AWARENESS AND INTEGRATION OF
MULTIPLE SOCIOCULTURAL IDENTITIES AMONG
BLACK STUDENTS AT A
PREDOMINANTLY WHITE INSTITUTION

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
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By

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* * * * *

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the awareness and integration of multiple sociocultural identities among a group of black students attending a predominantly white college. Sociocultural identities are those identity facets which have a biological origin and are socially constructed, i.e. race or gender. The participant group consisted of five students who attended a small, liberal arts college in the Midwest. Data were collected in two forms, questionnaire and interview, over a period of three months. The individual interviews were conducted in four stages. Five research questions guided the study: 1) the ways these students perceived their own multiple identity facets; 2) how these students chose which identity facets to embrace or abandon; 3) the role of race, gender, and class on the lived experiences of these students; 4) how these students articulate an integrated identity; and 5) the impact of spirituality on the students' perception and development of their own integrated identities.

The students' data stories were analyzed through multiple lenses to better illuminate the many complex issues involved in negotiating and integrating multiple sociocultural identity facets. Three interpretive frames were applied to the data: faith and identity typology as discussed by James Fowler and Sharon Daloz Parks; intersectionality typology developed by Amy Reynolds and Raechele Pope; and,
optimal theory applied to identity development founded in the work of Linda James Myers. Particular findings revealed the impact of the students' relationships to a transcendent source of value and meaning, the influence of external definitions, and the orientations of the students' worldviews.

Investigation of the research questions produced other relevant findings. These included the centrality and relevance of sociocultural identities; the inaccessibility of identity integration; and lastly, the influence of interpersonal relationships on the selection of identity facets to embrace or abandon. A number of significant implications also emerged from these findings regarding, among other things, the more thorough inclusion of relationships on identity development. Student affairs professionals are encouraged to nurture the development of student organizations which blend a number of identity facets, such as black fraternal organizations, which seemed to promote self-knowledge as an integrated individual.
DEDICATION

Giving glory and honor to God, who is the head of my life,
and the author and the finisher of my faith:
"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."
The Holy Bible, Hebrews 11:1 (KJV)

Dedicated to the "Daughters of Deborah:"
My grandmother Lucille Lemon Lazarus, whose faith and courage begat my mother,
Dorothy Elizabeth Lazarus, whose faith and strength begat me,
Dafina Makeda Lazarus Stewart, whose faith and hope begat my daughter,
Makeda Elizabeth Martin, who has stepped onto this plane with knowledge older than
her years, and whose path will be an outgrowth of the testimony of faith, courage,
strength, and hope of the women who have gone before her.

Also dedicated to the founding members of the “Nappy Hair Club for Women,”
who were determined to be at home with all of who we were,
everywhere we were, with whomever we were.
Praise the Lord, sisters, we’re finally making it home!
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"It takes a village to raise a child [or in this case a dissertation]."

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to frame the question of the awareness and integration of multiple sociocultural identities, particularly race, gender, and class, through a historical and psychocultural framework. Such a framework seeks to address both the philosophy and structure of education for African Americans and the impact this structure has had on the possibilities for constructing whole psychosocial and psychocultural identities for African Americans. Therefore, this chapter speaks to the historical nature of African American education and the structure of schooling, situating these received understandings of the connection between schooling and identity as a binary, which limits our capacity to understand students who do not know themselves in this limited fashion. An Optimal (Myers, 1993) paradigm is then introduced, which foregrounds the conceptualization of identity intersection (Reynolds & Pope, 1991) or wholeness, in which this study is grounded. Finally, the chapter closes with an introduction to the purpose and implications of this study, which will be expanded later in Chapter Three, Methodology.
Definition of Terms

The following terms will be used throughout this study and understanding their use in this context is critical, because in some ways their use here departs from traditional or assumed meanings. *Sociocultural* identities is used to refer to *bio-social constructions* of identity, which are ascribed to an individual from birth or family circumstance. Race, gender, and class are the particular bio-social constructions or sociocultural identities, which will be employed here. In this study, therefore, although class is not a biological condition, it is seen to function as a bio-social identity construction, indirectly, by virtue of how race and gender in the American social context are often used as ascribed markers of socioeconomic standings for both individuals and groups (Williams, 1995). Its connection with educational attainment and use in this study is further described later in this chapter. *Psychosocial identity* is a term used commonly to imply the interconnection between societal (external) and personal (internal) understandings and knowledges of the self (Erickson, 1968). In this study, the term *psychocultural identity* also will be used in juxtaposition to psychosocial identity to emphasize the culturally informed nature of both societal and individual understandings and knowledges of the self (Stanfield, 1994). *Optimal theory* refers to a way of thought, knowledge, and action which seeks balance and complementarity, where there has been imbalance and fragmentation (Myers, 1993) and is associated with African peoples and other people of color (Ani, 1994; Asante, 1988; Myers, 1993; Nichols, 1986; Nobles, 1980). *Suboptimal*, in contrast, refers to a way of thought, knowledge, and action that privileges discord and fragmentation. This way of being
has typically been associated with European and American cultural frameworks (Ani, 1994; Asante, 1988; Myers, 1993; Nichols, 1986; Nobles, 1980). Finally, identity integration, identity intersection, and wholeness represent three interchangeable terms for describing self-knowledges and identity patterns which belie interdependence and interconnection among the multiple sociocultural identities addressed in this study – race, gender, and class.

The Agony of Education

In the aftermath of the Bacon Rebellion in 1768, the United States government legally forbade enslaved Africans on American soil from learning to read and write. The penalties for deliberately breaking the law were swift and fierce. Some plantation owners cut off the fingers or the hands of the accused, others severely whipped their literate chattel, attempting to beat the knowledge out of them and make others afraid to even try to learn. Nevertheless, people continued to meet in secret caves or dense forests by the light of candles to learn (Douglass, 1997). The Africans learned that education was not only a prized possession, but a symbol and tool of freedom and liberty. As quickly as the Africans learned this, white plantation owners and poor white farmers in both the South and the North reacted violently to African Americans’ efforts to learn and to set up schools for their children after the Civil War (Anderson, 1988; Franklin, 1979). Nevertheless, education was seen, not as a birthright or a privilege the way white Americans had come to see it (Anderson, 1988; Rosovsky, 1990; Rudolph, 1990), but as a necessity and the political right of a democratic citizenry (Anderson, 1988; Cooper, 1892; Crummell, 1897a).
However, gaining limited educational opportunity did not lead to the liberation and political emancipation that the African Americans had envisioned. Rather, white philanthropists and other African Americans beholden to racist educational theories developed an educational philosophy that was designed to dumb down the brightest student and make second-class citizenship palatable to African Americans, called industrial education (Anderson, 1988). Industrial education emphasized manual labor for the development of virtue and moral character, so that those educated in the system would be 'appropriate' leaders for the masses of African American people (Anderson, 1988). However, champions such as W. E. B. DuBois, fought against these ideas and strove to maintain opportunities for African Americans to receive the same classical liberal training that white students received in Latin, the Greek philosophers, higher-level mathematics, and literature. They believed that African American minds were capable of absorbing the work of Plato and Socrates, of understanding the proofs of geometry, and of learning the romance and classical languages of ancient and present day Europe (Anderson, 1988).

This belief in the innate capability and the brilliance of the African American mind was not shared by most white Americans, nor by many African Americans (Crummell, 1897b). Therefore, those African Americans who were fortunate to receive a classical liberal education during their elementary, secondary, or post-secondary schooling, experienced further denigration and discrimination (Anderson, 1988; DuBois, 1903). Consequently, a consciousness emerged amongst these African Americans that their African blood lines should not be used to condemn them to
second-class status, nor was that cultural lineage evidence of their inferiority, mentally or morally. Yet, their social world, organized in the support of white supremacy, dictated a behavior that belied that knowledge and faith. In the mainstream society, they had to act as second-class citizens, devoted to their country and its discriminatory policies, but very aware that the life their white bosses, teachers, and neighbors led was not meant for them to lead. They were pledged to a dream that they could not take hold of, but fiercely desired and knew was rightfully theirs (Anderson, 1988; DuBois, 1903; Douglass, 1997). This “double consciousness,” as coined by Anna Julia Cooper (1892) and popularized by W. E. B. DuBois (1903), tore at their souls. This desire was to live life as both “a Negro and an American” (DuBois, 1903, p. 3), without “suing or special patronage” (Cooper, 1892), bridging the best in one with the best in the other. However, the desire to unite or integrate this twinned identity has rarely been acknowledged or achieved. The society in which African Americans lived did not allow for it or nurture it in those who aspired to it (DuBois, 1903).

In the last twenty years, scholars have shown that educated African Americans still do not feel at home on predominantly white college campuses (Allen, Epps, & Haniff, 1991; Fleming, 1984; Sedlacek, 1987). African American students face a dilemma of inclusion and exclusion: Being a part of and yet apart from American society as they are exposed to two different and competing value systems (Fleming, 1985; Hughes, 1987; Parham, 1989). Yet, there is a third way of forming identity consciousness. The DuBoisian binary of Negro and American is resultant from a knowledge of self that was greatly influenced by the racist stereotypes that white
Americans perpetuated about African Americans (DuBois, 1903; Myers, 1993).

However, some people of African descent, including DuBois in his later years, came to an understanding of themselves that fully embraced their African heritage or who have never seen themselves through the eyes of a racist Other (L. J. Myers, personal communication, November 2000). This self-knowledge does not represent the common social or cultural identity development experiences of African Americans in the United States. For most, the struggle is still between negotiating a positive sense of blackness and the competing Eurocentric values to which they are continually exposed both in schools and out.

The Structure of Schooling

Indeed then, the American college environment presents a fragmenting and invalidating experiential reality for many African American students (McEwen, Roper, Bryant, & Langa, 1990). McEwen, et al (1990) say that the “forced participation of Blacks in white institutions results in oppression, dehumanization, and deracialization.” Why is this? How did this become manifest? The short answer is that our educational system represents supreme suboptimal or fragmented functioning and a lack of consciousness regarding the relationship between self and others (Myers, 1993; Palmer, 1983). The long answer begins in the historical foundations of American education. Educational institutions in this country, largely have been founded to serve the interests of white, middle class, and male students (McEwen, et al, 1990; Rudolph, 1990). The philosophy and concept of education in this country, therefore, has a foundation in monocultural hegemony. Non-white peoples were presumed to be
ineducable and incapable of putting any education they did gain toward positive purpose (Anderson, 1988; Crummell, 1897b). Therefore, neither their interests, needs, histories, genealogies, nor biologies were considered in the conceptualization and construction of schools (McEwen, et al, 1990).

Embedded in the ontology and epistemology of whiteness is an understanding of reality as dichotomous and competitive (Ani, 1994; Myers, 1993; Nichols, 1986). In the Western mind, dichotomy presupposes an oppositional, hierarchical, and consequently competitive relationship between the concepts involved (Scott, 1994). This drive toward competition is reflected in Darwin’s evolutionary theory regarding the survival of the fittest and is suffused throughout American educational practice (Goldman & McDermott, 1987). The disintegration of complementarity into fragmentary and oppositional function inhibits the adoption of notions of cultural pluralism into education on a widespread basis. This suboptimal structure precludes the ability to apperceive the interdependence and interrelatedness of all knowledges (Myers, 1993), regardless of their cultural origins as well as the inherent value of all contributions by teachers and students regardless of their cultural origins.

Cummins (1986) points out that the structural organization in schools has an impact on the dehumanization and oppression of African American children. These structural elements are (1) cultural and linguistic incorporation; (2) community participation; (3) pedagogy; and (4) authentic assessment. These structural elements currently reflect the suboptimal orientation of American education (Cummins, 1986). Personally and individually, relationships between teachers and students resist cultural
pluralism. The imposition of presumably universal standards, squelch the multiple cultural intelligences present in a classroom. Many teachers are not in touch with their own selfhood and are thus incapable of recognizing, honoring, or learning from the selfhoods of their students. The often unconscious mythic image of African Americans as subordinate, stupid, dirty, and criminal prevents many teachers from treating African American students with respect and results in the disproportionate placement of African American children into lower tracked classes, detention halls, and special classes for the educable retarded (Cummins, 1986; Kunjufu, 1995).

Cummins (1986) reminds us that schools disempower students in the same ways that society disempowers their neighborhoods. There is a phenomenal lack of parental and community participation in the schools located in African American communities (Cummins, 1986). According to Cummins (1986), this has manifested from two facets of consciousness. One, school administrators, on the whole, do not value the input of African Americans and therefore do not seek it out. Two, even when asked, African Americans often do not value the worth of their own contributions, due in large part to the operation of a general psychology of oppression and their own more specific oppressive and dehumanizing experiences with schooling. The lack of inclusion of multiple voices prevents the possibility of any sort of cultural pluralism in the decision-making facets of American education (Cummins, 1986).

Next, African Americans continue to deal with the negative stereotypes of African peoples developed during slavery to justify the enslavement and later to decry the freedom of African peoples (Morrison, 1992; Riggs, 1987). Mammy, sambo,
jigaboo, pickaninny, Sapphire, Uncle Tom, and Aunt Sara were not fit to be educated, neither did they need it (Riggs, 1987). Many of those who did see fit to educate African peoples wanted an education that would ensure our continued political and economic subjugation (Anderson, 1988). It seems that such sentiments are rising again. The growing acceptance of cascading in education, in which disproportionately numbers of people of color are enrolled in community and technical colleges, reflects this resurgence and the structural purpose of schooling to maintain economic disparity (Dougherty, 1994).

Globally, we see this same type of cascading happening because racialized philosophies of education are a global phenomenon. Typically, northern nations such as the United States and Northern Europe reap the benefits and privileges afforded to white-skin privilege, while southern nations, such as the countries of Africa, South America, and Southeast Asia, suffer the same stereotypes and economic subjugation experienced by African Americans in the United States (Rodney, 1974). World-class educations are reserved for developed nations, while underdeveloped or developing nations get only enough training to prepare them to work piecemeal in the factories assembling cars, clothes, shoes, and electronic gadgets for those who deserve to be educated (Rodney, 1974). Educational racial and cultural hegemony is a global phenomenon that has implications for the identity development of non-elite, non-

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1 The term, underdeveloped, was popularized by Walter Rodney (1974) in his book, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa. The term is meant to convey the multiple ways in which economically rich nations have depleted the natural resources of former colonial states, in ways which impoverish those states on a generational basis (Rodney, 1974).
white, non-privileged students. Levinson and Holland (1996) describe the situation with alarming clarity:

This process of schooling imposes a kind of ‘symbolic violence’ on nonelite students, in which ‘instruments of knowledge ... which are arbitrary’ are nevertheless made to appear universal and objective (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977, p. 115). Such symbolic violence has a stultifying effect upon its recipients. As they develop a sense of their own social position, and the relatively degraded value of their own cultural-linguistic resources in given social situations, nonelite persons also tend to develop a ‘sense of their social limits.’ As these limits become permanently inscribed in a person’s ‘habitus,’ he or she learns to self-censor and self-silence in the company of those with greater social standing (p. 6).

Maturing in the Midst

After almost two decades of oppressive and dehumanizing educational experiences post-desegregation, African American college students enter the predominantly white educational context with three tasks before them: To acquire knowledge and skills leading to a bachelor’s degree; to face the requisite maturational challenges of the college years; and to deal with an oppressive educational context (Keniston, 1971; McEwen, et al, 1990). An essential task of this maturation is the development of identity (Chickering, 1993; Erikson, 1968; Keniston, 1971). Identity is a complex and multifaceted concept that does not have a standard definition. Identity includes personality facets, as well as social and cultural determinants. Identity
development as a subdiscipline covers both aspects. This study is attempting to capture stories of identity development that are related to the social, cultural, and biological influences which help us to answer the question, “Who am I?”

Yet, what is identity on a theoretical level? As Jones (1997) discusses, both Erik Erikson and William Tierney have defined identity. According to Erikson, identity is defined as “the ability to experiences one’s self as something that has continuity and sameness, and to act accordingly” (Erikson, 1963; Jones, 1997, p. 376). Tierney, on the other hand, says that “identity defines the individual in one way and not another – identity is difference” (Tierney, 1993, p. 63). Identity integration or wholeness is somewhat based in this Eriksonian definition of identity. However, as it stands, it is not troubled by the reality of the lived experience of externally imposed non-whiteness and blackness in America, which limits the extent to which someone can know themselves as “something that has continuity and sameness.” DuBois’s words ring out again,

After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second sight in this American world, – a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, – an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled
strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder (1903, p. 2).

The ability, therefore, to experience the self as continuous and integrated may be hampered from the beginning for African American college students, and particularly for those in predominantly white institutions.

Tierney’s definition is also not without problems. To define identity solely as difference presumes an oppositional dichotomy, which does not recognize an Optimal diunital logic in which all things are interrelated and interdependent and allows for a notion of complementary binaries (Myers, 1993). Rather, as Scott (1994) demonstrates, to define those binaries as inherently oppositional hides the inherent interdependence between the two concepts involved. To define oneself as Black, but not white, is to rely on an understanding of whiteness which conforms and limits one’s understanding of blackness. You cannot know blackness without also knowing whiteness – the knowledges are interdependent and related. Bringing diunital logic to bear in understanding identity would mean understanding our identities as a byproduct of what we are not as well as what we are and as the synergy of all which we are not and all which we are.

As suggested by Myers, understanding the psychosocial development of sociocultural identity in this way would open the field to the lived experiences of those people who have never seen themselves through the eyes of the Other, as Goffman (1959) suggests is necessary in childhood development, and neither have they interpreted their experiences through such an external lens. Therefore, these
individuals would not experience any barriers to successfully integrating multiple sociocultural identities, and the development of such wholeness is not dependent on shedding the Other’s view of the self. Perhaps, for these individuals, they have recognized that although it may be natural to see oneself in the mirror of another, to do so in this social context would be psychically damaging. Therefore, they bypass seeking external recognition and validation, substituting instead their internal knowledges of self (L. J. Myers, personal communication, November 2000). Evidence of this third space within selfhood development may become manifest in this study.

Conceptualizing Wholeness

At this point, a theoretical concept of identity integration and wholeness develops. Identity integration and wholeness is a critical concept for African Americans, who are conscious of the struggle within themselves to attain “true self-consciousness” in defiance of the “symbolic violence” of schooling and educational practice. DuBois continues, “The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife, – this longing to attain self-conscious [selfhood], to merge his [sic] double self into a better and truer self” (1903, pp. 2-3). This longing also represents a spiritual consciousness that recognizes the interrelated nature of human existence and the desire to be whole within one’s self (Baker-Fletcher, 1998).

Paulo Freire also helps to illuminate the distinction between identity integration or wholeness and identity management, which is discussed in the psychosocial development literature (see for instance, Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Freire (1973) states in Education for Critical Consciousness:
Integration with one's context, as distinguished from adaptation ... results from the capacity to adapt oneself to reality plus the critical capacity to make choices and transform that reality. To the extent that man loses his ability to make choices and is subjected to the choices of others, to the extent that his decisions are no longer his own because they result from external prescriptions, he is no longer integrated. ... The integrated person is person as Subject.... If man is incapable of changing reality, he adjusts himself instead. Adaptation is behavior characteristic of the animal sphere; exhibited by man, it is symptomatic of his dehumanization (p. 67).

Freire and DuBois give shape to what I mean when I speak of multiple identity integration as a concept. In this study, though, I am using the term integration to refer to internal processes, i.e. integration within one's own self instead of with one's context. The concept of identity management in psychosocial development is comparable to what Freire calls adaptation, where the locus of control is external to the self: You cannot change the environment, so you change your appearance of self to fit into the given environment (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Identity integration, rather, represents a symbiotic understanding of the self as inherently multiplicitous, in which the different forms or facets of self come together and impact each other in potentially transformative ways. For instance, your understanding of blackness is transformed by your lived reality as male or female, and vice versa. Definitions of the self as raced, gendered, and educated move from being externally imposed limitations
to internalized facets through which self-actualization may be more fully realized.
This symbiotic relationship means that each different sociocultural identity facet is
identifiable and salient in all areas of the individual’s life. Hearkening again to DuBois,
"In this merging [the better and truer self] he wishes neither of the older selves to be
lost. He would not Africanize America, ... He would not bleach his Negro [sic] soul in
a flood of white Americanism. ... He simply wishes to make it possible for a man [sic]
to be both a Negro [sic] and an American" (1903, p. 3).

I have asserted that identity integration provides a way to transcend the societal
tendency to compartmentalize everything including the self, to smooth out the
supposed contradictions between these faces or facets of self (i.e. sociocultural
identities), and to provide a sense of coherency about who one is and how one lives in
context. In this study, I am expanding the DuBoisian conflict of race and citizenship
into a broader field that encompasses race, gender, and class in a potentially
oppositional college environmental climate. As delineated earlier, race and gender are
bio-social constructs which mark an individual throughout one’s life. Class, however,
especially in the American context, is hampered by variant sociological and popular
meanings and significations. For use in this study, class status is defined as a
sociocultural construct which is exhibited in two ways. First, class status is a reflection
of the family background of the student, which includes income, wealth, and the
educational attainment of the parents or legal guardians of the student. Second, class
status is also signified by the student’s educational attainment goals, such that the
attainment of the bachelor’s degree is usually accompanied by increases in income and
social status (Dougherty, 1994), which are common objective determinants of socioeconomic status.

The symbiotic resolution of these three concurrent sociocultural identities (i.e. race, gender, and class) represents identity integration and wholeness. To accomplish this task in an environment which may be hostile to certain resolutions of one or all of these sociocultural identities, presents additional psychosocial and psychocultural identity challenges for the African American student. This tri-layered construct of identity development and resultant environmentally-imposed challenges (Fleming, 1985) is the motivation for the present investigation into identity integration and wholeness. Focusing on these layers of sociocultural identity is supported by the work of Alice Brown-Collins and Deborah Sussewell (1986), Diane Goodman (1990), bell hooks (1993), Susan R. Jones (1997), and Jones and Marylu McEwen (2000).

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this dissertation research is to uncover any awareness and integration of multiple sociocultural identities (race, gender, and class) among African American students at a predominantly white institution. Indeed, all human beings have multiple sociocultural identities and all are multifaceted (Wolcott, 1994). However, in a society that privileges certain voices and bodies based on race, class, and gender, some of the society's members feel a heavier weight of multiple oppressions due to having multiple disregarded identities within the frames of race, class, and gender (Reynolds & Pope, 1991). The pressures of living within and against the "mythic norm" (Lorde, 1984) make the integration of these bio-social constructions more pressing and difficult for
some in our society. As “involuntary minorities” (Ogbu, 1987), African Americans are
one of the groups who feel this weight. The intersection of high educational
achievement and aspiration with the lived realities of being an African in America, of
either gender, represents a qualitatively different experience or lived reality of self.
African American students at predominantly white educational institutions must cope
somehow with the “splitting” of their identities into several supposedly conflicting
facets in order to “become somebody” (Luttrell, 1996).

I approach this dissertation study with the implicit belief that the development
of the awareness of one’s multifaceted sociocultural nature and succeeding integration
of those multiple facets is an answer to the question of why some African American
graduates of predominantly white institutions reminisce fondly about their college
experiences, while others do not. This study into identity integration and wholeness
moves beyond biculturalism and “accomodation without assimilation” (Gibson, 1997;
Mehan, et al, 1994) to build an understanding of psychosocial identity that presents a
truly integrated understanding of the ways that race, gender, and educational
attainment intersect and interact, and which therefore, better reflects the lived realities
of African American students.

The aim of this study is to investigate the awareness and integration of multiple
sociocultural identities among junior and senior African American students on a
predominantly white campus. The following research questions have guided this
study.
1. In what ways do these Black college students at this PWI perceive themselves as having multiple sociocultural identities (Fowler, 1981; Wolcott, 1994)?

2. How do these Black college students at this PWI choose which sociocultural identities to embrace and which others to ignore or abandon (Eisenhart, 1995; Fowler, 1981; Parks, 2000)?

3. How do the intersections of race, gender, class background, and class attainment inform the lived realities and self-knowledges of these Black college students at this PWI (Fowler, 1981; Goodman, 1990; Jones, 1997; Parks, 2000)?

4. What factors mediate the articulation of an integrated sociocultural identity in terms of race, class, and gender at this PWI for these Black students (Jones & McEwen, 2000; Parks, 2000)?

5. In what ways does spirituality impact the perception of multiple sociocultural identities and the development of an integrated and whole sense of self for these Black students (Baker-Fletcher, 1998; Fowler, 1981; Love & Talbot, 1999)?

Importance of the Study

Disciplines across the academy are coming to see the necessity and the value of using multiple and intersecting frameworks to understand issues and people in this nation. Higher education student development theory has joined this movement with the work of Amy Reynolds and Raechele Pope (1991), Maria Root (1990), Susan R. Jones (1997), and Susan R. Jones and Marylu McEwen (2000). However, what remains rarely addressed, despite Jones and McEwen (2000), is an analysis of the multidimensionality of identity constructs in all human beings, across sociocultural
identities. Moreover, there is now an a priori assumption that sociocultural identities are by nature externally imposed and limiting. Where is the possibility of seeing one’s sociocultural markers as internalized identities as Reynolds and Pope (1991) discuss in their Multidimensional Identity Model?

Within this largely uncharted territory are the lived experiences of African American students at predominantly white campuses who within one “dark body” possess multiple and presumably opposing identities, which interact in a complex matrix of race, class, and gender. The communally and societally understood meanings of each of these dimensions of identity often conflict in an educational environment that reflects and reproduces incoherence and fragmentation (Myers, 1993; Palmer, 1993), and that may be hostile to the identity markers that African American students at these institutions represent (Fleming, 1985). Thriving in this potentially hostile, fragmented, and fragmenting environment may include the awareness and development of a multiple sociocultural identity that is whole and integrated. *This study seeks to make evident this alternate way of being and argues for its inclusion in our understanding of psychosocial identity development in college*. As Goodman (1990) says, “the intersections and interconnections between race, gender, and class impact development and need further study.” Theory development would be enhanced by an understanding of the relationships among the differing sociocultural facets of self and allowing those facets to speak with, across, and to each other.

2 I have separated communal understandings from those generated by the larger society to reflect the assertion that non-elite groups within a stratified society often define and ascribe meanings to race,
Wendy Luttrell’s (1996) study of adult African American and white women returning to school also supports the idea that schools are not culturally plural or welcoming places for all students. She says, “Schools are sites of cultural production, places where certain styles of selves and knowledge are authorized amidst race, class, and gender inequalities” (Luttrell, 1996, p. 94). She continues on to say that, “school is organized in distinct, if unintended, institutional and pedagogical ways to ‘attack’ the self” (Luttrell, 1996, p. 94). Her analysis demonstrates an understanding that identity integration is a psychocultural process that education and schooling can either support or hinder.

Therefore, understanding and recognizing identity integration is not only significant for theory development, but also for practice. Student affairs professionals, particularly those who work closely with African American and other students of color, act and intervene in the lives of these students outside of the classroom, in those places where issues of race, class, and gender are most often reflected upon and acted out. As Patrick Love and Donna Talbot (1999) point out, student affairs professionals have adopted the maturational growth and development of students as a valid and valued goal. Being able to effectively attend to and validate multiple sociocultural identity awareness and identity integration in the students they work with, can lead to positively transformative educational experiences for both students and administrators. The impact of incorporating this concept into daily practice can stretch from
multicultural advising and programming to general campus activities and student organizations. The end result could be the development of colleges into nurturing places where all students have a place to be.

This study is also important to understanding in depth the sociocultural contexts of predominantly white colleges and universities and the experiences of African American students within them. This element makes this study personally significant as well. I attended a predominantly white college and experienced the attacks on my self that Luttrell (1996) discovered in her work with African American women. I also remember struggling for most of my college experience to find some middle ground between my own multiple sociocultural identities. I was at once a vocal activist for racial justice, attempting to respect and honor my development as a woman, and pursuing a bachelor's degree. Often these roles and visions of my selfhood conflicted and some got lost in the shuffle to be picked up again later on (Eisenhart, 1995). I felt isolated and lonely most of time as I tried to comb and part my identity facets into neat, manageable sections that did not interfere with each other. Seeking to be all of me in this way was not successful and there seemed to be no one, either students or administrators, who could see what I was going through and could help me. But I was not the only one going through this. As I reflect on my peers, there were others who struggled to be all of who they were like I did, while there were some who seemed to suffer no conflict and no inconsistencies.

Then as I grew in my own spiritual awareness, I began to realize that “I had to stop combing my mind, so my thoughts could lock” (Kessler & Peipers, 1998). As I
looked deeper into what it meant to be a critically conscious African person, a womanist female, and the holder of a bachelor's degree, I realized that there were no inherent or necessary contradictions between these three facets of my identity. I began to resist seeing myself through the eyes of a fragmented Other, and embraced an alternate way of being and knowledge of self. I was slowly able to bridge the layers of my identity and walk from one identity to another, carrying with me the wisdom of one to the others. This process began while I was still in college, but I had no support in my journey and had to pursue it almost clandestinely, like a slave trying to learn to read in the forest. For this reason, it was critical for me that I delve more deeply into this concept of identity integration and wholeness so that I could understand my own experience better, as well as that of current and future students. It was important for me to study this, so that future generations of students would not have to feel alone in their confusion about who to be or how to be, isolated in their struggles to merge their multiple sociocultural selves, or attacked by an environment that is supposed to be nurturing and supportive.

Lastly, this study was necessary to support the liberatory voices of African American students on predominantly white campuses, expressing the "proactive possibility" (Kirk-Duggan, 1997) of multiple identity awareness and identity integration and wholeness as appropriate aims of psychosocial development. As hooks (1993) says in her book on self-recovery for African American women, "Living as we do in a white-supremacist capitalist patriarchal context that can best exploit us when we lack a firm grounding in self and identity (knowledge of who we are and where we
have come from), choosing "wellness" [or wholeness] is an act of political resistance” (p. 14). As a researcher, I believe that I have a responsibility to research not only what exists but to also point toward what could be transformative for our understandings of ourselves, our students, our colleges, and how students develop in college (Fine & Weis, 1996; James, 1993; Kvale, 1995).
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, relevant research related to the concept of identity integration and wholeness will be reviewed. Foundational theories in student development literature will be briefly addressed as background to the more relevant work done by researchers in the 1980's and 1990's specifically on African American students. Work from fields outside student development then will be introduced as they have helped to refine and frame the theoretical understanding of identity integration and wholeness that is studied here. Lastly, a synthesis of the literature is presented that supports the investigation of sociocultural identity integration as a theoretical concept. Both empirical research and theoretical literature are presented because of the lack of empirical research in this specific area, as well as to validate the scholarship of those writers whose only empirical data is the testimony of their own lived experiences.

Student Identity Development

Foundational Theories

Student identity development theories emerging from both developmental psychology and research on college students are typically grouped into five categories: psychosocial theories; cognitive-structural theories; typology theories; person-
environment interaction theories; and existential theories. The foundational theorists
for most of the individual theories within the schema are Erik Erikson and Carl Jung.
Taken together, these families of developmental theories can be described as stage
theories, structured linearly and progressively in hierarchical order. Successful
resolution of the first stage is essential to the successful resolution of the stage which
follows it. Although recycling or repeating certain stages is present, it is only validated
as the result of trauma. The theories also have in common an understanding of the
necessity of disequilibrium as an impetus for growth, as well as the need for an
adequate balance of challenge and support (Sanford, 1966) for the encouragement and
promotion of developmental growth in students. The works of Erik Erikson, James
Marcia, Arthur Chickering, Kenneth Keniston, and Douglas Heath will represent the
substantive, foundational work in psychosocial development.

Erikson’s (1968) work in identity development conceives of development as
unfolding according to an “epigenetic principle,” (White & Porterfield, 1993, p. 68) or
according to a predetermined schedule in which certain issues take ascendency at
specific points in the life cycle. His theory combines thinking, feeling, and behavior.
He also emphasizes the importance of understanding development within the
sociocultural context in which it occurs. Marcia (1966), Chickering (1969], 1993),
Keniston (1971), and Heath (1968) have developed landmark theories focusing on
college student development, which have emerged from Erikson’s work.

Marcia’s work (1966) refines and expands Erikson’s discussion of identity
resolution with a particular focus on vocation and ideology. His understanding of
identity resolution is a three stage process involving “experiencing a crisis, a period of uncertainty and active searching, and the making of commitments” (White & Porterfield, 1993, p. 69). Marcia (1966) developed a typology of ego statuses which represent how individuals cope with the identity resolution process. These statuses are foreclosed identity, diffused identity, moratorium, and achieved identity. Later, Ruthellen Josselson (1987) studied the relevance of this typology for understanding college women’s vocational and ideological commitments. Her longitudinal study of women found that relationships and connection to other significant people were not indicators of a deficient development of autonomy, but rather these significant relationships were vehicles toward the development of autonomy (Josselson, 1987). This was a major finding and coupled with Mary Belenky and her colleagues’ work (Belenky, Clinch, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986), Jane Loevinger (1976), and Carol Gilligan (1977) earlier, it forever altered the deficit view which had traditionally been taken toward women’s psychosocial development.

The influence of this work is shown in Arthur Chickering and Linda Reisser’s (1993) reconceptualization of Chickering’s (1969) initial work in college student identity development. Chickering identified seven vectors representing the essential tasks of identity that college students must successfully resolve. The vectors are developing competence; managing emotions; moving through autonomy toward interdependence; establishing identity; developing mature interpersonal relationships; developing purpose; and developing integrity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). These tasks attempt to cover all facets of the self, from academic competence to vocational
choice. Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) revision redefines the third vector, developing autonomy, as moving through autonomy toward interdependence. This is an acknowledgement of the work done by Gilligan (1977), Belenky, et al (1986), and Josselson (1987), among others to include women’s unique developmental experiences.

Chickering’s fourth vector, establishing identity, discusses in depth the importance of physical needs and self-concept, sexual identity, and the adoption of appropriate gender roles and behavior to the resolution of a healthy ego identity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). However, he does not place the individual in sociohistorical context as Erikson suggests by attending to the social and cultural identities that are assigned to and adopted by individuals. Therefore, his ability to attend to sociocultural issues, such as race, class, and gender is inhibited.

Chickering sees traditional age college students as individuals in a distinct developmental stage. This sentiment is also expressed by Keniston (1971). He argued that collegiate life is a unique social experience that poses equally unique psychosocial tasks for young adults which center mainly around the relationship between the individual and society (White & Porterfield, 1993). Including an environmental analysis in his framework, Keniston (1971) asserts that development results from the interaction of biological givens with social conditions, such that development is not an already written story that reads the same for any individual. Rather, conceptions of college student development “need to take into account the shifting nature of modern society in order to arrive at a complete understanding of college students” (White & Porterfield, 1993).
Finally, Douglas Heath’s maturity model (1968), based on cross-cultural longitudinal studies, presents a process of maturation that is initiated by instability, either internally within the individual or externally in the social environment. His model draws on literature from several disciplines, including anthropology, biology, psychology, and education (White & Porterfield, 1993). Heath’s model also suggests a sequential pattern in the four areas of the self in which maturation occurs: the intellect, interpersonal relationships, values and then self-concept (1968). Maturity involves development in each of the following growth dimensions: (1) the ability to symbolize and express one’s experiences; (2) becoming “allocentric” or other centered; (3) becoming integrated, connecting various aspects of one’s experience; (4) the ability to resist disruption and function consistently; and (5) becoming autonomous (Heath, 1968; White & Porterfield, 1993). Overemphasis or lag in any one dimension or aspect of personality inhibits progress in the other areas of personality. Also, contrary to Chickering, Erikson, and Marcia, Heath proposes that individuals cycle and recycle through this process throughout their lives as they are confronted with challenging stimuli, as opposed to viewing resolution as a goal that once reached is never sought after again (1968). The twin concepts of identity integration and wholeness are grounded in many of the same ideas as Heath’s maturity model. Identity integration correlates with Heath’s third growth dimension of connecting various aspects of one’s experience and is motivated by the belief that inattention to this growth process and lag in its maturation will inhibit growth in other dimensions of the personality.
This literature is the foundation upon which other researchers, including those following, have built their work. Erikson, Marcia, Chickering, Keniston, and Heath have contributed a great deal to our present understanding of psychosocial development during the college years.

Including Different Voices

Most of the studies which produced the theories and models discussed above, were done with predominantly White and male student populations and the findings were assumed to be generalizable to women, people of color, and gays, lesbians, and bisexuals. However, the 1970’s saw the emergence of work done by and about these marginalized groups and demonstrated that the foundational theories had not told the whole story of identity development. As shown through Chickering’s work (1993), studies which centered women’s experiences of identity development impacted the understanding of autonomy and morality development. Cass (1979) and Evans and Wall (1991) are among the researchers exploring the function of sexual orientation in identity development. Atkinson, Morten, and Sue (1993), Helms (1990), and Phinney (1989) have done important work on racial identity development for Whites and people of color as a group. This review centers selected work on African American racial identity development in college, as this is the group under study.

Black Psychology and Racial Identity Development

On the heels of the Civil Rights Movement, the resurgence of Black nationalism and militant activism, and virulent campus racial disturbances, understanding African American life through the perspectives of African American
people became critically important. Several researchers, noted here, moved to fill this gap and frame the discussion of African American racial development as an important element of general psychosocial development. William E. Cross was among the scholars examining the concept of psychological Nigrescence (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). Nigrescence is the process of transformation from a non-African centered identity to an African centered one. Cross’s model of psychological Nigrescence describes this process as a positive one with five sequential stages (1971). His work is the foundation upon which all theories of racial identity development have been built.

In the first stage, pre-encounter, African American students either view their racial identity as irrelevant and inconsequential or as a sign of deficiency. Whiteness can be viewed as a preferred racial status, and the attitudes of African Americans in this stage may not differ significantly from those of white racists. The second stage, encounter, involves an experience or a series of experiences that causes disequilibrium and challenges the individual’s previous views about race and the significance of race in the person’s life. These experiences can be either positive or negative. Reflection upon the experience causes the person to look at the world through a different lens. The immersion-emersion stage is a period in which the old identity is discarded and the new Afrocentric world view is taken on in full force. Initially, the individual may express a hatred for all things white or non-Black and adopt many superficial markers of blackness, such as changing hairstyles, manner of dress, or learning an African language, for instance. As the individual progresses through this stage toward
internalization, dualistic analyses of blackness versus whiteness are replaced by more nuanced and less emotionally charged interpretations. In the internalization stage, this new identity is rooted more firmly within the self and is reflective of inner security and self-confidence about being African American. Individuals in this fourth stage are more ideologically flexible and open to other perspectives. This openness increases in the fifth and final stage, internalization-commitment, as the ideology of the new identity gets translated into action on behalf of African American and other oppressed groups. A collective “we” voice begins to emerge, replacing the previous egocentric perspective (Cross, 1971, 1991; Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998).

In Cross’ wake, Wade Nobles (1980) asserted the need for a black psychology that was based on a black cultural ethos. According to Nobles (1980), culturally relevant black psychology would be the foundation of theories concerning the psychological development and mental health of African Americans. Like Cross, Nobles’ work was also rooted in the Negrescence movement of the 1970s. He argued that a black psychology based on a black ethos needed to be fundamentally different from a white psychology based on a white cultural ethos. The black cultural ethos that he referred to was based on African philosophical traditions, largely rooted in West Africa. Nobles justified this orientation by saying that white ethnographers who argue the “intra-distinctiveness” of West African societies may be allowing racist assumptions to blind them to “the underlying similarities in the experiential communality of African peoples” (1980, p. 24). This common ethos, or collective unconsciousness (Bynum, 1999), has two characteristics: (1) human unity and harmony
with nature; and (2) an emphasis on community survival (Nobles, 1980). Therefore, black psychology would not be derived from the negative aspects of black life in America, but rather from the positive features of a basic African philosophy.

His relevance to black racial identity development theory is in the tenets of his Afrocentric psychology, which follows (Nobles, 1980). First, to be human meant belonging to the whole community. The egocentric “I” is replaced by a collective “we.” “Only in terms of other people does the individual become conscious of his own being” (Nobles, 1980, p. 30). This is the concept of collective responsibility and is further articulated as whatever happens to one happens to all and whatever happens to the group happens to the individual. Nobles makes no distinction between act and belief or between the spiritual and the physical in his theory of black psychology. Instead, everything is seen as functionally connected (Nobles, 1980). Further, the uniqueness of a person’s environment determines the parameters of that person’s existence. Finally, according to Nobles (1980), “black psychology needs to concern itself with rhythm, orality, the soul, the extended self, and the natural orientation to ensuring the survival of the tribe” (p. 35).

Thomas Parham (1989) has critiqued and expanded upon the work of Cross (1971) and Nobles (1980) in the development of psychological Nigréncence for African Americans. Whereas previous models characterized movement across a series of sequential stages in response to pressures in the social environment and other life circumstances, Parham (1989) discusses three alternatives to resolving identity. These alternatives are stagnation, stagewise linear progression, and recycling. Therefore,
racial identity development should not be perceived as being begun or completed during the college years and several cycles of development may occur throughout a person's lifetime (Parham, 1989). According to Parham (1989), the Cross model (1971) was meant to discuss identity change within the context of a social movement, not as a lifespan evolutionary process. Models of Negrescence then can be viewed as processes of self-actualization under conditions of oppression, in a developmental process that is subject to continuous change during the life cycle (Parham, 1989). Similar to Keniston (1971), Parham (1989) says that young adults are seeking ways to define themselves in relation to their social environment and they begin to look for their reflections within that external environment. Agreeing with Nobles (1980), Parham (1989) states that the core of black people's personalities is essentially African in nature. Going further he says that African American students face a dilemma of inclusion and exclusion, being a part of yet apart from American society as they are exposed to two different value systems, one rooted in African values and traditions and the other in European and American values and traditions (Parham, 1989). Within the context of racial identity development then, movement between racial identity stages may represent an attempt to balance African American and European American values within one's own life space (Parham, 1989).

Joseph White and Parham (1990) continue the themes noted above. Building from earlier work by Nobles, as well as work by Erikson and DuBois, White and Parham (1990) also assert that the personality, consciousness, and core identity of black people are African in nature. Further, they also highlight communal orientation as a
fundamental “self-extension orientation” of African people (White & Parham, 1990, p. 43). White and Parham (1990) discuss the development of a culturally centered identity, which has five characteristics: (1) an understanding of a collective or extended self; (2) an understanding and respect for the sameness in self and others; (3) a clear sense of one’s spiritual connection to the universe; (4) a sense of mutual responsibility for other black people; and (5) a conscious sense that deviance is defined as any act in opposition to oneself (White & Parham, 1990, pp. 44-45). However, referencing the writings of James Baldwin, the authors also point out that this development is often mitigated by oppression and racism (White & Parham, 1990). White and Parham (1990) also repeat the theme noted above by DuBois (1903) and Parham (1989) that black identity develops in the midst of a set of dualities that are challenged by oppression and racism. Despite this, citing Nobles, interrelatedness, connectedness, and interdependence are viewed as the unifying philosophic concepts in the black experience base (White & Parham, 1990).

More recently, Robert Sellers (1997) and Janet Burt (1998) have produced reconceptualizations of African American identity which build from theories by Erikson, Marcia, and Cross. Sellers’ model, the Multi-dimensional Model of Racial Identity, has four components: (1) racial salience; (2) racial centrality; (3) racial regard; and (4) racial ideology (1997). Racial salience has to do with the extent to which race is a relevant part of African Americans’ self-concepts at a specific moment in time. Racial centrality deals with the extent to which African Americans normatively define themselves with respect to race. Racial regard represents the dynamic relationship
between the individual's affective and evaluative judgments of African Americans and the individual's perception of other's affective and evaluative judgements of African Americans. Lastly, racial ideology constitutes a person's attitudes, opinions, and beliefs about how they feel that African Americans should collectively behave.

Janet Burt's (1998) African American Identity Model includes family socialization and sociohistorical consciousness in the development of racial identity for African Americans. The four components in her model are family socialization, racial consciousness, cultural connectedness/collective thought, and self-concept (Burt, 1998). Burt (1998) asserts that the socialization process within the family structure impacts the racial identity formation of an individual. Racial consciousness is the extent to which a person understands the impact that race, history, and culture have on the individual and collective experience of African Americans. The other two components constitute the degree to which a person has adopted African American cultural norms and values and having a healthy and positive sense of self when functioning both within and outside the African American community and culture (Burt, 1998).

These two models by Sellers (1997) and Burt (1998) and the culturally centered identity model presented in White and Parham (1990) differ from most of the models presented above in that they are not stage theories. Individuals do not move from one stage to another in linear progression. Rather, each component has its own growth cycle and the dynamic relationship between the components constitute racial identity development in the individual, similar in structure to Heath's (1968) maturational development theory.
African American Students in Predominantly White Colleges and Universities

Most African American college students now are educated in predominantly white institutional environments (AAUP, 1995; Hoffman, Snyder, & Sonnenberg, 1996; Renner, 1998). There is another group of literature that deals with the psychological development of these African American college students. Walter Allen, Edgar Epps, and Neshia Haniiff (1991) edited a volume which details empirical quantitative research on African American students in both predominantly white and historically black public colleges and universities concerning achievement, representation, and climate issues. However, the qualitative data that will be presented here deals with the psychological costs that are coupled with being black in a white environment. It is this psychological impact that is most relevant to this study.

Jewelle Gibbs (1974) studied patterns of adaptation among black students at a predominantly white institution (PWI) and developed a typology of four modes of adaptation to the white university community. The first is withdrawal, characterized by apathy, depression, feelings of hopelessness, and alienation. The second is separation, marked by anger, hostility, and contempt for middle-class white values. Assimilation is the third adaptive pattern and is characterized by a desire for acceptance coupled with social anxiety, avoidance of other black students and staff, and compensatory overachievement. Lastly is affirmation. Individuals choosing this adaptive pattern display a positive ethnic identity, high achievement motivation, self-acceptance, and autonomous self-actualizing behavior (Gibbs, 1974). Gibbs (1974) also argues that black students have different expectations for the nature of their college
experience, both inside and outside the classroom, than the university’s administrators, faculty, and majority students, which causes the disjuncture and need for adaptive coping strategies.

George DeVos (1980) also deals with issues of adaptation for minority students at PWIs. DeVos emphasizes cognitive capacity and peer group influence in ways that other researchers studying African American racial identity have not. He asserts that identity formation depends on how and what basic mental mechanisms are involved in the development of personality (DeVos, 1980). DeVos (1980) continues by saying that studies of cognitive style patterns must include psychocultural determinants related to social or ethnic identity and the awareness of a disparaged minority status. Moreover, he asserts that the formation of an ethnic identity takes place not only in a family but in the mutual socialization among peers. This peer group may be the source of compensatory socialization in some ethnic minorities that have been most vulnerable to social degradation (DeVos, 1980). The role of the peer group as a socializing and formative influence though addressed in student development literature in the 1970’s (see the work of Vincent Tinto and Alexander Astin) has not received comparable attention in the racial identity development literature.

Jacqueline Fleming’s book, Blacks in College (1985), is a comparative study of student success in black and white institutions. Her assessment concludes that establishing a meaningful personal identity is a major problem for black students in white colleges for two interrelated reasons. The first are the psychological hurdles of role confusion, anxiety, and depression. These psychological conditions exaggerate
difficulties in establishing social ties and making intellectual adjustments to PWIs.

This predicament exacerbates the predictable life crisis of the collegiate years (Fleming, 1985). Fleming (1985) also identifies three implications of her study for white colleges:

(1) Institutional abandonment, isolation of black students, and bias against black students is prevalent, making the institutional climate for black students extremely hostile; (2) PWIs need to take into consideration how the norms, values, and expectations for behavior which black students bring to college interacts with what they find when they get there; and (3) due to the hostility of the climate, frustration plagues many black students which they vent in non-academic activities and results in lower or inconsistent academic achievement.

Not all authors center racial identity struggles in the lives of African American college students. Marvalene Hughes' (1987) assessment of black student participation in higher education revealed that African Americans at PWIs are preoccupied with basic issues of intellectual survival. Consequently, these students may defer their social, personal, emotional, and cultural development during college, because of the unpreparedness of the predominantly white university community to plan for and respond to their social and developmental needs. Pounds (1987) also asserts that African American students on PWIs need the institution to take an active role in their developmental growth, because environmental perceptions can and do inhibit social, intellectual, moral, and emotional development of students.

Further, Hughes (1987) addresses a gap in the student development literature, although it is not the focus of her study either. She says that student development
espouses the whole person but hesitates to include spiritual development. According to her research, spiritual development is a contributing variable to maturity and an important attribute of success for African American students at both PWIs and historically black institutions (Hughes, 1987). Also, Hughes (1987) points out that African American women seemed to have a more internal locus of control and a clearer sense of identity despite external obstacles than African American men, whose inner development is inhibited by their external focus on combating and surviving perceived and real racism and hostility.

Sedlacek’s (1987) review of twenty years of research about African American students on white campuses identifies eight non-cognitive or psychological variables that were critical for African American student success. They are (1) a positive self-concept or confidence; (2) realistic self-appraisal; (3) the capacity to understand and deal with racism; (4) demonstrated community service; (5) a preference for long-range goals; (6) the availability of a strong support person; (7) successful leadership experience; and (8) unusual or culturally related ways of obtaining knowledge in a field (Sedlacek, 1987). However, Sedlacek’s list does not include a developed sense of spirituality, which is repeatedly mentioned as a critical factor for African American student success, as demonstrated above.

Marylu McEwen, Larry Roper, Deborah Bryant, and Miriam Langa (1990) specifically address how the unique developmental issues of African Americans can be incorporated into existing psychosocial theories of student development. They propose nine dimensions to include in psychosocial theories, which reflect all the
themes addressed in the literature cited above. Ethnic and racial identity consciousness, successfully interacting with the dominant culture, fulfilling affiliation needs, surviving intellectually, developing spiritually, and developing a sense of social responsibility are included in their list (McEwen, Roper, Bryant, & Langa, 1990).

Further, these authors argue that PWIs were founded for the education of the white middle-class and are symbolically related to the cultural values of the broader American society, which is also based on European American values (McEwen, et al, 1990). These cultural values influence how students are viewed, how education is approached, and what knowledge base is used to explain student development (McEwen, et al, 1990). This means that African American students are taught and evaluated from an Anglo-Saxon perspective. Specific issues that African American students face are not accounted for. These issues include the psychohistory of African Americans in the United States, the colonized nature of black life here, the impact of racial hostility and environmental pressures, attempting to reconcile two or more identities, and the view of people as integrated and whole (McEwen, et al, 1990). Thus, the forced participation of African Americans in White institutions results in oppression, dehumanization, and deracialization (McEwen, et al, 1990).

McEwen and her colleagues (1990) assert that student affairs professionals must concern themselves with whether they are participants in the dehumanization of African American students through the use of traditional theories and practices. They review Fleming's work (1985), as well as that of Parham and Helms (1981), which show that African American students may have to put more work into guarding
against identity loss and that the racial identity process may be more complicated than expected by current researchers in the area (McEwen, et al, 1990). Further, they note that other research (Brown-Collins & Sussewell, 1986; Goodman, 1990) addresses the duality or even multiplicity with which African American students must struggle despite the fact that the environment works at "cross-purposes to this development" (McEwen, et al, 1990, p. 433). Following this, they call for the inclusion of this concept within psychosocial theories of identity development (McEwen, et al, 1990).

Lastly, Hughes' study (1987) is emphasized to show the importance of including a spiritual perspective in any theory of psychosocial development that is intended to be relevant for African Americans (McEwen, et al, 1990).

Research in this area further supports defining the predominantly white college experience as potentially negative and even destructive for African American students. Also, the literature in this area points toward the validity of addressing issues of identity intersection and integration.

**Identity Development in African American Women**

To date it has been research on African American women which most often has brought to light issues of multiple identities and the need for integration. Sometimes these conclusions have come as almost happenstance, in that the researchers did not go into the study looking for evidence of multiple or integrated identity orientation (Brown-Collins & Sussewell, 1986). Other research, such as that by Deborah Taub and Marylu McEwen (1991) validate and justify the sentiment that traditional models of psychosocial development, such as Chickering's model, while
accepted as valid for use with some populations are not fully useful for studying women or ethnic minorities.

Brown-Collins and Sussewell's (1986) study on African American women's emerging selves points to the complexity of the integration of race and gender, which had not been considered. Their research also showed, like Gilligan (1977), Belenky and her colleagues (1986), and later Josselson (1987), that an African American woman perceives her notion of her self in relationship to other people (Brown-Collins & Sussewell, 1986). The study's conclusions identify multiple self-referents for African American women: the psychophysiological, an African American referent, and what is termed as "myself" (Brown-Collins & Sussewell, 1986). The psychophysiological referent refers to the black woman's knowledge of herself as a woman. The second referent involves self-knowledge of social and political realities, in which knowledge obtained and understood about the self is a collective-affective experience. The myself referent is self-knowledge that is unique to one's personal history and is a by-product of both her blackness and her femaleness and needs to be studied simultaneously (Brown-Collins & Sussewell, 1986).

This emphasis on self-knowledge is carried on in Diane Goodman's (1990) work to include the voices of African American women in theories of women's development. Goodman (1990) seeks to address the deficiency in feminist research by explicitly focusing on the experiences of African American women and considering the interaction of sex and race. Goodman (1990) addresses identity development in African American women as resulting from the interaction of the following two
factors. First, she ascribes an Afrocentric world view to most African American women that defines the self as positively dependent on others, defined through relationship with others, and whose self-interest is tied to the welfare of the larger community, akin to Nobles' (1980) enunciation of an Afrocentric cultural ethos (Goodman, 1990). This is coupled with the family socialization of African American women to be both independent and self-reliant and to define their existence in relationship to African American men (Goodman, 1990).

Resulting from this are the three areas of self in which Goodman's respondents spoke about themselves and their identities. The three areas are sense of self, sense of self in relationship, and sense of being in the world or ontology (Goodman, 1990). As Goodman talked with these women, the role of spirituality was clearly interwoven into their stories of self and relationships with others (1990). Religion and spiritual beliefs play an important role in the process of change and personal growth experienced by these women (Goodman, 1990). Goodman (1990) also noted that the capacity for self-reflection was related to those with the most integrated self-concept and those most seriously preoccupied in moral and spiritual issues.

**Multiple Identities**

Due to the eurocentric and androcentric focus and design of the studies which produced the foundational theories introduced earlier in this chapter, issues of race, gender, class, and sexuality, among other social identity facets are not treated in the models which resulted. Consequently, as stated previously, other researchers have had to come in and fill in the gaps in the research. However, most of this "filling-in," until
recently, has been done in a fragmented, additive fashion, with little attention being paid to the intersections and interdependence of race with gender with class with sexuality. Rather, necessary attention has been given to how individuals living in the margins of “single” identities, such as biracial and bisexual students (see Evans & Wall, 1991; Root, 1990), develop a sense of identity. As reviewed above, Goodman (1990) and Brown-Collins and Sussewell (1986) urge researchers to look at the various ways that race and gender interact. Jones and McEwen (2000), Jones (1997), and Reynolds and Pope (1991) are among the first generation of scholars to address this issue deliberately.

Jones (1997) conducted a study which specifically examined the multiple dimensions of identity development in women college students. She found that the multicultural group of women she interviewed dealt with many issues previously unaddressed in the literature on women’s development (Jones, 1997). Among those issues were (1) the multiple ways in which race mattered; (2) the multiple layers of identity; and (3) the braiding of gender identity with other dimensions of self (Jones, 1997). Moreover, the more dimensions of identity that the women perceived, the more complex became their negotiations between inside (personal) and outside (societal) worlds. The ability to self-define one’s identity was critical as these women sought ways to live peacefully with multiple dimensions of identity (Jones, 1997).

Jones and McEwen (2000) extended the findings discussed by Jones (1997) and developed a conceptual model of multiple dimensions of identity. The conceptually driven model allows for the “portrayal of intersections or interactions among identity
development dimensions or between multiple identities not seen in other models” (Jones & McEwen, 2000, p.406). Theoretically, the model attends to the myriad ways that personal self-definitions and differing contexts dynamically interact with the development of socially constructed identities (Jones & McEwen, 2000). Significantly, the model demonstrates that it is possible to live “comfortably with multiple identities” (Jones & McEwen, 2000, p. 408). The authors found that the respondents spoke of having a core identity, defined as “valued personal attributes and characteristics,” that was more authentic and complex than the socially constructed, or “outside” identities (Jones & McEwen, 2000, pp. 408-409). This finding can be interpreted as assuming that the meaning of socially constructed identities, such as race, gender, or class, are often externally defined in inauthentic ways and the locus of control remains external to the individual. Neither the possible distinction between communal meanings and societal meanings, nor the ways in which personal or core identities may also rely on external definitions are addressed. However, such an extreme assessment is not warranted by the data (S. R. Jones, personal communication, July 2001).

Reynolds and Pope (1991) explore identity development for individuals possessing what they term as “multiple oppressed identities,” such as a female person of color who is also lesbian. Basing their analysis in the Afrocentric world view as articulated by Myers (1993), they assert that to be oppressed is to be socialized into a world view that is suboptimal and leads to a fragmented sense of self, which makes it difficult for people to embrace all of who they are (Reynolds & Pope, 1991). Reynolds
and Pope (1991) propose the Multidimensional Identity Model, which is based on Root's (1990) work on biracial identity development, to describe the process of facing "internal conflict over a core sense of definition of self" (p. 178). This non-hierarchical, non-evaluative model has four patterns of identity resolution: (1) identification with only one aspect of self that is assigned by society; (2) identification with only one aspect of self that is consciously chosen by the individual; (3) identification with multiple aspects of the self in a segmented fashion; and (4) identification with combined aspects of self (Reynolds & Pope, 1991, p. 179).

Although this model is primarily concerned with patterns of negotiation of oppressed identities and not sociocultural identities in general (Jones and McEwen, 2000), the concept to be employed in this study, identity integration or wholeness, is described by the last pattern of multiple identity resolution, termed identity intersection by Reynolds and Pope (1991).

This small subset in the literature most clearly argues for and demonstrates the utility of a framework that is built upon the assumption that identity integration and wholeness represents a valuable ideal, that is desired by African American students themselves. As Goodman (1990) wrote, "The interaction and intersection of gender, race, and class clearly impact the opportunity for self-development and needs further study" (p. 12).

**Wholeness in Other Disciplines**

Literature in cultural psychology, theology, and educational anthropology also clearly articulate the conceptualization of wholeness at work in this study, similar to
that defined by Reynolds and Pope (1991) as identity intersection. Although this departs from the student development literature, cross-disciplinary theorizing is valuable and particularly useful when examining the African American experience, which itself is cross-disciplinary.

**Cultural Psychology**

Within the last ten years, cultural psychology has emerged with a specific focus on multicultural counseling and research into multicultural identity development. Moreover, certain researchers and counselors in this field have sought to integrate a more optimal perspective into the development of theories of development to counteract the fragmented and suboptimal worldview represented in much of the developmental theories reviewed above.

Speight, Myers, Cox, and Highlen (1991) suggest a redefinition of multicultural counseling that sees the diversity of individuals as an asset instead of as a deficit, or as a problem to be solved. They assert that the alienation of individuals from their spiritual essence results in the externalization of self-worth and consequently such external realities as skin color, class, sex, education, and ethnicity all become significant factors in the definition of individual identities (Speight et al., 1991). However, in an optimal conceptual system, cultural specificity is only one aspect that influences individuals. “Individual uniqueness” and “human universality” also interact with “cultural specificity” to influence individuals and their self-knowledge (Speight et al.,

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3 A review of the course listings for any institution’s African American Studies department will verify this.
The basic principle of these authors' more optimal redefinition of multiculturalism is that "every person is like all persons, like some persons, and like no other persons" (Speight et al., 1991, p. 32). Hence, an understanding of both commonality and difference is required to gain a full understanding of any individual's life experiences. Neglecting any one of the three influences in an individual, human universality, individual uniqueness, or cultural specificity will likely lead to an incomplete understanding of the individual.

Further, the authors suggest that only in combination, where the three factors combine, can one begin to capture the fullness of individuals (Speight et al., 1991). An exclusive reliance on either human universality or cultural specificity, which are limitations of most current identity development models according to the authors, results in either underestimating or overestimating the impact of culture in individual development (Speight et al., 1991). Human beings are more complex than either of these perspectives alone could hope to illustrate. Lastly, the authors assert that alternative research paradigms which emphasize "description, discovery, and context," such as ethnographic and phenomenological methodologies, are well suited for the theory building and testing made necessary by this optimal multicultural perspective (Speight et al., 1991, p. 35).

Myers, Speight, Highlen, Cox, Reynolds, Adams, and Hanley (1991) discuss identity development as a process of continuous integration and expansion of one's sense of self. They use Optimal Theory (OT) as the foundation for what they suggest is a more inclusive, "pancultural" model of identity development. They critique
current models of racial-ethnic identity development as limited and reflective of a suboptimal worldview and suggest the possibility of a more Optimal framework along the following four dimensions. First, the authors cite that these models espouse a common worldview which means that a unified developmental model across oppressed people is possible. Second, that a universal worldview can be the foundation for such a model and thus applied panculturally. Third, that concurrent assessment of the multiple ways in which human beings experience oppression will yield a more accurate reflection of that individual and their experiences. Finally, the individual and his or her meaning making is a central player in the development of identity. The authors suggest that current models of racial-ethnic identity development have not considered these factors. Moreover, these may be reflective of the particular time periods in which they initially emerged (i.e. the civil rights, women’s, and gay pride movements), rather than a more universal process (Myers et al., 1991).

Fundamental to the optimal identity development process that the authors introduce is an understanding of the presence of conflicting conceptual systems. In this culture, the authors suggest that the maintenance of a positive sense of self, or identity is made increasingly difficult because oppressed peoples are defined as those who allow their power to be externalized and therefore must rely on external validation for their self-worth (Myers et al., 1991). Any self-worth that is achieved under this system is by definition vulnerable and insecure because self-worth in this culture is related to certain criteria determined a priori as making some group of people better than another (Myers et al., 1991). Particularly in this culture, those
criteria are most notably, white skin and male sex characteristics (Myers et al., 1991). Such a material foundation is not sufficient to achieve or maintain a grounded sense of self.

However, self within the optimal conceptual system is seen as multidimensional, extending beyond the individual self and “encompassing the ancestors, those yet unborn, nature, and community” (Myers et al., 1991, p. 56). Moreover, self-worth is assumed to be an intrinsic quality gained as a result of the recognition of one’s self as a unique expression of divine or spiritual energy (Myers et al., 1991). This marriage of the spiritual and the material bring optimal identity development into close harmony with models of spiritual development discussed in the following section (Myers et al., 1991).

According to an optimal model of identity development, “self-knowledge is the process of coming to know who and what we are as the unique expression of infinite spirit” (Myers et al., 1991). Such a knowledge then makes possible the integration of all the material manifestations of being, such as race, gender, class, age, color, and ethnicity, into a whole sense of self (Myers et al., 1991). The resultant identity development model, grounded in research interviews and counseling sessions is identified as Optimal Theory Applied to Identity Development (OTAID). The OTAID describes a seven-phase process that is sequential, but neither linear or categorical. Therefore, individuals may or may not move through all the phases of the model in one lifetime, nor is there a predictable amount of time that an individual may spend in a phase. The OTAID is described instead as an “expanding spiral” in which
the end of the process looks similar to the beginning. At the beginning, Phase 0, Absence of Conscious Awareness, individuals experience themselves as connected to all life but are lacking in self-knowledge. At the end of the process, Phase 6, Transformation, through self-knowledge, individuals again become aware of their connection to the universe and all life. The other phases in the OTAID model are Phase 1, Individuation; Phase 2, Dissonance; Phase 3, Immersion; Phase 4, Internalization; and Phase 5, Integration (Myers et al., 1991). Through each phase, the individual comes to know him or herself in a fuller more complete way and begins to understand that individual identities as raced, gendered, classed, or aged are actually interrelated and interdependent (Myers et al., 1991). Moreover, the intervention of the surrounding suboptimal culture provides opportunities for the individual to continually redefine and expand his or her self-knowledge (Speight et al., 1991). Gradually, the individual comes to appreciate him or herself and others as integrated wholes and unique expressions of infinite spirit.

**Theology and Faith Development**

One of the propositions of spirituality and faith is an understanding of the self and nature as inherently whole. As Joy James (1993) writes, “Spirit is inseparable from the mundane or secular and bridges artificially and socially constructed dichotomies” (p. 35). The foundation of spirituality, then, is to deconstruct the fragmentation we have created in our lives. Wholeness and identity integration are not only consistent with faith spirituality, but are the core of it.
James Fowler (1981) has done extensive research on the development of faith through the life cycle. His conclusions are based on conversational interviews with 359 people between 1972 and 1981 by Fowler and his research associates (Fowler, 1981). Fowler (1981) describes the characteristics of the sample as “overwhelmingly White, largely Christian, evenly divided by sex and distributed throughout the age categories” (Fowler, 1981, p. 317). From this data, Fowler (1981) develops a theory of growth in faith, which he describes as seven, stage-like, developmentally related styles of faith.

Fowler (1981) grounds his theory of faith development in an understanding of faith that is not necessarily intuitive and the key points of his discussion are highlighted here. Fowler’s understanding of the meaning of faith originates in the original meanings of that word in the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin languages, and the theological arguments of Paul Tillich and H. Richard Niebuhr. He describes faith as our ultimate support when the other things we depend on in our lives collapse around us (Fowler, 1981). Faith is deeper and more personal than religion, but is “awakened and nurtured” by the traditions of religion (Fowler, 1981, p. 10). Faith enables you to find meaning in the world and in one’s life and is about making a commitment to what is known and living in a way that is informed by that commitment (Fowler, 1981). Moreover, Fowler (1981) describes faith as shaping who we are and how we see ourselves.

It is from this last point that Fowler (1981) moves on to introduce the deep interconnections between faith and identity. He begins with acknowledging that each
of us has many “triads” or centers of value and meaning, which operate in our lives and shape how we see ourselves. He says that we live our lives in “dynamic fields of forces,” in which we are pulled upon from many different directions and we are faced with the challenge of making meaning of our lives by composing some kind of “order, unity, and coherence in the force fields of our lives” (Fowler, 1981, p. 24). Fowler (1981) describes three ways in which faith and identity integrate the many triads to which we belong. First, there are our “many selves,” student, parent, employee, which adapt and reshape as we move among roles, relationships, or social contexts. Secondly, there is among these many selves a “master identity” that is correlated with a dominant center of value and power and which overshadows our other roles, relationships, and contexts making them non-consequential in our identity and faith. Third, Fowler (1981) claims that through faith in an infinite source and center (some might call this God), we can relate our many selves in ways that are flexible and integrative enough to unify these multiple identities in the various roles, relationships, and contexts we have.

These layers of relationship between faith and identity inform a typology of faith-identity patterns that were initially conceived by Niebuhr. These faith-identity patterns are clearly progressive and hierarchical, which is consistent with other developmental theories (Weidman, 1991). The first faith-identity pattern is labeled polytheism. Polytheism is expressed in two ways, either as diffused or as protean. An individual exhibiting diffused polytheism would have commitments to many value-centers without an extensive commitment to any particular one of them. On the other hand, if an individual displays protean polytheism, then he or she would have
intense commitments to value-centers that are highly transient and shifting. The second pattern is *henotheism*. Henotheism comes from the Greek word for ‘one god’ and refers to an individual who has an inappropriate focus on a single value-center, such as one’s career. This individual may also be said to be “losing oneself” in a transcendingly important, if limited cause, like social activism. The third pattern is called *radical monotheism*. The individual displaying a radically monotheistic faith-identity has a loyalty to an infinite source and center of all value and power, and prioritizes less universal centers of value beneath this. The parochial communities this individual belongs to (school, family, career) are not revered or served as idols as in henotheism, nor do they temporarily take priority over each other as in polytheism (Fowler, 1981). Fowler (1981) asserts that radical monotheism is rarely consistently actualized in lived experience. These faith-identity patterns allow particular insight into the integration of race, class, and gender identities for Black students and will be analyzed through the data in greater detail in Chapter Four.

Sharon Daloz Parks (2000) builds from the framework laid by James Fowler (1981) and other cognitive-structural developmental theorists to discuss faith as a way of making meaning for young adults. Parks (2000) also highlights the important ways that different social contexts, such as higher education, can influence and “mentor” that development for young adults. Her conclusions are drawn from thirty years of teaching, counseling, and research with young adults in college, university, and professional school environments and from research interviews done in various colleges and universities. Parks (2000), similar to Fowler (1981) understands faith as
more transcendent than religion or spirituality, faith is the primary meaning making activity that all human beings share. Parallel to Fowler (1981), Parks (2000) defines faith as the “capacity and demand for meaning,” the self-conscious discovery of what is ultimately true and dependable in life (p. 6). The need to make sense out of life is the paramount task of the young adult years, defined as ages 17 to 30 (Parks, 2000, p. 7). Going beyond Fowler, Parks (2000) argues for the significance of what she calls “mentoring environments” in the formation of all commitments. Wholeness again comes up as part of the terrain of faith in Parks (2000).

Meaning-making is the activity of composing a sense of the connections among things: a sense of pattern, order, form, and significance. To be human is to seek coherence and correspondence.... To be human is to desire relationship among the disparate elements of existence (Parks, 2000, p. 19).

Parks (2000) also theorizes the interrelationship between faith and identity commitments through the lens provided by Niebuhr’s faith-identity patterns. However, Parks’ conceptualizes the typology in a slightly differently manner than Fowler (1981) and in a way that is particularly useful for my study of race, gender, and class identity integration. Polytheists are described as an assortment of isolated wholes that lack either coherence or correspondence. Henotheists orient their lives around a center of meaning that is insufficient to deal with life’s changes and challenges. Finally, radical monotheists possess a sensibility of life that points beyond themselves but also permeates and undergirds them (Parks, 2000).
Again consistent with Fowler (1981), Parks (2000) describes faith as something that people do, not merely as a possession. Faith determines action: People act in ways that are consistent with how they make meaning (Parks, 2000). Finally, part of the meaning-making task is “to become at home in the universe,” to be at home within one’s self, place, and community in such a way that you know that you belong and that you can be who you are (Parks, 2000). Parks (2000) describes the significance of this as synonymous with feeling “whole and centered in a way that yields a sense of power and participation” (p. 34).

Parker J. Palmer (1993) writing on the role of spirituality in education to transform schools into communities of love, describes the situation that students face in the classroom. “...[S]ince education takes the world ... breaking it into fragments called ‘disciplines’ with little attempt at unity, we finally understand ourselves as having no more coherence [i.e. wholeness] than the fragmented world itself” (Palmer, 1993, p. 13). Again, the environment is seen as an influential player in the development of whole and integrated identities. We naturally reflect that which surrounds us and to resist the environmental press is an arduous and stressful task.

Love and Talbot's (1997) discussion of spirituality was briefly introduced in Chapter One. The authors list five propositions of spiritual development, three of which will be discussed here as they relate to the concept of identity integration (Love & Talbot, 1997).

Proposition 1: Spiritual development involves an internal process of seeking personal authenticity, genuineness, and wholeness as an aspect of identity development.
(Love & Talbot, 1997, p. 364). This first proposition most clearly refers to a psychosocial or "internal" development of identity. The three components of authenticity, genuineness, and wholeness are related and connected to each other (Love & Talbot, 1997). Developing an understanding of oneself as internally unified and integrated is a key component of being fully genuine and authentic with oneself and others (Love & Talbot, 1997). These are spiritual and ethical values that need to be considered when investigating selfhood identity development.

Proposition 2: Spiritual development involves the process of continually transcending one's current locus of centrivity (Love & Talbot, 1997, p. 365). This essentially means moving from external definitions of self to internal ones (see also Baxter Magolda, 1999), and then finally moving to divine definitions of self (see also Vanzant, 1996). As discussed by Hughes (1987), possessing an internal locus of control was related to having a clearer sense of self-concept in African American women. The ability to self-define and judge the validity of that self-definition is critical for the development of an identity that is impervious to external criticism and hostility. As Jones (1997) found, self-definition was a critical step in moving away from confining and fragmenting notions of the self toward self-concepts that were authentic and liberating. Due to the fragmenting nature of education and society (Palmer, 1993), the absence of an internal locus of control capable of resistance would inhibit the development of an integrated or wholistic identity.

Proposition 3: Spiritual development involves developing a greater connectedness to self and others through relationships and union with community
(Love & Talbot, 1997, p. 365). This is ideologically synonymous with the Afrocentric ethos expressed by Nobles (1980) and used by McEwen, Roper, Bryant, and Langa (1990). As Nobles (1980) asserts, an individual cannot know herself outside of community. As indicated in the second proposition, this does not mean that the community imposes its definition on the individual, but rather it is through our relationships with others that our essential nature is reflected back to us (Love & Talbot, 1997; Vanzant, 1996). Identity integration and wholeness value connectivity as a reflection of a spiritual understanding of ontology and epistemology that reflects diunital logic, which seeks the ‘both-and’ instead of the ‘either-or.’ Interconnection within the myriad forms of self identity encourages connection with the myriad forms of humanity. The value of connection as a factor in identity development has been a landmark finding in women’s development theories, as discussed earlier in this chapter (Belenky, et al, 1986; Gilligan, 1977; and Josselson, 1987).

The last two propositions involve deriving purpose and direction in one’s life and openness to exploring a relationship with divinity (Love & Talbot, 1997, pp. 366-367). The attainment of these two developmental facets influences and is influenced by the development of identity integration. An integrated identity effaces contradictions inherent in modern discourse about social justice concerns and comprehending the unity of a Godforce is difficult if an individual has not comprehended the unity within him or herself. The authors pose an important question for researchers of student development when they ask, “Can a student reach a higher level of cognitive, moral, or psychosocial development without having developed somewhat spiritually?” (Love &
Talbot, 1997, p. 372). As both Goodman (1990) and Hughes (1987) found in their studies of African American college students, levels of spiritual development indeed were important factors in the development of maturity in these students.

In womanist theological literature, theologian Karen Baker-Fletcher (1998) has written about the nature of God and creation from a womanist standpoint. She conceptualized God as both male and female and yet neither, defying the common and traditional Western image of God as Father and the ultimate male (Baker-Fletcher, 1998). Later, she spoke of the deep interconnection with nature and humanity that African women particularly have felt through their traditional work with the land as gardeners and farmers and through childbirth and childrearing (Baker-Fletcher, 1998). Baker-Fletcher defined spirituality and the universe in ways akin to Joy James (1993), above. Speaking directly about self-identity, Baker-Fletcher wrote that humans are both nature and spirit; that body and mind and spirit “are integrated and interconnected deeply and densely within each other like the molecules of a rock” (1998, p. 62). Though not intending to refer to the intersections of sociocultural identities, the two ideas are continuous and consistent. For instance, I cannot know my blackness outside of my womanhood; I cannot know my womanhood outside of my education; and I cannot know my education outside of my blackness. They, too, are deeply and densely integrated and interconnected. Further, as stated in the introduction, identity integration and wholeness is about allowing the differing sociocultural facets within one’s identity to speak to, with, and across each other in internal and external transformative dialogue.
This moves the discussion to Emily Townes (1995). Another womanist theologian, Townes' (1995) work emphasizes the social justice focus of spirituality, and womanist spirituality in particular. She writes, "Womanist spirituality moves to wholeness out of a concern for all the intersections of identity and an intolerance for injustice" (Townes, 1995, p. 87). Womanism, emerging out of and parallel to black feminism, is attuned to the intersections of identity, because African American women are inherently faced with the oppressions and joys of being both black and female in this world. Therefore, an intolerance for all forms of injustice, particularly that of race, gender, and class oppression are common amongst many African American women, many of whom experience all three (Cole, 1995).

Despite the differing points of origin into the discussion of faith, spirituality, and meaning making, it is significant to note that all these scholars agree that issues of faith and spirituality are ultimately issues that involve seeking coherence and wholeness among the myriad identities, responsibilities, and relationships that all human beings possess. In this literature, identity integration or wholeness is supported as a spiritual concept that is related to faith and the commitments that are made to certain roles, relationships and concepts, and which is deeply relevant to development of young adults.

**Educational Anthropology**

Educational anthropology also has addressed the concept of multifaceted identities. Levinson and Holland (1996), attempting to see beyond the social reproduction theory reflected in Paul Willis (1981) and John Ogbu (1987), identify
three questions left unanswered by the current set of theories in educational anthropology. It is their last question that addresses multiple sociocultural identity awareness and integration. They ask, “How are these different social systems [race and gender] interrelated to one another and to class?” (Levinson & Holland, 1996, p. 10). This question illustrates the need for empirical research to help researchers and practitioners understand how race, gender, and class might interact in symbiotic dialogue to produce a qualitatively distinct sociocultural manifestation individually, collectively, and institutionally.

At the heart of anthropology is an understanding of a plural self. Introduced in Chapter One, Wolcott (1994) employs the concept of a “culture pool” to illustrate this understanding. He explains, “The idea of culture pool acknowledges the competence of normally functioning humans capable of effective participation in multiple systems but ordinarily required, expected, and allowed to demonstrate only a tiny portion of that range of capabilities in any particular setting” (Wolcott, 1994, p. 1726). This is an effective description of the environmental press of the typical college or university as discussed by McEwen, Roper, Bryant, and Langa (1990), Parham (1989), Hughes (1987), and Gibbs (1974). The first part of his sentence indicates that each of us possesses multiple sociocultural identities that interlock in ways that constitute a qualitatively different experience or unique cultural manifestation. However, as indicated in the second half of Wolcott’s statement, most of our social institutions do not “require, expect, or allow” us to live and move within the intersections of our identities (1994). Rather, as is the case with schools, certain aspects of the self are
“attacked” (Luttrell, 1996) or we are led to “self-censor” (Levinson & Holland, 1996) those aspects of self deemed inappropriate for a given social or cultural setting or aspiration.

Eisenhart (1995) expands Wolcott’s inquiry (1994) and asks, “What leads an individual to pursue some identities and abandon or ignore others?” (p. 5). She is seeking to understand how people construct their “images of self out of the cultural models and socialization processes to which they are exposed” (Eisenhart, 1995, p. 5). This question becomes even more critical for individuals and young people, particularly, who interact in competing and/or opposing cultural models and socialization systems. To enact success, meaning exiting the university with both a degree and a healthy sense of self, African American students at predominantly white colleges and universities must construct images of self which allow them to negotiate both home, school, and self in a way that leaves them physically intact and capable of achievement, not just survival, and not just on an academic level.

A foundation in the development of multiple sociocultural identity awareness and integration is the realization of the self as inherently multiple and interdependent. For instance, “my emphasis is on the doubleness and paradox of psychic life – the built-in tension between self-assertion and recognition such that ‘in the very moment of realizing our own independence, we are dependent upon another to recognize it’” (Luttrell, 1996, p. 95). Although she is not specifically writing about multiple sociocultural identities in the same way, her central point regarding the relational or independent nature of identity formation and expression is still relevant. Internalized
understandings of the self as multifaceted must join with community environments which also privilege and validate that understanding of the self, in order to give those internal understandings utility, mobility, and expressive function. This is where the role of educational institutions as co-participants in the creation of cultural products, known as multifaceted, integrated students, becomes critical.

The literature in educational anthropology reveals that multiple sociocultural identity integration is also a psychocultural process. Further, it is a natural cultural byproduct and consequence of living in a society, which has multiple sociocultural identity referents.

Addressing the Void

Brown-Collins and Sussewell (1986), Goodman (1990), Jones (1997), Jonaes and McEwen (2000), and McEwen, Roper, Bryant, and Langa (1990) push for more research in the area of multiple sociocultural identities in college students, particularly those who are African American. This study is attempting to meet that challenge by merging many of the concepts in the literature reviewed above into a cohesive and unitary framework that describes and begins to theorize the process of multiple sociocultural identity awareness and integration in Black college students. However, this study alone is not enough. Exploration into the awareness and integration of multiple sociocultural identity facets among different minority populations of students at PWIs should also be conducted. Patterns of identity integration should be compared and contrasted between students at PWIs and institutions which serve specific ethnic populations, such as historically Black colleges and universities.
Moreover, patterns of multiple sociocultural identity awareness and integration should be explored among administrators and faculty. Such data would be useful in assessing the environmental press for sociocultural identity integration and wholeness on a particular campus. Longitudinal studies would also be useful to delve more deeply into how development in this area cycles and recycles during the life cycle (Parham, 1989). As Beverly Daniel Tatum (1997) writes, "The salience of particular aspects of our identity [race, class, or gender] varies at different moments in our lives. The process of integrating the component parts of our self-definition is indeed a lifelong journey" (p. 20). Empirical research into the lived experiences of students, faculty, and administrators with sociocultural identity integration and awareness should be a lifelong journey as well.

Lived Testimony

I would like to conclude this review of the literature with two passages which breathe life into the concept of sociocultural identity integration and wholeness used in this study.

The axes of the subject’s identifications and experiences are multiple, because locations in gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality complicate one another, and not merely additively ... Nor do different vectors of identification and experience overlap neatly and entirely (Smith & Watson, 1992, p. xiv).

In other words, it is not enough to merely discuss racial identity formation, or gender identity formation, or class identity formation. It is profoundly necessary to look at the ways in which these "vectors of identification" interact with each other and
complicate each other. Race takes on a different form when interrogated by gender and class status. This is equally true for gender and class when they are interrogated by the other two factors. Moreover, because the world is not simply about black and white, male and female, or rich and poor, identities of sexuality, age, and geography also complicate the task of forming an integrated social and cultural identity. "Who am I?" is a multi-layered question, the depth and complexity of which lies in the intersections between identity facets and in how one facet may take ascendancy over the others given relationships, roles, or environmental contexts.

The second quote is from Audre Lorde (1990). I have quoted her at length here, because her words give embodied testimony to the phenomenon under investigation in this study:

I find that I am constantly being encouraged to pluck out some one aspect of myself [such as race, gender, or class] and present this as the meaningful whole, eclipsing or denying the other parts of myself. But this is a destructive and fragmenting way to live. My fullest concentration of energy is available to me only when I integrate all the parts of who I am, openly, allowing power from particular sources of my living to flow back and forth freely through all my different selves, without the restrictions of externally imposed definition. Only then can I bring myself and my energies as a whole to the service of those struggles which I embrace as part of my living" (Lorde, 1990, p. 286).

These words give voice to the struggles of unknown numbers of Black students in predominantly white colleges and universities across the country. The fact that their
numbers and personal experiences are unknown makes studies like the one here valid
and necessary. Pursuing a bachelor’s degree should not have to be a “destructive and
fragmenting experience,” but it often is (Levinson & Holland, 1996). As researchers
and developmental theorists, we can only maintain our relevance by addressing the
intersections of identity, as well as their singular manifestations. As professionals
working with students, we cannot help them to mature and effectively hone the
“fullest concentration” of their energies until we understand their unconscious drive
toward the awareness and integration of their multiple sociocultural identities
(Goodman, 1990; Jones & McEwen, 2000; Parks, 2000; Myers et al., 1991; Wolcott,
1994). For educational social justice, we need to encourage and implement conditions
which promote wholeness, and not fragmentation (hooks, 1993; Townes, 1995). In
order to do that, however, we need to understand how this concept moves in the lives
of these students through empirical investigation.

Therefore in this study, I have used a multifaceted theoretical frame to analyze
and interpret the data that I collected through my interviews with the participants. I
believe that the spirituality and faith interpretive lens offered by Fowler (1981) and
Parks (2000), the intersectionality typology suggested by Reynolds and Pope (1991),
and optimal theory developed by Myers and her colleagues (1991) are the most useful
illuminating analyses and interpretations of the data I present in Chapter Four.
However, they are not the only applicable interpretive frames.

Moreover, I have deliberately chosen not to single out any one of these three
particular interpretive frames. Rather I have incorporated each of these perspectives
and constructed an interpretive prism to analyze my data. Through this prism, I feel that the weaknesses and gaps of each of these frames are complemented by the strengths in each of the others. Also, such a multifaceted view permits a more creative and inspired approach to the data, revealing more implications for future theoretical work.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology

Deep and thorough investigation of issues of sociocultural identity and sociocultural identity consciousness are best achieved through the rigors of naturalistic inquiry, therefore a qualitative research design was used (Lincoln & Guba, 1988). Qualitative inquiry’s focus on eliciting stories (Hollway & Jefferson, 1997) and the creation of a “vital text” (Denzin, 1994), through which the voices of the participants are given center stage promotes the possibility of a more authentic rendering of lived experience. However, researchers using currently available qualitative methods and methodologies construct the why of what is in such a way that dominant modes of knowledge production and interpretation are actually silently preserved (Stanfield, 1994). I have introduced whole-sighted archetypal portraiture, developed by Linda James Myers, as an ‘indigenous paradigm that is rooted in the experiences of people of color” (Stanfield, 1994) and centers those constructed understandings as valid frameworks for the analysis and interpretation of those constructions.

As Myers (1993) explains, the Optimal Theory (hereafter OT) paradigm is Afrocentric because it is based on the values, beliefs, and practices of African people.
These traditions are shared by Asian and Native American peoples, however, they have their longest practice on the continent of Africa (Bynum, 1999). Labeling the cosmology as African is not intended to suggest homogeneity of specific practices and traditions across Diasporic and continental Africa, but rather it recognizes the prevalence of certain common themes in how African people have theorized about the world (Bynum, 1999; Nobles, 1980). Generally, this is a cosmology that values harmony, interconnectedness, and relationships between humans, the earth, and the universe. If one values these aims, then such a conceptual system can be termed as Optimal (Myers, 1993).

There are four key assumptions that characterize and distinguish an Optimal conceptualization: ontology, epistemology, the nature of logic, and the nature of identity. The nature of reality or ontology in an Optimal conceptual system is both spiritual and material. There is no contradiction suggested or imposed and it is perceived that one aspect influences and reflects the other. This combination of knowing and perceiving reality through both what can be sensed and what cannot be sensed, liberates notions of theorizing and knowledge production. It allows one to discern the operation of overarching systems of power – such as racism, sexism, and classism – and their impact on people’s lives through intangible evidences, such as daily interactions and norms of behavior which are typically not readily apparent in everyday life.

The epistemology, which informs OT is a self-knowledge episteme mediated by relationships with others (Myers, 1993). As Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) writes, “The
self ... is only experienced through connection and the I-thou relationship – of attention, empathy, trust, and intimacy – [and] can only be achieved when people come to it as separate and whole individuals” (p. 135). In other words, through knowing oneself intimately, knowledge of the universe is attainable. This self-knowledge is manifested both spiritually and materially, in that the symbols we use to interpret our reality and the personalities we have developed interplay to construct how we see ourselves, others, and our experiences. As researchers, knowing how this “symbolic imagery and rhythm” (Myers, 1993, p. 99) manifest in ourselves as we navigate our lived experience can open our eyes to similar and different manifestations in others.

Logic or reason is assumed to be diunital or a union of opposites (Myers, 1993). This view of logic subsumes an ability to handle abstraction, which is also a cognitive development that can be nurtured from birth. Such a perspective allows a researcher to look at a subject’s story and see not good from bad, but rather patterns and processes of growth toward a more Optimal ideal (L. J. Myers, personal communication, October 5, 2000).

Finally, identity is assumed to be an extension of the individual and is multidimensional (Myers, 1993; Nobles, 1980). Who one is, that individual identity, is shaped by and in community (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; James, 1993). The relationship is symbiotic, as reflected in the African proverb, “I am because we are, we are because I am” (Myers, 1993). Therefore, there is no manifestation of self outside of the context of culture (L. J. Myers, personal communication, October 5, 2000).
Extending this to my study, who one is cannot be reduced to the solitary influence of a single variable. I am not just raced, or just gendered, but I am both those and then some, as Lorde (1990) illustrated in her testimonial regarding the external pressures she experiences to “pluck out some one aspect” of her identity (see Chapter Two). Therefore, in order to hear my story, one must consider all these factors and how the social order has constructed their meanings, which in turn has informed how I may or may not see myself. Full consideration of multidimensionality also means recognizing the multiple communities to which individuals can belong. These multiple allegiances also can impact a person’s understanding of their experiences (Parks, 2000; Reynolds & Pope, 1991).

Whole-sighted archetypal portraiture can be described as a snapshot that is developed by both subject and researcher. This snapshot is inevitably only a partial view of the individual, like a tissue biopsy of a complex organism. It is a place to voice and express the intuitive sociocultural realities of both researcher and subject, while making evident the ways these lived realities interact to influence how the subject tells the story, how the researcher hears the story, as well as the narrative of the story. Authenticity and relevance are achieved through the full expression of our voices (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; Myers, 1993). An in-depth authentic understanding of the particular is the key to understanding the general (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; Myers, 1993; Stake, 1994). My primary role as researcher is to approach the subject with my heart and mind in tact, aware of my own multipliantious identity and how it came to be formed.
I am seeking the emic perspective (Pelto & Pelto, 1978) of the lived realities of race, class, and gender and the ways in which they intersect and interconnect in the eyes of the local actors – the students. The generalizations provided within an etic perspective would violate the desire and the necessity I feel to name, witness, and give testimony, letting it be known that we are here and need to be counted (Dillard, Tyson, & Abdur-Rashid, 2000; Giovanni, 1995; Lee, 1996). Recognizing the socially constructed nature of validity (Kvale, 1995) I am seeking pragmatic validity, where the effectiveness of our knowledge beliefs is demonstrated by the effectiveness of our action and the validity that comes from the recognition of mutually shared experiences by actors, researchers, and audience (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). The challenge of constructing the narrative is to tell the story as it may become through different and divergent analytical lenses – to conduct research as a means of transforming culture. Such a measure of validity is judged by the worth of the research to inform and transform practice – thereby becoming theory reflective of a “living thinker” (James, 1993; Kvale, 1995). Lastly, I strive for authenticity as verified by the students themselves, in which these Black college students recognize their own voices in the dialogue and connect with the portrait that I have drawn (Lawrence-Lightfoot 1994; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

Such an investment requires that I as the researcher become fully cognizant of my researcher self and consciously consider how I enter the research (Fine & Weis, 1996; Roberts & McGinty, 1995). Through my own college experience and subsequent development (see Chapter One), I have come to a “floating sense of race,
one that is always braided with gender, class, biography, and generation" (Fine & Weis, 1996). I assert the multiple sociocultural identities that I myself possess and how they have and continue to intersect and interconnect as they inform and construct my meaning making (Parks, 2000; Peterson, 1998). In this way, I see myself as "working the hyphen" (Fine, 1994) between researcher and subject, insider and outsider. As an undergraduate, I was a Black student on a predominantly White campus. Therefore, as I endeavor to study and name lived realities and reflections about wholeness from current Black college students, I am studying and reflecting on my own development as well (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). As Reason (1994) states, "research is always personal, political, and spiritual" (p. 324). I believe that such reflexivity will only add to the depth and quality of my analysis, keeping me honest and avoiding the stultifying and dehumanizing effects which can come with holding too close to traditional ways of conducting and writing research (Dillard, Tyson, & Abdur-Rashid, 2000; deAnn Matthews, 1997).

The hybrid methodology employed in this study marries the dual nature of both spiritual and material realities (Myers, 1993) and reflects a concern with the multiple venues through which psychosocial and psychocultural development can be expressed. The multiple ways in which portraiture describes the operation of the researcher's voice in a study are brought to bear. Specifically, the following research questions and design use the self-knowledge episteme of whole-sighted archetypal portraiture which has parallels to phenomenology, participative inquiry, and portraiture. This design is phenomenological because through eliciting the
participants' stories through interview and using them as the basis for analysis, the validity of experience as empirical data and analytical tool is emphasized. The values of participative inquiry are enunciated in the thorough participation of the students in parts of the analysis, as well as in using their comments as the basis for the theoretical and practice implications that are presented in Chapter Five. Portraiture heavily influences the interpretations and presentations of the data in Chapter Four, as well as my researcher reflexivity. Therefore, this methodology is better equipped to frame an investigation of multifaceted sociocultural identity integration in Black college students on a predominantly White campus.

In this chapter, I present again the definitions of critical terms in the study introduced in Chapter One, lay out the research questions which guide the study, and outline the research design and data analysis. Then, limitations of this study and possible critiques are discussed. This chapter ends with a profile of the institution which the participants attended and demographic descriptions of the participant group.

Definition of Terms

As introduced in Chapter One, the following terms will be used throughout this study:

- *Sociocultural* identities is used to refer to *bio-social constructions* of identity, which are ascribed to an individual from birth or family circumstance.
• *Psychosocial identity* is a term used commonly to imply the interconnection between societal (external) and personal (internal) understandings and knowledges of the self (Erickson, 1968).

• *Psychocultural identity* also will be used in juxtaposition and interchangeably with psychosocial identity to emphasize the culturally informed nature of both societal and individual understandings and knowledges of the self (Stanfield, 1994).

• *Optimal theory* refers to a way of thought, knowledge, and action which seeks balance and complementarity, where there has been imbalance and fragmentation (Myers, 1993).

• *Suboptimal* refers to a way of thought, knowledge, and action that privileges discord and fragmentation.

• *Identity integration, identity intersection, and wholeness* represent three interchangeable terms for describing self-knowledges and identity patterns which belie interdependence and interconnection.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to investigate how race, gender, and class identities intersected and interacted to inform the self-identities of upperclass Black students on a predominantly White campus and to begin to theorize the process of identity integration. The research questions guiding this study follow:

1. In what ways do these Black college students at this PWI perceive themselves as having multiple sociocultural identities (Fowler, 1981; Wolcott, 1994)?
2. How do these Black college students at this PWI choose which sociocultural identities to embrace and which others to ignore or abandon (Eisenhart, 1995; Fowler, 1981; Parks, 2000)?

3. How do the intersections of race, gender, class background, and class attainment inform the lived realities and self-knowledges of these Black college students at this PWI (Fowler, 1981; Goodman, 1990; Jones, 1997; Parks, 2000)?

2. What factors mediate the articulation of an integrated sociocultural identity in terms of race, class, and gender at this PWI for these Black students (Jones & McEwen, 2000; Parks, 2000)?

3. In what ways does spirituality impact the perception of multiple sociocultural identities and the development of an integrated and whole sense of self for these Black students (Baker-Fletcher, 1998; Fowler, 1981; Love & Talbot, 1999)?

Research Design

In keeping with the rationale and goals of qualitative research, this research design was both flexible and emergent (Patton, 1990). It allowed for the study to be responsive to unforeseen challenges encountered in context, as well as to data which would call for a change in data collection techniques or direction of the research itself. Therefore, what appear here as methodological rules should actually be taken as purposeful strategies, rife with ambiguities (Patton, 1990). This ambiguity, though, serves the purpose of making it possible to get rich data given the limitations of time, expense, and the purpose of the study.
Relatedly, the focus of this study is on achieving depth of analysis instead of breadth. Since this study is seeking to investigate a psychosocial and psychocultural phenomenon that has received little empirical attention, it is more important at this juncture to understand in as much detail as possible a narrow field of variation than it is to show the many patterns that identity integration may exhibit given variations in institutional context, student achievement, and other sociocultural identity markers. Further, as Susan Chase (forthcoming) discusses relative to narrative analysis, we learn about the kinds of narratives that are possible for certain groups of people by analyzing specific narratives from individuals. Moreover, general social processes are not fully apparent a priori, rather we come to know the general through its specific embodiments in the lived experiences of individuals (Chase, forthcoming).

The individual student was the subject or focus of this study. The study dealt with how a group of individual students negotiated and integrated multiple sociocultural identities in their self-images and meaning making.

**Sampling**

The students selected for this study were all students at a small, selective, rural college in the Midwestern United States, classified as a baccalaureate - liberal arts college in the most recent Carnegie Foundation classification (Chronicle Almanac, 2000). A profile of the institution (Rosse College) is given later in this chapter. I believed that narrowing my focus to students at one type of institution would afford

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4 Rosse College is a pseudonym I have chosen to identify the institution.
me the opportunity for greater in-depth study and understanding of the phenomenon investigated, i.e. identity integration and wholeness. This type of institution was selected because it closely mirrors my own undergraduate institution in which I first recognized this phenomenon. In terms of selectivity, the size of the student body, the relative size of the African American student population, and the racial and ethnic campus climate, this institution closely parallels the conditions I experienced as an undergraduate student. As stated earlier in this chapter, I come to this research with a relevant personal history that informs the nature of this study, as well as its design.

Additionally, Rosse was the forum for my early experience with student affairs administration. As a member of the student affairs staff, I worked closely with other student affairs administrators and numerous faculty. Despite the turnover of a number of key student personnel staff, this previous positive association permitted an easy entrée back into the institution, particularly through my connection to my former support staff assistant and the immediate past Director of Multicultural Affairs. These prior associations made it easier for me to establish rapport with the students and to relate to the experiences of the students in my group. In addition to aiding with rapport, my particular history with the institution made the temptation of presuming inferences upon the students’ stories and experiences a challenging one to resist. I had to force myself to ask the students to explain references that I was sure I understood. However, these checks were important to maintaining the validity of the data and any interpretations, which were drawn from them.
The selection of the student participants used a combination of two purposeful sampling techniques (Patton, 1990). First, I sought to recruit upperclass students, at the junior or senior levels. This decision is supported by the work of Chickering (1993), DeVos (1980), and Perry (1970), which demonstrate that the capacity for critical (self-) reflection is connected to the duration of one’s college experience and general maturity levels (see also Goodman, 1990 and Heath, 1968). Secondly, within this group of junior and senior African American students, maximum variation sampling and intensity sampling was used to select the participants for the study.

Although the focus of this study is on depth not breadth, it remained important to me to attend to variation within the sociocultural identities I was investigating as I selected students for participation in this study. Therefore, maximum variation sampling included Black students in my sample who were both male and female, as well as from both working class and more privileged backgrounds.

The data gathered through this sampling technique “document unique or diverse variations that have emerged in adapting to different conditions and will identify important common patterns that cut across variations” (Patton, 1990, p. 182). Intensity sampling was then employed to narrow this pool of students to those “information-rich” cases, which represented those students most likely to have thoughtfully engaged with issues of sociocultural identities and identity integration and wholeness intensely, but not extremely (Patton, 1990). Based on my own undergraduate experience and a pilot study conducted during the period between January and March 2000, I believed that students who were leaders of organizations or
very active in campus activities would provide the best “information-rich cases” for engagement with issues of race, gender, and class. The sample size of five students sought an open range of experiences among a smaller number of people to achieve the study’s purpose, the investigation of the awareness and integration of multiple sociocultural identities among Black college students (Patton, 1990).

When I began the recruitment of participants for this study, I contacted the college’s Director of Multicultural Affairs and asked for the names of the presidents and vice presidents of the three campus organizations which were focused on cultural and gender issues for African Americans. Recruitment invitations were sent via electronic mail messages and direct phone calls to the students. I initially sent an invitation to participate to the president of the umbrella Black student organization (BSO5) and the Black men’s organization (KNGZ). The Director informed me that the president of the Black women’s organization (QENZ) was not African American, so my invitation first went to the vice president of that group. The BSO president and the QENZ vice president both readily responded and agreed to meet with me to learn more about the study. After several attempts to contact the president of KNGZ, I sent the invitation to their vice president, who agreed to meet with me and eventually agreed to participate in the study as did the two women. The BSO president (Sage6) and KNGZ vice president (Poke) signed the consent form and completed the

5 The acronyms BSO, KNGZ, and QENZ are pseudonyms chosen by the researcher for these student groups. The students had some issues with KNGZ and QENZ, they referred to them as difficult to decipher and possibly reflective of negative interpretation in the case of KNGZ.
6 Sage, Poke, Kashmir, KB, and Ophelia are the pseudonyms chosen by the students to identify themselves at the time they filled out the demographic survey.
demographic survey in my presence. Due to illness, the QENZ vice president, Kashmir, signed the consent form and completed the survey on her own after an extensive phone conversation with me.

With a participant group of three, two women and one man, I wanted to add another upperclass male student to balance the gender representation in the group. I expressed this concern to my institutional contact and he recommended that I contact a Black student, who was a junior and managed the multicultural center on campus. This student (K.B.) agreed to meet with me and agreed to participate in the study. During our introductory meeting, at which K.B. signed the consent form and completed the demographic survey, he highly recommended that I speak with another Black female student, who he asserted would have very relevant and substantive reflections to offer on this topic. I decided to follow through on this recommendation and contacted this fifth student (Ophelia), although she did not meet the initial sampling qualifications for the study. Ophelia was neither an upperclass student (she is a sophomore) nor was she in a leadership position or actively involved in any culturally specific student organization on the campus. However, because of the strong recommendation she received from K.B., who had already demonstrated himself to be highly reflective and engaged with the study, I decided to invite her to participate. She enthusiastically agreed and we set up a time for the introductory meeting. The selection of these last two participants, K.B. and Ophelia, parallels the community nomination selection process used by Gloria Ladson-Billings in her work with successful teachers of African American children (Ladson-Billings, 1994).
Data Collection Procedures

Four semi-structured, multi-staged, individual interviews were used to collect data from the participants. As previously mentioned, a demographic survey was administered to the participants before the interviews were scheduled. The purpose of the survey was not to report findings, but rather to report demographic descriptions of the participant group. Appendix B contains the demographic survey.

The majority of the interviews were audiotaped with the consent of the students and took place in a room in the multicultural center at Rosse College. There were two interviews that were conducted in a vacant staff apartment in one of the residence halls. The interviews took place over a three month period (inclusive of the college's spring vacation) to allow for deeper reflection and ferment of ideas among the participants and myself as researcher, and also to allow time for tape transcription and initial coding of the narratives. The purpose of the first stage of the interview was to get a picture of the life history of each participant, clarifying and expanding upon responses given in the survey. The aim in the second stage of the interview was to procure the students' descriptions of their own identities and to investigate the students' understanding and acknowledgement of their multiple sociocultural identities and progress toward identity integration or wholeness. The third stage of the interview focused on the respondents' self-knowledges of the ways in which race, gender, and class intersected and interconnected in their lives as Black college students on their campus. The last interview centered more specifically around the issues discussed by Parks (2000) of dependancy and feeling at home. The first three stages of
the interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes each and the fourth stage took approximately 20 to 25 minutes. The individual interview protocols can be found in Appendix C.

Confidentiality

Consent to contact students on the campus was obtained first from the Dean of Students and the Director of Multicultural Affairs, who then became my primary institutional contact. Initial written consent for participation in the study was gained from each student during an introductory meeting, at which the study was described. The recruitment script and consent letter are included in Appendix A. As the individual interviews progressed, consent was continually verified and re-established. The actual names of the institution and the student participants have been kept confidential and, as already indicated, pseudonyms have been used to identify both the college and the students in the presentation of the findings and interpretations. The institutional profile was written to be thick enough for the reader to gain a sense of the campus, but not discrete enough for the reader to readily identify the participating college. The student participants were asked to choose a pseudonym that was used to identify all the materials they provided, including the demographic survey, interview tapes, and transcriptions.

Trustworthiness

Both internal and external persons to the study were used to ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the data. First, two administrative members of the campus community and the student participant group reviewed and critiqued the faithfulness
of the representation of the campus as portrayed in the institutional profile that is offered later in this chapter. These administrators were selected for the probability of their varying perspectives: one, a Black man was a new member of the community; the other, a White woman, was a long-time member of the campus student affairs staff. These critiques balanced each other and were also checked by the students' feedback. Elements of these different perspectives augmented my impressions.

Secondly, after the conclusion of the final round of individual interviews, I shared with each student the narrative portrait that I developed for them, which included my analyses of their integrated sociocultural identity development and the factors in their life histories and campus life that may be impacting that development. These narrative portraits are in Chapter Four. The students' feedback and critiques were used to validate my data analysis. It was important that they felt that my representation of them was faithful and consistent with whom they saw themselves to be, while also illuminating for them possibly unrecognized facets of themselves.

Lastly, an inquiry auditor was enlisted to review and critique what could be called the content validity of my analyses and implications also presented in Chapter Four. This person was a professional colleague, who was familiar with the topics under study. Where the auditor felt that my conclusions were not tied closely enough to the data presented, I went back to the interview transcripts and my notes and searched for more data to support my conclusions and implications. If no supporting data was found, the conclusion or implication was withdrawn.
Data Analysis Procedures

In addition to the a priori theories on faith-identity patterns (Fowler, 1981; Parks, 2000) and the typology of identity intersection developed by Reynolds and Pope (1991), two other assumptions were carried into the analysis of the data. The first assumption was that the subjective reality of how one knows oneself is a “discursive accomplishment” (Holstein & Gubrium, 1994) developed in interaction with others, as well as an intuitive one, and exists within the context of the multiple social worlds of which one is a part. This led to the use of well-defined analytic procedures, which combined opportunities for intuitive analytic hunches, such as the impressionistic poems in Chapter Four, with formal searches for convergent patterns, reflected in the theoretical tales told in the same chapter. The second assumption was that I did not presume to find that sociocultural identities (race, gender, class) were generally oppressive, externally imposed, inauthentic, or superficial (Holstein & Gubrium, 1994; Jones, 1997; Jones & McEwen, 2000). Rather, I sought to know what were the cultural resources used by these students to help them interpret their experiences as people consciously living through multiple sociocultural identities. The centering of sociocultural identity development as a valid and potentially desirable psychosocial and psychocultural process stems from this.

The aim in the staged, semi-structured, individual interviews was to elicit stories and narratives from the students (Hollway & Jefferson, 1997; Seidman, 1998). Through inductive reasoning, I endeavored to use the phrasing and words of the students to cross-reference and identify the emergent themes and patterns that were
uncovered. In seeking an emic perspective (Pelto & Pelto, 1978), it is critical to ground my analysis in the voices of the students, so that different and divergent ways of seeing development and wholeness might emerge. When people are allowed to tell their stories, it is amazing to discover how much they know about what is going on (Chase, forthcoming; Hollway & Jefferson, 1997).

Although I entered this study with a priori theoretical frameworks and guiding research questions, I fully expected and welcomed that those frameworks and questions likely would have to be adapted to be relevant for the narratives of the participants. Specifically, the analyses of the individual interview data represent “an iterative and generative process ..., which draws out refrains and patterns and creates a thematic framework for the construction of the narrative” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). After each individual interview in each of the four stages, I sketched notes in which I developed key categories, identified areas needing further elaboration, and began sketching an integrated understanding of the student and theory of identity integration (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

Descriptive, interpretive, and pattern coding was used as I analyzed the interview data along the following five modes of emergent themes used in portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). First, I listened for repetitive refrains that are spoken frequently by the students. Second, I searched for resonant metaphors, which are expressions that reveal the ways the students experience their realities. Third, are the cultural and institutional rituals which express certain themes in the students’ lives. Fourth, I used triangulation to synthesize data converging from the variance of the
students’ lived experiences (see also Patton, 1990). Lastly, in portraiture, themes are constructed to address and account for disconfirming evidence among the data (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

As the researcher, my voice is present throughout the text in multiple ways (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). First, it is present as witness to the patterns and stories that are unfolding from the students and to give initial interpretations of what I am hearing and seeing. Second, as previously acknowledged, my voice is also present through my personal history and preoccupations which have shaped this study from its theoretical focus to its design. Third, my voice is apparent in my selection of which quotes to pull out from the individual interviews as illustrative of the whole narrative. All these voices of the researcher move within the text of the portraitist and are consistent with the methodological goals and values I have expressed (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

Through these in-depth, individual interviews, I am seeking to make implicit knowledges explicit and to transform habit into knowing as these students and myself journey toward our life purpose (Ephirim-Donkor, 1997; hooks, 1993; Parks, 2000). The larger aim here was to create a “vital text” (Denzin, 1994), one that enabled the expression of multiple identities and their intersections and interconnections (Peterson, 1998). Such a text would then be capable of pointing us toward transformation and social justice in higher education (Fine & Weis, 1996; Kvale, 1995; McEwen, et al, 1990; Townes, 1995).
Limitations of Research Design

This was not a longitudinal study which would be able to track the existence of wholeness development at college matriculation and then through interactions with college peers and the campus environment. I also did not attend to the patterns of identity awareness and integration among the administrative staff or faculty. This long-range and broader look would add a great deal to our understanding of the role that the campus environment, including student affairs professionals, and faculty and staff, might play in the wholeness development of African American college students. As McEwen, et al (1990) remind us, student affairs professionals need to critically look at their practice and the theory which informs it to determine if they are aiding in the dehumanization of African American college students.

More studies on identity integration and wholeness need to be conducted to address the limitations of this study. The small sample size may not be inclusive enough of the variation of multiple sociocultural identity awareness and integration and the focus on students at a single campus, may exaggerate or bias the effect of the environment on those processes.

Institutional Profile

It would not be a misnomer or an exaggeration to say that Rosse College is nestled in the rural hills of the Midwestern countryside. The drive to its 800 acre campus from the airport, located some 50 miles away in the nearest largest city is

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7 All data about Rosse College came from in-house statistical data.
either sterile or idyllic depending on the route you take and your own perspective. It is not coincidental that there are several routes one could take to Rosse College. Indeed, no one pathway to Rosse exists, neither by its geography nor by the origins and histories of its faculty, staff, and student body. To note that Rosse College is isolated invites no debate, as the increasing loneliness and seclusion of the drive from the airport to the campus will testify. One goes from being one car among many, to one among several, to just one on the road to Rosse. Arriving upon the campus itself, it becomes logical to conceive of someone losing themselves in this place, even to the point of forgetting that there is a world beyond the hill or that this world is any different from the one of which you have become a part. The Gothic architecture and the names of the residence halls and classroom buildings remind you of Rosse’s age and give a distinctively majestic air to the campus. Next, one is bound to notice the houses, yes houses, which accommodate various academic departments, faculty and administrative offices. One is certain to know that this is a college, not an institution.

At almost anytime of day, walking down the path that runs through the middle of the campus from north to south, one is struck by an interesting paradox of serenity and activity. At the north end, where the multicultural center sits in a house named for a prominent African American family during the early 20th century and the northern residence halls are huddled off the main road, one can easily hear the busy chatter of birds in the trees and find oneself walking alone. Approaching the center of campus, others begin to zig-zag across your path, going between the post office (where everyone receives their mail at a post office box) and the bookstore (which has a dual
social function as a Soho-esque coffee shop and library). Continuing to walk south, you arrive at the "Gates of Hell," or the gates which used to mark the entrance to the original campus. This reference is both metaphorical and spiritual. Metaphorically, it refers to the students' perceptions of how difficult the academic curriculum is at Rosse. Spiritually, the reference may also be related to the fact that three cemeteries lie beyond these gates.

Here, at the south end, is the academic center of the college. One comes across the admissions and financial aid offices, the main dining hall (there is an auxiliary one at the north end), classroom buildings, theater, music hall, and more residence halls. If it is mealtime, one cannot help but be drawn into the procession of students entering the dining hall. It is primarily a long room, with several long tables and benches upon which to sit, and the serving area located at the opposite end from the entrance door. This family-style dining concept has survived nearly 200 years, although some of the students refer to it as a gauntlet and it has parallels at institutions like the United States Military Academy at West Point. However you perceive it, this is marked territory and anyone familiar with the variety of fraternal organizations and athletic teams and clubs at Rosse could easily identify the members of certain groups by the tables at which they customarily sit. And of course, there is the "Black table" which is designated as such not merely by its geographic location, but by its occupation by more than three Black students. There is also a room, upstairs from the dining hall, known colloquially as "The Lounge," which functions as the meeting room of the BSO and a space for Black students to get away from Rosse, while still on campus.
The residence halls at the south end also house wings which are marked by certain fraternities and sororities, whose members predominately live in those areas, though not exclusively. Although none of Rosse’s ten social fraternities and sororities can boast of being one of the organizations with the largest participation, Greek life does organize much of the social life of the campus.

Founded in the early 19th century by an Episcopalian minister as a seminary for young men, it was moved to this isolated hilltop away from the “evils and distractions of the big city” (Rosse administrator) in the town in which it was originally located. Rosse College was distinctively a nest where young men sought knowledge, wisdom, and direction and learned to fly above social pragmatism powered by social optimism and to soar above political expediency on the wings of moral fortitude. The minister whose dream was Rosse College was a man of high ideals and stubborn determination. He had been told that a college built in this setting would not survive, that no one would come to its nest on the hill seeking knowledge and a community of learners. Almost 200 years later, that bishop’s foresight and faith is rewarded with a healthy endowment and a full-time enrollment of nearly 1600 students, of which approximately 75% are from other states. However, like its Gothic architecture, Rosse College has become a rarity among institutions of higher learning, and perhaps even an endangered species (Gilbert, 1995). Rosse is a four-year, residential, liberal arts college, where the most popular major is English, the average age of students is 20, and only a quarter of a percent of all its students are over 25 years of age. It indeed may no longer be representative of higher education institutions in this country, where the average
student commutes to campus, attends part-time, does not pursue a liberal arts degree, is over 25 years of age, and is enrolled in a two-year community college or for-profit institution (Altbach, et al., 1999; Chronicle Almanac, 2000; El-Khawas, 1996).

Despite its uncommon presence among institutions of higher learning, Rosse is a college where an African prince could enroll, pursue a degree, mysteriously die, and be buried on the college grounds at a time when he and his American brothers could only enroll in one other institution for higher learning in that state and only a handful in the country and could not pretend to live on campus even at those. Rosse is also a college where neither Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, nor any woman could herself attend nor enroll her daughters until after the height of the 1960’s Civil Rights Movement. Thus beset with such a conflicted history of opportunity and exclusion, Rosse College now has an enrollment of 54.6% women, 9.2% students of color, and 2.3% international students. Yet, there is only a single Black woman registered as a classical mathematics major and in the last graduating class of over 350 graduates only 2 took advantage of the concentration in African & African American Studies and only 10 of the Asian Studies concentration. Moreover, according to Sage, Rosse is the kind of place that knows it is an elite institution and wears that elite status with a sense of pride that is paradoxically unaware of how that elitism implicitly labels others as inferior.

Although obviously not a perfect utopia, these numbers do not present a complete picture of the community at Rosse. There are nine student organizations which are devoted to cultural and ethnic interests. The Office of Multicultural Affairs
regularly sponsors events featuring engaging and controversial African American, Asian, and Hispanic figures. Students engage each other on such issues as racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia through forums, workshops, and class discussions. Over the last 15 years, the college has made institutional commitments of financial support, programmatic efforts, and increased staffing with a focus on multicultural student populations to broaden the diversity of its faculty and student body. In the midst of this continuing transformation, Rosse seems to be attempting to fashion a marriage of its isolated and distinctive character with the educative needs of a diverse intellectual community to produce a democratic elite with the same high idealism and stubborn determination of its clerical founder.

This description of Rosse College is not intended to be a definitive statement of all that the college has been and will become. Rather, this is my impressionistic portrait of its character, its history, and its presence. This was Rosse for me as a researcher at the moment I came to it.

Characteristics of Participants

Maximum variation and intensity sampling produced a participant group that was sufficiently heterogeneous, reflecting the diversity within the Black student population of Rosse College. This heterogeneity makes the common themes and experiences shared among the participants that are discussed in the following two chapters more powerful for the diversity of backgrounds represented here. The participant group will be described along five groups of characteristics taken from the
demographic survey: (1) Race, gender, ethnicity, and age; (2) family background; (3) future aspirations; (4) campus involvement; and (5) facets of identity.

**Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Age**

The participants generally defined themselves as Black African Americans, almost evenly split female and male, are all heterosexual with modes of 20 years of age and juniors in college (see Table 3.1). Kashmir is a bi-racial student, the child of an African American mother and White father and did not select an ethnic identification. Sage is a West African, whose family moved to the United States while she was an infant. Ophelia stands out as the sole sophomore at 19 years of age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Class Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poke</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>AfAm</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sage</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kashmir</td>
<td>Bi-Racial</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K.B.</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>AfAm</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ophelia</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>AfAm</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: AfAm - African American; NA - item not answered; M - male; F - female

Table 3.1: Social and cultural demographic data and class rank of participants.
Family Background

Most of the participants identified their hometowns as urban. Three-fifths of the group described the racial composition of their neighborhood as mostly Black or African American. Two-fifths described their hometown’s racial composition as being mostly of another race or ethnicity than themselves, White in these cases. The three participants who identified their neighborhoods as mostly Black or African American, also described their parent’s socioeconomic status as working class, while those from predominantly White neighborhoods both described their parent’s socioeconomic status as middle class (see Table 3.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hometown</th>
<th>Neighborhood Racial Composition</th>
<th>Parent’s SES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poke</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Mostly another race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sage</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Mostly Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kashmir</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Mostly another race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K.B.</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Mostly Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ophelia</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Mostly Black</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: SES – Socioeconomic status

Table 3.2: Neighborhood and family characteristics of participants.
There was much more diversity amongst the participants relative to the educational attainments of their parents (see Table 3.3). In only one case, Poke, is the educational attainment of both mother and father equivalent. The mothers’ educational attainments range from some college to doctoral or professional degree. The fathers’ attainments range from having a high school diploma to having a doctoral or other professional degree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mother’s Education</th>
<th>Father’s Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poke</td>
<td>Doctoral/Professional</td>
<td>Doctoral/Professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sage</td>
<td>Associate’s degree</td>
<td>Some graduate school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kashmir</td>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>Some graduate school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K.B.</td>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>High school diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ophelia</td>
<td>Doctoral/Professional</td>
<td>Associate’s degree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3: Parental educational attainment.

**Future Aspirations**

As might be expected from such a group of highly talented and motivated students, most of the group have committed to pursuing some form of postgraduate education. Sage, however, has only committed herself at this point to finishing her bachelor’s degree at Rosse. However postgraduate work, possibly in medicine, is
under consideration. Also, most of them expect their class status to change in an upwardly mobile direction. However, Ophelia stands out as the only one who did not feel that her class status would necessarily change after graduating from Rosse. Ophelia answered in terms of an immediate shift upon receiving her bachelor's degree, not as an inevitable eventuality as was the case for the four other students. Since Ophelia is considering pursuing postgraduate work, she saw that as extending her current financial situation as working class.

Generally, the group felt that it was part of their responsibility as children to outpace their parents and attain higher levels of formal education. It was hoped that this education then would equip them to live better lives economically than their parents. Again, these data are consistent with what one would expect to find among any group of students attending a college like Rosse.

**Campus Involvement**

The questions in part two of the survey (see Appendix B), asked the participants to report the number of campus organizations in which they were active members and their degree of involvement with Black students, faculty, and administrators at Rosse. The participants were spread out across the three ranges of the amount of their campus organizational involvement (see Table 3.4). As a group, they typically affiliated themselves with groups dealing with campus multicultural issues, although there was a great deal of diversity among the groups represented, including religious organizations, the campus newspaper, and the sexual assault task force.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - 2</td>
<td>Ophelia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - 4</td>
<td>Kashmir, K.B.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 4</td>
<td>Poke, Sage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.4: Number of active campus organizational memberships.

The degree of involvement with the Black community at Rosse College was reported in three areas: students, faculty, and administrators. As shown in Table 3.5, generally, there seems to be a great deal of interaction with other Black students among the students in the participant group. However, the responses are slightly more spread out when responding about the amount of interaction with Black faculty and administrators. Considering the high involvement of these students with committees that are chaired by a Black administrator or to which Black administrators would belong, it is not surprising that, on average, these students do have a great deal of interaction with Black administrators. However, the fact that, on average, these students do not have a great deal of interaction with Black faculty is somewhat curious. This is especially curious on a campus where faculty-student relationships are highly valued and touted as a recruitment tool for prospective students. It would be interesting to see if all students at Rosse generally disagreed with the statement that they had a great deal of interaction with the faculty.
Q. 15: I have a great deal of interaction with Black students on this campus.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. 16: I have a great deal of interaction with African American faculty on this campus.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. 17: I have a great deal of interaction with Black administrators on this campus.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Participants responded to these three items using a five-point Likert scale: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Not sure, Agree, and Strongly agree.

Table 3.5: Participant involvement with Black community at Rosse.
Significant Facets of Identity

Question 18 of the survey asked the participants to respond to the following question: Which of the following facets of identity do you consider to be the most important or most central to how you see yourself as a person? They could check any and as many of the identity facets that were listed and they were not asked to rank them in an order of significance. Table 3.6 reports the number of times each of these facets was chosen by any of the participants. The number of facets selected as important or central to their identities ranged from 4 to 10. Only one facet, personality, was chosen by each of the five respondents. The last question on the survey asked the participants if they ever felt that they had to pick out only certain aspects of their identity in order to be accepted in certain groups in college. Three respondents choose to answer this question as Yes (one emphatically), and the other two said No.

It is suggested by this data that all of these students were aware of the multiple layers of their identities. Moreover, the selection of race and gender by four of the five participants (although not always the same four) as most important or most central to how they saw themselves as persons may indicate the possibility of an internal component to these sociocultural constructions of identity beyond any externally imposed definitions. The analysis of the interview data presented in Chapters Four and Five further supports this assessment.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central Facets</th>
<th>Number of Times Selected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational level</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic Origin</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Neither “sexuality” nor “disability” were chosen by any of the participants.

Table 3.6: Multiple identities of participants.
CHAPTER FOUR

KNOWING THROUGH AN INTEGRATED ANALYTICS

Introduction

As Norman Denzin (2000) reminds us through the words of Wahneema Lubiano, marginalized peoples need to be wary of the seduction of realistic representation and accepting all that such an interpretation implies about not only our ability to know, but also about our abilities as researchers to represent another's life, thoughts, and processes as being complete or objective. Denzin (2000) also reminds us that writing is not the innocent practice that we were taught in becoming social scientists, rather there is only interpretation and interpretation that is marked by cultural, political, and societal implications. Like Denzin (2000), I too believe that “words and language have a material presence in the world - that words have effects on people” (p. 898). This belief in the power of words, a belief that is also deeply imbued in the African American tradition (Bell-Scott, 1994; James, 1993; Lee, 1996), cautions me as I begin this chapter, presenting my representations of the stories of these students and my interpretations of what they mean for this project on wholeness, identity integration, and intersectionality.
Therefore, this chapter and the next embody a utopian project (Denzin, 2000), hoped to represent the possibilities of integrating disparate and fragmentary methods of analysis and research narrative into a whole picture, a kaleidoscope that can be best appreciated through the multiple prisms of its architecture. This chapter has four sections, each of which represents a different portrait of the participants and together give a more full view of them. Chapter Five then addresses the study’s research questions and points toward the implications for a collective structure of wholeness and identity integration.

In this chapter, the five portraits of the participants in the study are presented in four intersecting layers, first through impressionistic poems; second through a theoretical tale (Van Mannen, 1988) of their social and campus involvements read through the lens of patterns of faith and identity (Fowler, 1988; Parks, 2000); third, through a second theoretical interpretation of the students’ struggles with identity integration and pursuing wholeness as read through the lens of Reynolds and Pope’s (1991) typology of identity intersection; and fourth, an optimal interpretation of the students’ identity development (OTAId). The intersection of these layers lies in their origination in a common source, the total of twenty individual interviews and transcripts of those sessions. As illustrated by Honan, Knobel, Baker, and Davies (2000), interpretive frameworks shape how you see the data and what data you see. They go on to elaborate that our participants can never be fully contained by any one particular analytical framework (Honan et al., 2000). Consequently, these four pieces together form a four-sided prism through which to view and know the participants.
Each facet represents a partial view of the students and reveals a different partiality than the other three facets.

The first layer of representation, the impressionistic poems, are my construction of the stories that each student told me during the course of our four interviews. The representation of interview transcripts as literary texts, edited and constructed by the researcher is acknowledged by Laurel Richardson (1992). Richardson (1992) describes interviews as interactional speech events that are jointly constructed as texts, which arise from the intersection of the subjectivities of both the interviewer and the interviewee. However, this subjective interaction is mediated by the unequal power of the researcher and his or her participants (Richardson, 1992). She says that standard sociological writing treats the interview transcription as a literary text, without acknowledging it as such, while the poetic form does three things: One, it centers the subject of the interview, the interviewee, through using their words directly instead of the researchers; two, it acknowledges the fact of the essential constructedness of the interview; and three, the poetic form engages the reader in a sensual and reflexive exercise of their own “interpretive labors of [the participant’s] interpretive labors” (Richardson, 1992, 1993). Through these mechanics, the participant is more effectively represented as thought in the process of creation and transformation (Richardson, 1992). Moreover, because the details of our participants’ lives that they choose to tell us as researchers are first constructed through the lenses of trust, rapport, and self-efficacy and therefore are necessarily partial, poetic representation honors that partiality through a literary form that can simultaneously
be experienced as both whole and partial (Richardson, 1992, 1993). Finally, these impressionistic poems and interactional tales serve as neither merely a transgressive exercise nor an insertion of myself into the text, but rather “for the sake of knowing about lived experiences which are unspeakable in the ‘father’s voice,’ the voice of objectivity; flattened worlds” (Richardson, 1993).

Therefore, the following narrative poems, were produced by the direct use of the participants’ words as recorded in the transcripts of their four interviews with me. I have lifted out of the context of the interview those phrases which struck me as most capable of telling a sensual story, of creating a dramatic epic, and used them as the lines of the poem. The stanzas of the poem indicate shifts of mood and subject in the story, while each poem is divided into four sections representing the four interviews. Consistent with the constructed nature of the interaction in the interview, these narrative poems are also co-constructed texts. The participants’ responses to their own thoughts in process and my representation of them are inserted as footnotes throughout the poems. Read as part of the poetry but yet outside of it, these “interruptions” also represent a different portrait of the students as they themselves look back on their words and continue to clarify and make meaning of their stories.

Following the impressionistic portraits are theoretical tales using sociograms and synoptic charts, which illustrate the social and campus involvements of each student as a means of entering the discussion of how each of them constructs and makes meaning of identity fragmentation and integration in their own lives through the lenses of faith-identity patterns, identity intersectionality, and then OTAID, as
discussed by Fowler (1981), Parks (2000), Reynolds and Pope (1991), and Myers, et al. (1991), respectively. As Van Mannen (1981) and Lather (1991) describe, these are theoretical tales in that they assume an epistemological stance in which these students' lived experiences with wholeness and fragmentation are fully knowable through the application of appropriate method and theory. I present myself as the researcher and ultimate voice of authority and the text, that unlike the impressionistic and interactional tale described above, stands unmediated by the clarifications, disputations, or experientially-based theorizing of the participants.

With this foundation, the next chapter continues with a discussion of the research questions. Assertions answering the initial research questions laid out in Chapter Three are substantiated with warrants from the data, the interview transcripts. Together with this chapter’s analyses and the lens of OT, implications for theorizing a general framework for understanding how these students integrate the differing fragments of their identities will be presented in Chapter Five.

**Impressionistic Tales**

**Poke: Man in the Middle**

*...

growing up I was super duper fortunate
both my parents are attorneys
never had a real want in my life
growing up through like kindergarten with those kids
I didn’t necessarily know them

---

8 Poke returned his copy of the poem without any comments or other feedback. I was unable to contact him to elicit any feedback. This is somewhat puzzling because he was so generous with himself during the interview process.
I didn’t really see a difference between us
there was no prejudice
but every year as we got older
certain people getting certain ways and saying certain things
I started to notice more things like I’m different

it was seventh grade
we were watching Roots in my history class
and I was sobbing
another girl was crying
we were the only two black people

some guys were in the locker room
reenacting the whipping scene laughing at it
I snapped at them
I kind of blew my lid
I threw him in the locker and then some other stuff
first time I had looked at myself as really different
that was not good for me

the friends I had from kindergarten up
treated me the same
but freshman year of high school
they let like a flood of minorities in
some of those same friends
treat them a lot different
I’m not a color
I’m one of them
and I was man in the middle
I’d brought a lot of my other friends kind of like together
that why I didn’t really lose friendships

it’s cool to be the one who breaks stereotype
like I don’t mind that
I can hang out at Rosse
just because of the experiences I had in high school
if I didn’t go to that high school
I wouldn’t be as open

I knew I was going to college
it was a given
there was nothing I could do
I was going to college
when I got here it wasn’t that big of a deal
but the longer I’ve been here
this is some serious stuff
how hard it was for my grandparents to go to college
now I didn’t even have to think about it
what am I going to be able to do for my kid
it’s frustrating
how I’m going to outdo my parents
I would like for my kid
to come up better than I did

whenever there’s been a serious struggle
all of a sudden it wasn’t a problem anymore
where I know I could have died
but I didn’t die for some reason
before Christmas break I wrecked my car
a deer literally jumped over my hood
I didn’t hit the brake or anything
there were two deer on the road
I swerved off and 3-60’d into a tree
I hit the back of the car instead of the front
I’m spinning I’m sitting there I’m praying
I didn’t have my seat belt on
I just opened the door and walked
no scratches no bruises no soreness no nothing

God put everybody here for a reason
all throughout my life
being the man in the middle
friends on this side
friends on this side
I’m in the middle
I’m teaching these people

ii.

I am very black male
it’s impossible to hide
I am a young black male
that’s how I identify myself
a collage
when people see me
they identify me one way
once people really get to know me
there is a lot more to me
than just being young black male

I know I can still play the field
I can associate with any group of people
under the ocean
I'll make a few friends somewhere

I've noticed the change
from family friends associates
every year I have more associates
less friends and family
I kind of get tired of trying to play the field

being a black male
the most difficult
most wonderful thing
I could ever ask for
as hard as that is
I could not see myself trading it for anything
I just wouldn't want to
it gives you character
it gives you heart
other people are spoon-fed
there isn’t one white person in this room
that would want to trade places with me

if I'm at home
I may speak differently
I may dress differently
everything I say still comes out the same
you're going to get the same points
able to express myself twofold
if I couldn't
the other part of myself
would have been killed
I don't know how I do it
I just know it’s there

the one thing that I know for certain
I will be black for life
it's not as obvious as it sounds
I wouldn't trade it in for the world
no matter how much money I get
no matter how well liked I am
they're still going to say he's just black
that's very frustrating

somebody's gotta have your back somewhere
had it this far

iii.

when you're a freshman guy
they give you a lot of attention
known all over the school
I think like the public
just like walking down the street
in their minds
I pose more of a threat

it's really good and fun when it's positive
it's definitely not bothersome
you grow to learn who is honest
the negative end really sucks
I get a lot more attention from cops
I'm pretty much tired of that

every year I get older the color barrier gets wider
it's really depressing
my first year of college
I was 'be-everybody's-black-person'
I'm running out of time
I don't even really care that much anymore
I'm done playing the role of the teacher
    at least for right now
I might go back to being me

iv.

in the worst moments
I do my crawl back to God
I'm a religious person but
I tend to only pray in like serious times
you always get a gut check
I got a gut check when I was applying to colleges
I didn’t know what I was going to do
I was shook
those are the decisions that mess me up

Sage: Out of Sync

i.

as far as black people
there was little association
I didn’t see myself as one of them
to a certain extent still don’t

we didn’t chill with the kids on the block
I didn’t start associating in my neighborhood
until two summers ago
my closest friends were guys
did I act black enough?

private schools were a learning experience
needed to assert I was black
my sense of individuality came out of that
my first experience with white people ever
it was surreal

I knew since I was maybe 10
I wanted to be a doctor
there was never a question of whether
just a matter of which college

y they drive me crazy
those hundreds of kids\(^9\)
who don’t do squat
I like being involved
I like things going well
the resources I’m helping provide
I know people who need those
I don’t want to let them down

\(^9\) I sound a little self righteous, no?
I could be really content
doing my homework
dabbling here and there
and going to bed
people complain
I don't see enough of them
if you got involved
I wouldn't have to

my faith has done some interesting things
very easy to grow up believing
everything I'm told
I've had to investigate
my relationship with God
whether it's really right
you can't always do that with faith
the private school education
taught me to question

ii.

I am straddling all sorts of margins\(^{10}\)
anything worth doing is worth doing well
things I do for myself
not as nit-picky
really big on not having people hurt
I take a lot of things seriously
when no one else will
I like to have a good time
I'm a fun person
provided fun is not stupidity
things should have a purpose
relationships are very important to me
don't like the spotlight
often in it
want to be acknowledged
matured into who I want to be
doesn't mean I portray it any better
totally depends on the group

people see parts of me

\(^{10}\) Wow! I'm all sorts of disjointed! That really comes out here.
pick and choose what they like
I'm just out of sync
with all these different groups
pick two extremes
I'm in between
makes a lot of confusion
a lot of the time

girls are so silly
so'n'so wants to date so'n'so
isn't that cute
it was just odd

still fine to be the jock
partly cuz I was black
certain roles it's okay to fill
okay to shake your thang
rap music dancing clothing basketball
they couldn't understand
how there could be more to me

black woman\textsuperscript{11}
I see myself as strong
dealing with white society
dealing with male society
I get stronger
I have to learn to deal
limiting in a lot of ways
so many things
to struggle against
have to fight the expectation
easy to slide into roles
the very willing to please
always there to support you
mammy\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{11}I think it's interesting – the level to which I seem to see myself as “black.”
\textsuperscript{12}Ugh! Makes me uncomfortable to see this here. I don't think I have a good enough grasp of the
cultural nuances of the mammy figure. I keep feeling that I'm using it in a pejorative way and I don't
like that. Plus, I don't know whether this is the particular role I've felt blocked into; I may have just
picked a figure I'd learned about that my characteristics/actions resemble and projected my feeling that
- for example, it's good to be helpful on others, saying, in effect, they forced me to be helpful or they
expected me to be helpful.
there are some days
I understand everybody perfectly\textsuperscript{13}
nobody understands me
most of the time
I did say those exact words
like half an hour ago
the perspective is amazing from where I am
shame some people
just can't see the other side
result is I start pulling away
my Christian friends
  none of them understand you know
my sorority friends
QENZ
  network of people
  who can relate to me
  we can come together
  don't feel that alterity
  with my QENZ girls
my volleyball girls
I forget their names after a while\textsuperscript{14}
this has not been a good semester for weaving things together\textsuperscript{15}

iii.

it's just easier for black guys
getting dates
going partying
finding someone to dance with

there's always a sense of powerlessness
we're neither white nor male
no reason why anyone should listen
loud and forceful and aggressive
act of presenting and explaining and asserting yourself

if I were a male
my voice would have more power

\textsuperscript{13} Rather presumptuous comment, no? The assumption that only I understand and that I understand \textit{perfectly}.
\textsuperscript{14} Did I really say this?! [I did show Sage in her transcript where she really did say this.]
\textsuperscript{15} Still true throughout the semester.
there’s a lot of authority that comes
being where I am
I’m where I am for a purpose
that’s a gift I have

I don’t do hand shakes
it doesn’t fit with what I want
with people

I started to settle into a better sense of myself
I view myself as a black woman
I don’t like feeling torn
like the patch on a quilt
the quilt is stronger because of all the different parts
I’d like to have that full thing
I think I’m stronger
when I have a sense of wholeness

is.

the really good person award
something I’m proud of
a little disappointing
people who I work with
people I do for
don’t recognize what I do*

cling to hope
everything works out well in the end
times it’s harder to believe it
might seem just a bit gloomy
it’s always back there
otherwise existence is arbitrary
not something I can accept
has to be a purpose
God wants what’s good for us
if we allow him
everything is an opportunity
put our faith and trust in someone
you don’t understand*

* Again with that I’m everything attitude. Interesting. But I did feel rather unappreciated and taken for granted.

115
life in America would be easier
born white upper class as a guy
you could pee standing up
quite something sometimes
though obviously
you are
what you’ve experienced

I need this perky outlook
kind where you wouldn’t care
poor butt-naked middle of winter nowhere to live
you wouldn’t care


laugh
joyfulness
inner peace
God working through you
I’m letting stuff get in the way

Kashmir: On Baby Stitches

i.

I don’t actually remember much
before I was 10
my parents divorced when I was young
my father went to prison
my grandmother helped raise us
my mom worked all the time

I liked the sense of community
within my high school class
how cliquish they were
definitely a distinction
between those who had the wealth
and those who didn’t
you wanted to do everything
everybody else was doing

---

17 Still gets me through the day.
18 Wow! I’m really impressed. I like this.
19 After Kashmir reviewed this poem, she commented that she realized how angry she was and how confined she felt being at Rosse. She also recognized how much she had changed during the course of our interviews.
sometimes I couldn’t

my mom
one of five children
she was the first to go to college
actually get a degree
I’m the only one
that went straight through
took the bull by the horn
it kind of means a lot to me
for me to do it
for my grandfather to come for graduation
does give a sense of pride
accomplishment
somebody had done something
instead of just making babies

my father’s family
when I’m around them
they don’t look at me like I’m black
it’s Kashmir
she’s white
she’s like us

I think black people are more accepting
they were so accepting of my father
the relationship with my mom
you’re just one of the family

people’s favorite question
what are you?
I’m a person!
that was what I got growing up
didn’t associate much with black students
the girls didn’t like me
the guys didn’t want to talk to me
I dated a lot of guys that were white
all I dated was the white guys
I wasn’t black at my school

when I did the college application
it came down to what box
other African American
I decided African American
I'm my mother's child
I was forced to check a box
that shaped a lot of things in more recent years

ii.

black female
since I've come to college
my circle of friends is more that now
I associate myself more with that
twist ice cream
chocolate and vanilla
I would mix it all up
started off with black and white
I kind of mixed it up
looks more like chocolate now
still has consistency of vanilla underneath

checking the box
made all the difference

I came for a visit
the black guys thought I was cute
it was so accepting
I can come to school here
be these people's friend
take me under their wing
I can change
be something I never experienced before
the girls there also said
we can see you being part of our sorority
I didn't know at that point
if the black females were sincere

I was dating someone
White family
Thanksgiving dinner
I was not welcome
Grandma was coming
my black family
never made me choose
people are really confused
I'm milk white
my boyfriend told me I'm fair-skinned
I sound black
I sound white
it's hard to tell sometimes
somebody thought I was from Guadeloupe once
I don't have to live up to any perception
I'm able to kind of establish who I am
by being me
I'm big on personalities
regardless of race

I'm in that who the heck am I phase
I don't know!
a strong person fighter survivor
feeling more and more pulled away
from my white side
I feel so secluded
surrounded by all my black friends
eventually I'm going to know me

being with a black male
has made me feel
more like a black female.
I don't have confidence
being a strong black woman
walking alone
when I step away
and I go home
people don't know

iii.

myself as a black female
I find strength in it now
I've dealt with
black female relationships
black male
being a minority
people not knowing I was a minority
I've gotten exposure to black culture
not a positive and uplifting experience

119
I feel stronger now
I've lost friendships
    regained them
I've lost relationships
    regained them

it's a shame
black people tend to stick together
when something goes wrong
they tend to split
down the middle
guys and girls
I was always right on that border
    for years
I wanna go out and experience new things
    meet new people
wanna leave this school with friends
all the stuff that goes on
in the black community
I'm really sick and tired of it
sick of gossiping
    sick of taking sides
    sick of he-said she-said
    people being mad for petty reasons
    they live in stereotypes
I just walked away from it
that's easier for me to do
I know what it's like to *not* be a part
I knew I was okay before
the only difference now
I know positive things
do and could come out of it

don't know if I feel less
of a black woman
I am a black woman
don't want to deny
my father
    my white side

I'm not really thinking about black-white issues now
I kinda forgot the question...
my world has been falling apart
and I haven’t known what to depend on
I look to my mom
next I tend to run
to a man in my life
mom she’s always been there
never known her not to be there
I’m not dating my ex anymore

I would change
the way I look at myself
I would give myself more confidence
better self-image
made sure I respected my own beauty

I really don’t have anyone here
I’m not dating my ex anymore
before I had a bunch of friends
they don’t realize how uncomfortable it is
finding my comfort on my own more

I really feel like an outcast right now

K.B.: Put On a Pedestal

in second grade
I got tested
put into the gifted and talented program
or whatever²⁰
had to transfer schools
moved to a white school
had to catch the bus
used to walk to school
in class one day
the teacher told me
read such and such paragraph

²⁰ Why do I say “or whatever” so much? I sound rabid.
I hadn’t learned what a paragraph was yet
so I’m just sittin’
it’s so silly now
I just started crying
‘cause I had no idea

I had a pretty tame childhood
actually
my brothers were my world
we weren’t poor
we were truly working class
living from check to check
or whatever

bused until third grade
came back to east side
great, wonderful
I was popular
I was class president
or whatever
then came junior high
move to another school
big seventh and eighth graders
voice starts crackin’
kind of weird
I became a lot more introverted
or whatever

I was overweight at the time
definitely got more quiet in junior high
solid, straight B student
blend in really easily
on to high school
dilapidated
rats when you’re in class
enjoyed that year or two
I learned a lot
grades don’t reflect that
end of ninth grade school closed

transferred

---

2 This makes it sound worse than it actually was. It was bad though in many ways.
first time I ever had straight A’s
it was okay
everyone thought I was great
   at least the teachers did
I was smart
I wasn’t popular
I was known
everyone knew the valedictorian
I definitely didn’t fit in
always been particularly uncomfortable around black males

a summer program
first introduced me to Rosse
it was real cool
I knew I was going to college
everyone was pushing me to do this
or whatever
never occurred to me how
I applied
I got a scholarship
here I am
nobody knew me
I could definitely be who I wanted to be
I was in a magazine
top black scholar
everybody already knew who I was

I just believe there’s a God
I believe in spirits and that kind of thing
but I don’t worship under
any organized way
God loves us and all that stuff
I guess I have a childlike view
don’t intentionally hurt people
me and God are cool
but relationships with other people
the Golden Rule
that’s what I try to do
if you do that you’ll go to heaven
I suppose
I definitely lost touch since I’ve been here
sometimes I do just talk
and assume God is listening
I don't think God actively intervenes
I don't think organized worship is me
I just really don't

all my best friends have always been girls
but I was fat
I wasn't cute
I wasn't athletic
or whatever
especially back in the eighties
light-skinned guys were in
chocolate brothas are in now

coming here
that was weird
I didn't drink, I didn't smoke
that's all people seem to do here
that was definitely a big stressor

ii.

first thing would probably be my name
after being here
definitely black male
probably my age group
working class family I guess
inner city
that kind of stuff
having been boxed to fill out forms
that's how it would start
personality traits
nice shy friendly open reserved
mature
thoughtful
as in pensive
I think a lot

always been aware that I was a black male in America
and all that stuff
just wasn't constantly coming to mind
when you come here
all these white people around
their backgrounds are so different
people here there are a lot of luxuries
I just don’t feel comfortable

I don’t drink
I don’t smoke
I’m not promiscuous
I don’t date white women
I’m not a hip-hop fan so to speak
I’m not too loud
that’s how people expect black men to act
very ghetto-fabulous
or totally assimilated
I’m usually somewhere in between

KNGZ
all black male
I don’t feel I’m black enough
or whatever
I still went in
to show that we could
be black men unified
it really did become a family

real preoccupation with pleasing others
so there are times when I just have
to only showcase so much of myself
don’t necessarily like it
sometimes I’m just accustomed to it
other times it’s a real chore to be silent

iii.

when black males come here
there’s an exoticism that goes around
an automatic commodification issue
for me in particular
I’m not really receptive to being commodified
so it went away immediately

with the black women
people are more intimidated
it’s gotta be hard to be a sista here
academically it seems
black women have an easier time 
less distractions for them 
the sistas here are usually on top of their stuff 

the differences are not very significant 
I can empathize with the sistas more 
spend more of my time with black women 
I notice it when something for sistas only 
be an honorary female 
I needed to leave 

in high school 
I was a big fish in a small pond 
here at Rosse 
people were using these $20 words 
when a 50 cent one will do 
I was going to class to learn 
people kept going to class to show off 
they’re having just as difficult a time as you 

I learned what it was like to be a minority 
I learned about black people here 
not true that everybody acknowledged their blackness 
my lifestyle is so different 
it became more real how “other” you were 

why not live your life fragmented 
because it’s tiring, it’s tiring, that’s why 
why wouldn’t you want to be whole? 
find some purpose to everything 
a rhyme and reason for the madness that is life 


only when I’m here that it feels like my world is falling apart 
either latch on to somebody 
definitely something picked up here 
just becoming super-reliant on myself 
biggest thing I picked up 
take your time be calm 

or whatever

22 There it is again!
I like being alone
I don’t need constant validation from somebody else
that helped me survive

I wish I was a lot more confident
a little more self-assured
I wish I was in shape
the biggest thing for me
confidence issues
particularly stressful
people here tend to put me on such a pedestal
think I’m so smart
I feel so fraudulent

thank you for this
it’s been very therapeutic
I realize I’m still holding back
that’s just where my comfort is right now

Ophelia: My World is Falling Apart²³

i.

we had a disc player
like a record player
me and my mom
would dance to songs
Prince or Michael Jackson
my mom’s favorites
she would have the broom
I could play with the mop
supposed to be cleaning the house
every other Saturday

I remember getting into a fight
my little sister was one or two
it was my next door neighbor
she started calling my mom mom
over for dinner every night
my mom just buys into it

²³ Perfect title!!
I would get so upset
one day I told her to leave
she said no
so I had to beat her up²⁴

by eighth grade I learned
don’t get attached
you’re just gonna move away
it was really hard to make friends
by eleventh grade I was very unpleasant
I had gotten attached at my first high school
thought I would have a legacy
didn’t happen like that
that’s how it was

I liked lockers
you could decorate it
put pictures of boys in your locker
superstar boys of course
I didn’t actually talk to real live boys
liked the academic setting
did very well in school
didn’t like math very much

more so in high school
I tended to not like people
everybody was really shallow
people didn’t worry about the same things
my family was really struggling
some kids were worried about prom
I’m worrying about rent
nobody could understand that

in an ideal world
I could be a writer
not have to worry about money
it gets fuzzier every year
do you want to teach?
I don’t know
I don’t think so
primarily I just want to write

²⁴My resolution that I had to beat her up is amusing and reminds me of the seriousness of the situation.
mainly I hold jobs
babysitting
library
admissions project
make me kind of irritable
I work because I have to
people here their parents just send them money
they just send it
it's not me learning responsibility
it's me being responsible
I get a little bitter sometimes
I'm going to work
I'll study tonight when I get home
it's what my mom did

it all balances out
sort of get weary sometimes
I get so tired
don't even have time to talk
I'm just so tired
more often than not
it all balances out

my faith is in tradition
there is a culture
going to church
putting on church clothes
socializing with people
can't say I don't want that
there is something missing

last year I was really gung ho about gender
tended to ignore race
I'm aware of my race
don't want to ignore that
been on my mind
meditating in the library
think about race and gender today

here

---

25 I like the irony here: The illusion of balance compared —er, contrasted with three lines of weariness.
just being different
people expecting you to explain
if you have braids
someone wants to know
how does your hair grow
white people mainly
astounds me
kids here not had contact with black people
don't know how to handle it
sometimes it's funny
sometimes it's irritating
makes me wonder what I got myself into

doing a lot of things my mom did
she says that people will walk past you
be loud
they think you won't be a loud black person
be loud²⁶
they'll watch you
they'll pay attention
she's been really encouraging
keeping my morale boosted

ii.

people try to make things fit together
some things just kind of step on other things
couldn't put everything into compartments
everything ultimately with my identity has to blend
you know intersect
at one time I started thinking
eventually it is going to fit together
now I'm not quite so sure
(gotten very postmodern)
sometimes one aspect will dominate another

still a lot I'm confused about
have absolutely no direction
that's not true I'm here

²⁶ Ophelia put a star next to this stanza.
²⁷ Ophelia thought it would be interesting to put this in the same section as the lines that addressed defining herself.
this is my holding cell until they let me out
don’t know how to synthesize everything
don’t know what I want people
to think of me as
black writer
woman writer
black woman writer
kindergarten teacher
at my worse
I completely withdraw
get angry at all of it
I just I don’t care
except for being in the bed asleep
I’m really trying to make sense of it
it doesn’t always work out
take it day by day28

wonder if I’m ever going to wake up one morning
that’s it
this is how you behave
woman
black woman
educated black woman
don’t know if that will happen
hope it does by my 35th birthday

you get real special
when you’re a minority here
I never knew being black was so cool
I’m kind of on display
I really lose touch of that ownership

my mom is educated
we were crazy poor
below the poverty line
middle class in a nightmare
or
lower class with potential
not really quite sure how to think about it

I really wasn’t comfortable around black people

28 Yay! I really like this stanza. It matches the title perfectly.
before I came here
go to a predominantly white school
make all black friends
the height of irony

iii.

sounds kind of strange
really glad I’m not black and male
pressure seems to be a lot different
as a black female I grapple
fight this whole invisibility
I can’t have someone ignoring that I’m black too
I don’t need to have my womanhood ignored either
trying to find a voice
my identity can be a lot more fluid
don’t necessarily have to follow rigid rules about gender

I think I’d rather be invisible
than constantly watched
you know
people think I’m not much of a threat
I’m a black woman

never felt people are out to get me
nobody’s going to listen to me
I’m a black woman

education is money
education is power
I really like the idea of having power
like people listening without having a choice
making me sound scary
forget I said that
education is opportunity

since I’ve been here
I’ve become more aware
had mostly white friends
had this whole philosophy
race doesn’t matter
we all need to hold hands and sing
now I’m realizing
race isn't just something in a vacuum
there's culture
there's oppression
there's bitterness
on both sides

I'm trying to figure out
where my priorities should lie
on the other hand
I'll be like
it's not time for me to be black today
today I'm a feminist
tomorrow I'll talk about black stuff

doing after
Imma talk about fashion and makeup that day
this process of synthesizing is really important to me
kind of seeing the impossibility of it
don't know what to do with myself
those days just screw it
Imma talk about Britney Spears' clothes today
interesting to take all my individual ups and downs
try to work them into a larger framework
find so-called identity

I really just don't know what to do with myself sometimes

I have about two years
figure out the secrets of the universe
there's still grad school
figure out some more secrets
do something productive
that's what I'll do
figure out that whole race question
figure out this gender thing
stop getting so infuriated at everything
I spend a whole lot of time just mad
I've got two more years
to figure it out
so I won't get mad anymore
so I can calm down
stop feeling like I'm oppressed

29 Now that I think about it, I wonder why it is that these sorts of identity separations have to occur.
you know get it together
there you go
I'm going to get it together

iv.

Dafina, my world is always falling apart
my world has to fall apart
otherwise it just doesn't work
I write it all down
I read it later
it's brilliant

before Thanksgiving break
sick of being here
I was so angry all the time
hunger for attention
I was like nobody notices me
might as well not be here
talking to my mom
helps when it helps
most of the time
I write it

I'd change my hair
long and silky
someone cute
if I could snatch the hair out of her head
tape it on to mine
that would be so nice
I don't think I'm ugly
I just need that hair

I didn't have any perception
of my skin color
until someone told me
I was different

I'm handling things better
don't get that feeling
that I don't even matter

30 I think this is an interesting thing to note here.
Reading through each of the five poems, the similarities and differences among the students in the group live in a way that they did not through the frequency tables given in Chapter Three. These are truly individuals, who struggle with different issues and challenges and whose major life questions differ in both content and implication. However, in the midst of these differences, similarities also are manifest. Issues of race live for these students and their feelings about race are readily accessible to them. These are all highly intelligent, thinking people, who collectively possessed a capacity to reason and interpret their own experiences as well as those of others. Moreover, they are all struggling with issues of relationship, of how to be in relationship with both others and themselves. Poke, Sage, Kashmir, K.B., and Ophelia are profoundly interesting people, each beautiful in his or her own right.

Therefore, I have presented them here uninterrupted for two reasons. The first reason was to bring out the reader’s affective response to the poems, and thereby to affectively respond to the students. I hoped to engage the reader, in some small measure, with the multifaceted way in which I experienced these students. I did not

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31 First, I just want to thank you for your work on this project. I don’t doubt that it’s been a formidable task. Reading over my own words has been, in fact, surprising, and I’m conceited enough to believe that my feelings about race, gender, family, and education have important (and startling!) implications.
come to know these students simply as participants in a research study. They did not only intrigue my mind and test my analytical prowess. These students touched me, they spoke beyond my mind to my heart and down into my soul. Their words, their tones of voice, their language, both verbal and non-verbal, became a part of me. I was deeply affected, in an emotive, sensual way, by the stories these students told me. I wanted to convey something of that to the reader and the best way I knew how to do that was through poetry, which has always been a form of writing meant to touch the soul, not just the mind. The second was to make these differences and yet similarities more apparent and striking than they would be if "explained" by my words. The process of crafting, editing, and incorporating the students' comments continually reminded me of the power of their own words to declare, translate, and explicate their own lives (Hollway & Jefferson, 1997). These impressionistic tales, co-authored\(^2\) poems, represent each student as I saw them and as they saw themselves. Yet, in choosing what was important enough to be put in and rearranging word order to make certain things evident that I wanted to make evident, the poems definitely stand as interpretive pieces. They reflect my own worldview and interpretive frame, in much the same way as the three theoretical tales which follow.

\(^2\) It is important to note that the words in the poems were all actually spoken by the participants themselves during our interview sessions and can be located in the transcripts. Therefore, the students themselves are authors of the poems. I am also an author because I constructed the poems, meaning the initial decisions concerning what would be included from the transcripts, as well as the order in which they appear in the poems, were made by me. However, the students reasserted their authorial role when they reviewed the first drafts of the poems and starred, underlined, or otherwise marked the stanzas and lines which were the most significant for them. They also determined if there were lines that they wanted removed from the poem. Lastly, it is important to note that the footnotes that appear throughout the poems are the verbatim responses of the students themselves, except where otherwise indicated by brackets [ ], or wording.
First Theoretical Tale: Faith-Identity

According to Fowler (1981), people live their lives negotiating among a variety of competing expectations and commitments from the different groups with whom they relate. These groups include such networks as family, work, church, and community organizations. These different groups represent identity triads or value centers in our lives (Fowler, 1981). How people negotiate among these competing triads and value centers speaks to their understanding of themselves as individuals and their understanding or acknowledgement of transcending centers of value and power to prioritize their competing triads (Fowler, 1988; Parks, 2000). In the same fashion, the various identity triads and value centers of the participants in this study suggest an assessment of their faith commitments and understanding of themselves as multiplitious individuals.

As introduced in Chapter Two, a three-fold typology of faith-identity patterns has been used to discuss the differing ways that individuals negotiate the multiple commitments in their lives (Fowler, 1981) and prioritize their sources of dependency and meaning making in their lived experiences (Parks, 2000). The patterns, polytheist, henotheist, and radical monotheist represent increasingly theocentric and more optimal value centers and modes of meaning making. Fowler (1988) demonstrates the progressive development implied by this typology when he asserts that radical monotheism is of "extreme importance" for the future of humankind, which "[will require] our learning to live in an inclusive, global community" (p. 23).
The Polytheists: Kashmir and Ophelia

The first pattern of faith and identity is characterized as polytheistic faith. As its name implies, this pattern of faith and identity is exhibited by persons who have interests in many non-transcendent centers of value and power (Fowler, 1981). Not even the power of one's own self-worth or abilities "[are] compelling enough to unify one's hopes and strivings" (Fowler, 1988, p. 19). Such individuals make a series of relatively intense or even encompassing identity commitments, but find it impossible to maintain them. Thus they move discontinuously and abruptly from one faith-relational triad to another (Fowler, 1981). Parks (2000) further describes the polytheist as one who may comprehend the whole of their lives, but have only been capable of composing an "assortment of isolated wholes" (p. 22). This is akin to those who yearn for deeper integration of their lives, but yet experience their home and work worlds as separate, incompatible, and even "oriented to differing values, expectations, and loyalties" (Parks, 2000, p. 22). Fowler (1981) also describes a second manifestation of polytheistic faith, in which the individual lives with a diffuse pattern of faith and identity. As Fowler (1988, p. 20) describes them, "these people never bring all of their passion to any relationship or value commitment," rather they retain their ability to withdraw and become aloof.

Kashmir and Ophelia represent each of the two manifestations of polytheistic faith and identity. Kashmir is better represented as the individual whose value commitments are transient and shifting, moving from one faith-relational triad to
another depending on her circle of associates. Ophelia’s many value commitments lack the intensity of Kashmir’s and thus she exhibits a more diffuse polytheism.

Kashmir as Polytheist

Figure 4.1 is a sociogram of Kashmir’s identity commitments. In the middle of the diagram is a split circle representing Kashmir. To the right are her school commitments, encompassed by the black community generally and her sorority particularly. The circle representing QENZ is not totally within the black community center, because the membership of QENZ is not wholly black. However, Kashmir’s relationships with these groups has been mediated by her romantic relationships with black men, first during freshman year and again this year. This line is broken because she ended what she termed an “unhealthy” relationship during the course of our interviews. On the left side of the diagram, Kashmir’s home life is represented. Here, her two main commitments are her family, which is black and her friends, who are white. At first glance, it does not seem to be representative of the polytheistic faith described by Fowler (1981) and Parks (2000) above. Although Kashmir seems to have only two overarching identity commitments – a black world and a white world – her abrupt and transient shifting between the two groups qualifies this as an appropriate analysis of her faith and identity relationship.
Figure 4.1: Sociogram of Kashmir's identity commitments.
As reflected in her impressionistic tale, Kashmir is a biracial woman, the child of an African American mother and Caucasian father. She grew up in a predominantly white suburb and attended the public predominantly white high schools in her area. Kashmir views her world through a black/white prism and her identity commitments reflect that. There are several theoretical frameworks, which could be used to analyze Kashmir’s identity development, including Josselson’s (1987) identity resolutions and Marcia Baxter Magolda’s (1999) self-authorship. However, Fowler (1981) and Parks (2000) are used here because of the unique connection their work makes between relationships with others and the ability to integrate multiple roles, contexts, and identities within one’s self-image or identity.

Kashmir’s current pattern of identity commitments is different from what it was in high school and from what it looks like when she goes home. At Rosse, Kashmir’s world and the focus of her most intense commitment, at least until the last interview, was very solidly African American. Her relationships with the black sorority QENZ and her African American boyfriend helped to cement her tie to the black community at Rosse. This intense connection to the Rosse black community is demonstrated through the following three quotes. The first deals with her decision to attend Rosse.

... it was so accepting and I was like, wow, these people are being cool with me and comfortable with me right from the start, I can come to school here and be these people’s friend and they would take me under their wing and that was like I never felt that kind of comfort with a group of black students before, in
high school and so it was like wow, I can change, I can be something that I have never experienced before in coming here... (Second interview, 2/23/01).

In this quote, Kashmir confesses that she came to Rosse anticipating and expecting the opportunity to “change” to “be something [she had] never experienced before,” to be black. In our first interview, Kashmir shared that she was never considered to be black by her friends in high school, who were all white, until they met her mother. As she says, “I didn’t associate much with black students in high school ... a lot of the girls didn’t like me ... and a lot of the guys didn’t want to talk to me because all I dated was the white guys. So that was a big issue, very much like I wasn’t black at my school ...” (First interview, 2/11/01). She was generally assumed to be white and therefore was related to as a white person. Rosse offered the possibility of a different experience, of exploring the other side of her racial identity in a way that had never been afforded her prior, despite her close connection with her mother’s family.

The next quote further demonstrates the connection Kashmir has made between identifying as a black female and her circle of associates.

Since I’ve come to college (pause) I think (pause) I identify myself more as a black female and I’m not exactly sure if that transition just happened when I came to college, when I started applying to colleges, I’m not exactly sure when that happened, I think that because my circle of friends is more that now that I more associate myself with that (Second interview, 2/23/01).

The “that” to which Kashmir is referring is black or being black. In other words, because she has mostly black friends now, as opposed to as when she was in high
school, she has begun to see herself, not as a biracial female, but as a black female. Moreover, she credits her sorority, QENZ, with being her link to the black female community on campus and her boyfriend with being her link to the entire black community. This will be discussed in further detail below.

The last quote supports the distinct separation pictured in the sociogram between what could be termed as Kashmir's black life at Rosse and her white life at home. Her own words ring out poignantly and with solemn resignation:

My, those parts of my childhood and growing up and even now are very separate. Rosse and being here at college is very separate from my life back home and when I'm here my friends are black, when I'm home the friends that I have are white and there's no // I dated black guys at Rosse and white guys at home and it's very, very separate. They run parallel, each, each life is kind of going on at the same time and I kind of cross over on those little baby stitches that connect, but never mixed (Second interview, 2/23/01).

Kashmir describes here two separate worlds that do not have any overlapping facets, except for herself. One can imagine that how she behaves and how she is treated differs across these two worlds. The psychological toll is unimaginable to me as I listen to her and becomes apparent in our later interviews as she discusses seeking counseling and needing to find healing.

As resolute as Kashmir's identity may seem as a black female from these quotes above, further conversation with her during the second interview, particularly, demonstrate that this is indeed a transient identity. Her attachment to that black
female identity was dependent on other’s feelings and attitudes and her persistence in
that identity has also been dependent on her perception of other’s attitudes and her
relationships with certain individuals, particularly her boyfriend. This abrupt and
discontinuous shift in identity from high school to college is reflected in the following
three quotes. In the first quote, Kashmir talks about what might have happened if her
first interactions with the black community at Rosse had been different.

... there was so much intimidation there and I think that coming to college is
that that intimidation would have still been there if I wouldn’t have felt the
warmth and the welcome of the black community from the jump, I probably
wouldn’t have been so close and part of the community and I probably would
have associated more with white students and I would have been one of those,
those I think she’s black, but we’re not sure, she doesn’t associate with black
people, it would have been like that and I think checking the box saying I was
an African American when I was applying here made all the difference in a
sense that it did bring me closer to the black community (Second interview,
2/23/01).

The intimidation that Kashmir is referring to here at the beginning of this section is
that which she felt in high school toward the black community. As she expresses here,
her identification with the black community at Rosse and her corollary self-
identification as a black female are grounded reflexively in the reaction of the black
community to her as a visitor during her senior year.
Secondly, her relationship to her black female identity is acknowledged as completely external to herself.

[How much ownership do you feel over your identity as a black female?] Not much ownership... If I have to go to another school, I fear whether or not the black females will be just as welcoming as they were here (pause) or not. ... So, ownership over being a black female (pause) it would, it was a title given to me when I came here and umm I've carried it with me over the last three years here and in a sense I think that it has made me stronger and made me have to deal with more race-oriented events and with different struggles within the black community, but I don't know how much it really is going to be with me when I leave here (Second interview, 2/23/01).

Again, Kashmir's comments strongly suggest that once she leaves Rosse, whether she carries the "title" black female with her will be fully dependent on whether or not other black females see her and relate to her as such. She has not internalized this identity, although she has over the last three years, adopted it as part of her self-concept and credits it with having had influence over her developmentally, "it has made me stronger."

Finally, Kashmir reasserts at the end of our second interview that her identity as a black woman has been explored through other people's perceptions and that her commitment to it is as fleeting as driving off campus.

Because, I came to this point of being this strong black female here at Rosse with him by my side and people see us as together and now it's like, okay, can I
do this, walk on my own sort of thing, and I don’t have, I don’t have
certainty in being a strong black woman, kind of contradicting there, but of
walking alone and saying you know I’m black and I’m proud (laugh), you
know, I think I do identify the fact that my relationship and my sisterhood and
all that stuff right now is what’s making me this black woman that everybody
sees (pause) because when I step away from that sisterhood and when I step
away from that relationship and I go home and I’m walking down the street
people don’t know and people // So people’s perception of what they think of
me affects me in a sense of who I think I am, depending on what circle I’m in
[right, right] (Second interview, 2/23/01).

This is the last statement Kashmir makes in the second interview. After she stopped
talking, there was a somewhat lengthy pause. I was blown away. I had never known
anyone to be so clear about saying that the identity they wore in public was not their
own. She simply sat there, fully poised, looking at me as though she had just said the
most obvious thing in the world.

Despite the transience of her identity as a black female, Kashmir knows that
this is a very unstable rock on which she sits. She recognizes the fact that she has been
tossed to and fro with every wind as it were and as come to a peace about the process
and finding an internal monitor. I quote her at some length here because of the depth
of her own insight and her perspective into the importance of identity integration.

I think it’s really important to like, finding out who you are is an ongoing
process, I think it’s like you do it your whole life, but I think that – knowing
that, like actually knowing that it is an ongoing process and that you have gotta
listen to your instincts about certain things. If I would have known that a long
time ago, I would have saved myself a lot of heartache [mutual wry laughter].

She continues,

Because I've gone back and forth so many times on my own identity just
because, you know, I've let other people into my life and they would influence
who I was one way or another just and I would let them do that because that's
who I wanted to be (Fourth interview, 5/2/01).

The openness and transparency of self which Kashmir shared herself with me
still amazes me as I write this. Kashmir is definitely the student in the group who I
visibly could see transform her mannerisms across the four interview sessions. In the
first session, she was very soft-spoken, almost sheepish in her body carriage. By the
last session, she was speaking boldly and with confidence, laughing more easily,
expressing amazement at herself – in early May 2001, this was not the same young lady
with whom I had spoken just three months earlier.

Ophelia – Diffused Polytheist

Polytheism has two possible manifestations in the patterns of faith and identity.
The first was just described through an analysis of Kashmir's commitments. The
second, Fowler (1981) describes as a diffuse attachment to several relational triads and
centers of value. This diffuse attachment is not intense, but rather, the diffused
polytheist can withdraw from any of those commitments at any give time (Fowler,
1981). It is this pattern of polytheism which describes Ophelia's relationships to her relational triads and self identity.

Figure 4.2 graphically represents Ophelia's identity commitments. Ophelia is not the only student in the study who had to work, however, she worked the most and continually referred to her work schedule as a factor which impacted her ability to become more actively involved in either of the organizations to which she is drawn: the women's center and the black student organization (BSO). At the end of our last interview, she informed me that she had dropped one of the three jobs she had been working, and expressed a great deal of relief that now she is "actually having fun as a student" (Fourth interview, 5/2/01).

Therefore, her connections to these groups is represented by thin, broken lines. Moreover, the several transplantations and school transfers she experienced during her elementary and secondary school years has caused her to refrain from forming an extensive friendship network. She described it as, "Well, for one thing I definitely didn't see school as a real social atmosphere, you know, 'cause I mean by eighth grade I learned you know, don't get attached to anybody, 'cause you're [right] just gonna move away from there" (First interview, 2/19/01). Ophelia later specifically says,

I guess for the whole social thing, I mean I socialize with a small group of people, I don't go to parties at all [okay], I haven't been to one Rosse party and I mean my best friend on campus lives in my room, so [mm 'hmm] my other one lives upstairs, so I mean it's pretty easy to get in touch with people to make sure I don't lose touch" (First interview, 2/19/01).
Therefore, in Figure 4.2, the circle representing her friendship network is comparatively small. However, not only is this circle of friends a small group, it is also apparently all or largely composed of other black students. Ophelia commented on the "irony" of this considering that the majority of her friends in high school were all white: "I really wasn't comfortable around black people before I came here. Which is, I think, the height of irony, go to a predominantly white school and make all black friends" (Second interview, 2/23/01).
Figure 4.2: Sociogram of Ophelia’s identity commitments.
Race and gender are the two primary value centers for Ophelia, along with her personal identity as a writer, although she states that she is “reluctant to label [herself] a writer, but sometimes that (pause) happens” (Second interview, 2/23/01). However, her commitment to these two centers of meaning making is not consistent. Unlike Kashmir, who finds her identity through her social relationships and then switches back and forth in an effort to please whoever is closest to her at the time, Ophelia rather consistently identifies both race and gender as important ways she makes meaning of her life and the world around her. As she says, “... it’s intuitively obvious that I’m a black woman ...” (Second interview, 2/23/01). Nevertheless, she is so loosely attached to those centers of meaning that she can pick up or drop them on a day-by-day basis. “Hmm, well this whole gender thing, okay [mm hmm] umm, last year I was really gung ho knowing about gender and I would try to say things like um, and I tended to ignore the whole race factor ...” (First interview 2/19/01). In a later interview, she repeats this theme at greater length.

He’ll, he’ll voice some issue about blackness to me, and I’ll be like, you know what, it’s not time for me to be black today, today I’m a feminist, [right] and tomorrow I’ll talk about black stuff, and the day after that I’m off, I’m not going to talk about any of that stuff, Imma talk about fashion and um makeup that day. So, its kind of this process of synthesizing is really important to me [uh huh] but it’s just like I’m really seeing kind of the impossibility of it you know sometimes, [mmm] I just // I don’t know what to do with myself, and those are the days when I say, no, just screw it, Imma talk about Brittany
Spears' clothes today or something. Whatever, you know and umm... (Third interview, 4/3/01).

The fact that she confesses in this quote that although synthesizing the pieces of her identity is important to her, she is “seeing” the impossibility of it. This is resonant of Kashmir as well, and likewise is reflective of Ophelia's lack of a more universal transcendent center of meaning to use to synthesize these subordinate pieces together.

Ophelia elaborated on her need to blend together and be cohesive, and this elaboration further warrants a polytheistic assessment. When I asked her how she wove together all of the pieces of herself that others assumed to be contradictory, her answer revealed a deep sense of frustration, confusion, and of being adrift.

I really don’t know how to synthesize everything. I don’t know what I want people to think of me as. I don’t know if I want to be you know a black writer, or a woman writer or a black woman writer or a kindergarten teacher, I don't know something inconsequential or things like that and I think at my worse what I do is completely withdraw and I get angry at all of it. You know I just, I don’t care about being a woman, I don’t care about being black, I don’t care about being anything except for being in the bed and asleep and not worrying about any of it (Second interview, 2/23/01).

Despite Ophelia’s confusion, frustration, and “Imma talk about Brittany Spears’ clothes” days, she does recognize that the process of weaving herself together is important to her and that she “would really like to be able to do it” (Third interview, 4/3/01). She continues, “I think that’s part of the reason why I’m crazy because it’s
kind of like I’m trying to figure out where my priorities should lie, you know....umm, particularly where um, race and gender are concerned...” (Third interview, 4/3/01). In order to achieve her goal, however, Ophelia will need to search for a center of meaning and value that is capable of transcending and including her identities as woman and black.

My conversations with Ophelia were always lively and spotted with bursts of laughter from both she and I. After an initial timidity, she opened up to me very easily and adopted a very comfortable posture and speaking tone with me. For our third interview, she had missed our scheduled appointment, but walked over to the room I was in from her residence hall in a pair of powder blue PowerPuff Girls pyjamas and house shoes and a huge smile. That was Ophelia.

In this discussion, I have suggested that both Kashmir and Ophelia are most appropriately read as polytheists in the faith-identity typology. This should not be taken to mean that Kashmir and Ophelia’s life experiences are similar or overlapping. By contrast, Kashmir and Ophelia have led very different lives, with the exception of the early absence of their fathers and their admitted discomfort and estrangement from other black students before coming to Rosse. Indeed, it is this very alterity in their life histories, which makes their parallel faith-identity relationships both compelling and significant.
The Henotheists

The second faith-identity pattern discussed by Fowler (1981) and Parks (2000) is called henotheism. Henotheism, from the Greek for ‘one God,’ suggests that the individual has identified a single source of value, meaning, and dependency. However, this god is more comparable to the ascribed deity of an individual family or clan, but which is not assigned status as the only god (Fowler, 1981). In other words, as Fowler (1981) characterizes it, the henotheistic pattern of faith and identity reflects a deep investment in a transcending center of value and meaning making through which one focuses his or her personality and outlook, but this center is inappropriate and incapable of supporting the individual in the face of crises and loss (Parks, 2000). This center then ultimately becomes an idol, the elevation to “central, life-defining value ... of a limited and finite good” (Fowler, 1988, p. 20).

The self and confidence in one’s own abilities may be the focus of henotheistic faith, as in the doctor who is always an M.D., who sees himself as God for his patients (Fowler, 1981). However, henotheism can be masked behind more admirable endeavors. As Fowler (1981) explains, causes and organizations which require self-sacrifice and almost complete commitment often become idols. Here, the self is lost in the service of a “transcendingly important” yet finite cause (Fowler, 1988, p. 21). At its most extreme, henotheism becomes fetishism, a faith which focuses on an extremely narrow value center and source of dependency. Sex and money are easy examples of such fetishistic faith (Fowler, 1981).
Among this group of students, both Poke and K.B. stand out as reflections of faith and identity grounded in henotheism. However, the henotheism reflected in their interviews differs from each other and parallels two of the forms of henotheism discussed above.

**Reading Poke as a Henotheist**

Poke describes his social relationships through the character of his relationships with people as either family, friends, or associates, and not through his organized campus involvements. The one exception to this is KNGZ, which he firmly positions as part of his circle of family on campus. Within this, Poke identifies his involvements as either with black people or with white people. He describes himself as the man in the middle in these relationships. Therefore, in Poke's sociogram (see Figure 4.3), two large groups of individuals are represented, blacks and whites and Poke is illustrated as the bridge between those two groups. Also, the family that Poke talks about is mostly black, while his friends and associates are of both races. Moreover, the size of the groups has varied over his time at Rosse, such that every year he has more and more associates and fewer family and friends. As Poke says in his own words:

But I've noticed the change from what I consider family, friends, and associates — and none of those deal with immediate family. Like I'm in a fraternity and when I look at my brothers, they're not my friends, they're honestly my family. And I have other people that aren't in my fraternity of other races that I can really confide in and say, hey, those are really good friends. And then I have other people on campus where — we'll see each other in passing, we'll talk,
we might have lunch and we have a good time, but I knew if something really
hits the fan that they wouldn’t be there. And every year, (pause) I’d say I have
more associates, less friends and family... (Second interview, 2/20/01).

And later, he continues:

Most of my family on campus is black. In fact, I could (pause) solely say that
most of the people I would consider to be family on this campus are black,
unless I’m missing somebody, ... and that doesn’t belittle my friends – cause I
have some great friends, but there’s definitely gaps (Second interview, 2/20/01).
Figure 4.3: Sociogram of Poke’s identity commitments.
Poke's narrative suggests a henotheistic faith and identity pattern because he seems to rely on his openness and ability to function as the "man in the middle," as a bridge as the primary mode of meaning making for his life and the center of his dependency. This is illustrated in the following four quotes from the first two interviews. Discussing his reason for choosing Rosse:

I figured (pause) the reason I didn't want to go the most is like if those guys graduate and I'm stuck at Rosse (pause) I don't want the only minority students to be brought out here to be people I can't relate to [right]. So that scared me. But I figured if everybody who gets in, like me decides they're not going to go for that reason, nobody'll be there, so if I go somebody else will say they will go. You know what I mean? So I was like if we all [God this sounds familiar], yea, and I was like if we all get there and really have a good time, like we can leave our mark, change some minds and that'd be cool (First interview, 2/6/01).

Discussing whether he feels God put him here for a reason:

Yea, wacky as it sounds, God put everybody here for a certain reason, it has to be – but I've noticed all throughout my life I've been in the situation of being the man in the middle. I have friends on this side, friends on this side and then I'm in the middle and through that I'm teaching these people ... (First interview, 2/6/01)

Regarding feeling conflict within himself as to his identity:

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Umm – conflict about who I am? (pause) Not really. It just seems that every year that goes by, I know I can still play the field regardless of where I am, or I can associate with any group of people I feel like I can. You can drop me off under the ocean and I'm sure I'll make a few friends somewhere (Second interview, 2/20/01).

Relating how he got in a situation in which he was called a "nigger" in a group of white people from the local community outside Rosse:

Right, and my friend and I were sitting there and we're like here we are actually doing you guys a favor because you didn't have something to do, we're trying to be nice, maybe and I take it upon myself – I'm sure it was probably the first time they really hung out with some black people, so I like that because if this is going to be their first time, let it be somebody like me or one of my friends and not somebody pulling a gun on them so they can be like, yea, man I told you about those ni- (Second interview, 2/20/01).

Throughout these instances and numerous others in the interviews, Poke relays his consistent trust in his own ability to act as ambassador to white people and to bridge black and white people together through educating each group about their commonalities. This is augmented by his feeling that the reason he was born may be to be just such an ambassador. Particularly in assessing his decision to attend Rosse College, paramount in his mind was his responsibility and ability to be an effective change agent and he cites this as the real reason he decided to attend Rosse, although he describes it as "the corniest". Further, the fact that he related my question about
whether he ever felt conflict about who he was completely as an issue of his ability to make and maintain relationships, suggests that Poke has put a great deal of value and power in his openness and “man in the middle” status as a locus of his identity. One could infer that if he were to suddenly find himself in a situation in which he was not able to make friends, that his identity might begin to lose focus as well.

However, Poke also seems to recognize the insufficiency of this value center. He does point to a more transcendent center of meaning making that is capable of sustaining him when his ability to be a bridge or to be the “man in the middle” fails him. This is illustrated in the following quotes. Explaining why spirituality is a central component of his identity:

All right. I put it on there for a couple of reasons, like whenever there’s been a serious struggle or problem in my life – all of a sudden it wasn’t a problem anymore. Like something happened I’m // where I know I could have died but I didn’t die because (pause) for some reason... like there’s something greater out there. That was supposed to be the end of me (First interview, 2/6/01).

Regarding his inability to influence other’s perceptions of him:

But no matter how much money I get, or no matter how well liked I am, in the back of a lot of people’s mind, they’re still going to say that he’s just black. You know what I mean, and then I think that’s very frustrating because I...

...might be open to an extreme, but like, even if I’m dating a girl ... if she’s not of my race, I’m like man, she is about to go through some stuff ... through no fault of her own....Like there’s going to be a time when she’s in the car with me
and she gets pulled over for the first time, or if she sees me, a gun put to the back, put to my back for the first time for something I didn’t do. And that really bothers me... (Second interview, 2/20/01).

When he feels like his world is falling apart:

I always know in the worst moments that’s pretty much when I do my crawl back to God. That’s pretty bad, I mean, I’m a religious person, but [hmm mmm] I tend to only pray in like serious times (Fourth interview, 5/2/01).

In the first quote, Poke continues on to relay two stories of when he should have died or at least gotten into pretty serious trouble, but did not, “for some reason.” The first was a very bad car accident that nearly totaled his car and he wasn’t wearing his seat belt, but yet he was able to walk away from the accident with “no scratches, no bruises, no soreness, no nothing.” He told me that as the car was spinning, before he finally crashed, trunk first, into a tree, that he was praying to God. Connected with the third quote, Poke is aware that his ability to form friendships even “under the ocean” is revealed as totally irrelevant in the face of possible injury or death, “like in serious times.” Nevertheless, he does not seem to see the relevance of God in negotiating his relationships with others. He remains “frustrated” by the fact that he will be incapable of teaching some people or protecting the people he cares about from other’s close-mindedness. Moreover, he seems to explain that close-mindedness as defying his best efforts at being “well liked” or financially successful. The issue of financial success came up earlier in the second interview when Poke described what it meant to him to be a black male and that, in spite of Chris Rock’s wealth, there were
no white people who would be willing to trade places with him. Further, there seems
to be no hope for these people who will remain unswayed by the force of Poke’s
personality. There is never any mention of turning them over to “something greater
out there.”

The surrounding context of these comments is also interesting. Poke’s
narrative flowed easily, with few notable pauses and without him apparently searching
for words. His mannerisms with me were very easy-going and suggested a high level
of comfort and relaxation. He indeed communicated himself to me as the friendly,
open person that he described himself to be through the stories he told me of his life
and relationships with others. These were issues that Poke evidently had thought
about prior to my contact with him as the stories he told me were very close to the
surface of his mind and did not require a great deal of probing. He made himself
extremely accessible to me, both emotionally and in terms of scheduling times for the
interviews. Poke’s dialogue with me came so fluidly and so consistently, that I often
wondered if he was hiding something from me. However, even when I asked him if
there were ever any chinks in his armor, so to speak, he persisted in revealing none.

Reading K.B. as a Poly-Henotheist

At the time of our discussions during this winter and early spring, K.B.’s
comments suggested to me that he would be more accurately interpreted as falling
between two faith and identity patterns, instead fitting neatly within one. For his first
two years at Rosse, K.B. describes himself as “I was doing everything” (First interview,
2/14/01). Now, since his return from a semester abroad experience at another
institution, he has limited himself to only three organizational involvements, his fraternity, KNGZ, the black student organization, and the campus multicultural center.

As seen in Figure 4.4, however, his world of commitments cannot be identified through these organizational affiliations, with the exception of his fraternity, which he says, "really did become a family." Poke also described his relationship with his fraternity brothers in KNGZ as a family connection, which went beyond the business of the formal organization. Despite this family bond, and in stark contrast to Poke who "never feels out of sync" with his brothers, K.B. says that "I still don't necessarily feel comfortable in it when we're all together" (Second interview, 2/19/01). Instead, he says that he deals with this by "trying to foster really good individual relationships between me and each of the other members" (Second interview, 2/19/01). This is indicated in the sociogram by the single arrows which connect K.B. and individual members of KNGZ, represented by the letters X, Y, and Z.
Figure 4.4: Sociogram of K.B.'s identity commitments.
Along with his fraternity brothers, Black women figure prominently in his relational commitments. As he said, "I have a very good relationship with my mom" (First interview, 2/14/01). This early relationship was probably the origin for his latter statement during that interview that, "all my best friends have always been girls." Moreover, he said that he "definitely feel[s] most comfortable in groups of minority women, particularly black" (Second interview, 2/19/01). This comfort was tied to the fact that black women related to him in more "expressive" and "compassionate" ways when he talked and that they "tend to relate to it or understand a little bit more" (Second interview, 2/19/01). However, he did recognize that there were times when "there's also a part of [him] that, that being male can't totally fit into that" (Second interview, 2/19/01).

Lastly, K.B. did talk often about being in predominantly white groups, usually in the context of his classes, and that he tries "to steer clear of those type of settings," because he feels that he has to "silence the racial voice" by not speaking out on issues which he perceives have racial implications. He also said that he had learned that "it's just getting along a lot easier if you don't talk about racial things in class" even though he did not want to do that "because that's the way that I see it" (Second interview, 2/19/01). He compared these experiences to feeling "stifled" and overall declared that "I just don't feel comfortable" eating in the main cafeteria because he felt surrounded by "white male privilege" (Second interview, 2/19/01).

K.B. seemed to have a transcendent value center in racialized discourses and had committed himself to what could be termed a "black agenda" for his time at Rosse.
However, this noble henotheistic faith was joined with what appeared to be a very polytheistic orientation to understanding both himself and the world around him. Like Kashmir, K.B. was also very dependent on receiving positive affirmation from others and filtered his self-assessments through how he felt he was being perceived by others. K.B. discussed in the following quote how he began his involvement with the Rosse community:

I was trying to stay // or get involved in everything and I did BSO, and [the multicultural admissions group], and anything multi-cultural or whatever, I was doing here [the multicultural center] and a lot of other stuff, with just admissions and hostings and phoning. And I got so involved in everything and I wasn't eating right and I got sick, and I was fatigued and I was tired and I was depressed (First interview, 2/19/01).

K.B. pursued his involvement with “anything multi-cultural” to the point that he was suffering from overexhaustion. This narrowly focused faith-identity commitment is reflective of his worldview. “...the way that I look at things or see things in terms of issues or things that we’re talking about, things that [happen] on campus is different than some people, because I definitely see things through a quote-unquote racial lens or whatever or see any racial ramifications for it” (Second interview, 2/19/01).

According to K.B., the primary difference between himself and most of the other students at Rosse was that he sees things in a racialized context. This undergirded one of his main reasons for joining his fraternity, KNGZ.
"I still went into the group because I felt that even though I wasn’t necessarily like them, we are all still black men and there was some commonality of experience because of that ... I think it’s important to showcase that we could all still be black men unified under that moniker, but still be diverse within themselves, I think it was important to showcase that. I thought that it was going to be an opportunity for, it seemed like brothers who were about, they had something going on, and it seemed like they were about something and wanted to kind of, in many ways counter the negative images that were out there about black men and kind of, I don’t know, proactively deal with a lot of that."

K.B.’s ‘black agenda’ represents his primary way of making meaning at Rosse and is his primary, if not sole, analytical lens of his experiences there.

Yet, as described earlier, the racial lens was not the orienting structure for his sense of affirmation in the area of his identity he feels most strongly tied to now, being a black male. In fact, K.B. admits that he also joined KNGZ because “to an extent it largely did feel like it was expected of me, that I looked at and hoped I would do it” (Second interview, 2/19/01). Along with this, it was a close friendship he had formed with another black male that also “had a lot to do” with him deciding to pledge. The element of the importance of external expectations resonated throughout my sessions with K.B. and was reflected in the following passage, in which he told me about a time when he thought seriously about deactivating from the group but chose not to because it was also a time of great organizational stress.
I was like okay, we got one more thing against us, we need to, we're looking worse than ever, we really need to jump back into it and get things done to counter all of this. But, it was KNGZ, not K.B. doing everything, but that's what it came up to be and I couldn't deal with that, it was really, well I thought of quitting, I thought of deactivating and everything and, but I just couldn't because, first of all after losing so many people that quick, they wouldn't have taken it very well at all. I really think my brothers would have taken it as a snub and that would have been the end of our friendship period. I would not have been able to talk with them or anything like that for the remainder of my time here. And I mean honestly, I care about them a lot, so I couldn't abandon them” (Second interview, 2/19/01).

Despite his final comment that re-centered his decision to remain in the group as an internal resolution of his attachment to them and concern for his fraternity brothers, the major impetus of the passage cannot be ignored. The major reason he maintained his membership in the group was because he could not face losing that connection with them. Their opinion of him was more important than his own mental fatigue or the lack of care they showed him by letting him do all the work of the organization alone.

In our last session together, K.B. did express to me that his dependence on other people is shifting. He acknowledged that he had become too dependent on the black man who was his best friend here and that he was beginning to “try to solve my
problems myself." Nevertheless, there was still a struggle with relying on and trusting in other people.

... in terms of relying on other people, yea, that's what I want to do, that's what they're there for and I want to show, you know, that I have this trust or whatever, this need for them, but at the same time I don't want to be too dependent on anybody, you know I can't, an', an', at the end of the day I'm all I got you know (Fourth interview, 5/2/01).

Being away from Rosse seemed to amplify his self-reliance. He talked about how he was able to cope the semester he spent at another school. It was apparent that being out of the Rosse context seemed to open up new possibilities of being for K.B.

And then also just learning to, uhh, realizing that although it's good for me to be able to be a social person, I'm perfectly okay on my own, you know. There were times when I would just go in the mall on my own and so that helped me survive too, the fact that I like being alone, I don't need constant validation from somebody else, that helped me survive (Fourth interview, 5/2/01).

K.B. definitely seemed to be heading more firmly away from a polytheistic faith-identity pattern. Indeed, he still has another year at Rosse, and there are more challenges ahead for him. He told me that our sessions were "therapeutic" for him, yet, he admitted that he was still holding back. He had not told me everything. There were things he was not comfortable sharing, although our relationship extended beyond the interview sessions into late-night talks about the speaker that was just on campus and emails that were not related to the study. It was clear, however, that K.B.
internalized his feelings and emotions a great deal and so I am not surprised that our interviews, although they almost always went over time, barely scratched the surface of his feelings, reflections, and hopes about the issues we discussed. K.B. was the student who was the most openly excited about the topic of the study when I introduced it to him in February. He was also the one who was the most eager, along with Kashmir, to read my analyses. K.B. was very accommodating of me, although it should have been the other way around, I suppose and we developed an easy rapport.

As stated above in relation to Kashmir and Ophelia, the categorizing of Poe and K.B. as henotheists should not be used to obviate the very deep differences in their perspectives and life histories. These two young men have almost nothing in common beyond their involvement in KNGZ, and the motivations for their involvement differ as well. Nevertheless, as was said earlier, the very difference between them makes their commonality within this interpretive frame significant.

The Radical Monotheist

Since faith, as understood by modern theology, is universal and not parallel to religious institutions or culturally-informed visions of theism, monotheism then, in the context of this typology of faith and identity relationships, is also not specific to any one cultural embodiment of faith or spirituality (Fowler, 1988; Love & Talbot, 1999; Parks, 2000). Nevertheless, radical monotheism, in contrast to both polytheism and henotheism, displays an ultimate trust and loyalty in a center of value and power that is neither an extension of individual or organizational ego, nor can be inhabited in any finite cause or institution (Fowler, 1981). As Parks (2000) expands, this pattern of
meaning is located in a center of power and value which is "adequate to all the ongoing conditions of the experiences of persons and their communities" (p. 23). In other words, that center of commitment is the lens through which all other commitments are analyzed. It reveals a consciousness of the foundation of the universe, of something which not only transcends us, but inhabits our very being (Parks, 2000).

This is not to say that radical monotheists negate the importance of other less encompassing commitments and value centers, but rather that these centers are prioritized according to their ability to commune with the all encompassing, foundational center of meaning (Fowler, 1981). Some would relate this to the identification and surrendering to the image of a Supreme Being, Great Spirit - God. However, in doing so, this God cannot be confined to a doctrinal understanding, it cannot be exclusive. If so, it actually represents a form of henotheism, albeit a more noble form perhaps, but it is an idol nonetheless.

**Reading Sage as a Radical Monotheist**

Consistent with the typology, my reading of Sage as an exemplar of emergent radical monotheism is not based in her Christian faith, nor in her active involvement with the Christian community at Rosse. As I will demonstrate below, it is based in her trust and loyalty to something both transcendent and intimate.

As depicted in Figure 4.5, Sage had several very exclusive identity triads and commitments that represented her involvement in the Rosse community. The groups represented in the sociogram parallel the most significant pulls in Sage's self-definition of her identity as Black, African, woman, Christian, and a person who "like[d] to have
a good time” (Second interview, 2/19/01). She continued later to say, “I have to define them as my Christian friends, or as my sorority friends, or as my volleyball girls...” (Second interview, 2/19/01). The broken lines represent her sense of being “out of sync with all these different groups in some fashion,” with the sole exception of QENZ, where she doesn’t “feel that sense of alterity” when she is with them (Second interview, 2/19/01). The double-headed arrows used to connect Sage’s self with all these groups indicate that she did feel herself to be a part of and to be reflected in each of these competing triads. However, there was no connection or overlap between these groups, other than herself. As she said, “there seems to be no unifying thread aside from me” (Second interview, 2/19/01).
Figure 4.5: Sociogram of Sage’s identity commitments.
The all encompassing and foundational center of value and power for Sage was her faith in the ultimate purpose of her life and that God's hand was directing her. This was not a fatalistic faith, where she believed that she had no choice in the direction her life took her. Unlike Poke, she did not simply fall into decisions, because "there was nothing I could do" (Poke, first interview, 2/6/01). Rather, she fully believed that everything had a purpose to it and that everything she did must also have a purpose. "I think things should have a purpose, not just necessarily for the sake of doing whatever," as she states (Second interview, 2/19/01). This purpose was God's will for her life, as she saw it. The expression of such a faith can be found also in the Christian scriptures, the Bible, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28, KJV). The assessment of her faith as Sage's guiding principle is warranted by the three quotes below. She stated the following, in relation to how she saw God impacting her ability to weave these different parts of herself together:

Has my spirituality and/or how I see God affected my ability to weave all the pieces together? Yea. [Okay, how? (laugh)] (pause) I think there is a reason why I am pulled the way that I am, umm, I think I can tell how God is moving in my life through the relationships that I keep (pause) and which isn't to imply that relationships bad equals God's relationship bad, it isn't that one-one correlation but the way that I care about the relationships that I keep and the way that I think about the relationships that I'm in says something about what
God's trying to do in me and/or what God's trying to do through me (Second interview, 2/19/01).

In this quote, Sage discussed what she depended on when it felt like her world was falling apart.

No, I depend on, I cling to the hope that (pause) everything works out well in the end....Umm, there, there are times when it's harder for me to get myself to believe it, just cause I think, it might seem just a little bit gloomy, (pause) [inaudible], but it's always there, in the back of my mind, otherwise (pause) otherwise, my existence is totally arbitrary, and if everything doesn't work out in the end, then anything can go wrong and not be fixed and that's not something I can accept. Like there has to be a purpose for everything (Fourth interview, 5/2/01).

Sage explained that this hope was grounded in her beliefs about God:

Umm, my belief that God ultimately wants what's good for us (pause) and will steer us in that direction if we allow him to (pause) that everything is an opportunity to (pause) put our faith and our trust in something, someone you don't understand and can't attempt to understand (Fourth interview, 5/2/01).

The following represents the principle she used in thinking through how she wove herself together:

I'm just, (pause) especially with the Christian community that I'm in because my spirituality is something that I can't just let go of. And a lot of the way that I re-enforce that is by being among other people who encourage me to think
about it (pause) and if I feel out of sync with those people, then I'm out of sync with myself and it just perpetuates problems that I'm having elsewhere (Second interview, 2/19/01).

My conversations with Sage continually revolved around the importance of being whole, of being able to weave the pieces of herself together, of finding herself constantly having to explain groups of people to each other, and thereby constantly explaining pieces of herself, because "people...pick and choose what they like to see" (Second interview, 2/19/01). These explanations usually involved members of the group of people she identified as her "Christian friends," and they typically took on the nature of defending herself and deciding whether or not to evade an argument. She almost relished the opportunity to discuss these issues, because, as she stated in the second interview, "This has not been a good semester for weaving things together."

This statement and the last quote cited above, which I listed out of chronological order purposefully, led me to trouble Sage's dependency in the faith that "everything works out well in the end."

Consistent with the analysis of this faith-identity pattern, Sage had trouble maintaining her faith in God's purposefulness as the primary and prioritizing center of value and meaning in her life. As Fowler (1981) explained, this pattern of faith, radical monotheism, is rarely consistently actualized in persons or communities. Instead, it is too easy to lapse into henotheistic or even polytheistic forms of faith and identity, because those pulls constantly surround people (Fowler, 1981).
For Sage, the priority she placed in relationships and her need to be in sync with the Christian community at Rosse, continually threatened to pull her away from her radical monotheistic faith, into a faith commitment and self-identity that would be reliant on maintaining positive, harmonious relationships with the Rosse Christian community. This struggle was depicted in the last quote used above, "a lot of the way that I re-enforce [her spiritual center] is by being among other people who encourage me to think about it (pause) and if I feel out of sync with those people, then I'm out of sync with myself" (Second interview, 2/19/01). Later in the same interview, Sage revisited this theme, specifically regarding how her faith impacted her ability to see herself as integrated and whole.

I get so caught up on the relationships with other people and other things and other groups and that just frustrates me more, which is why all the stuff with the Christian community is so troubling. Because they should be my safety net and (pause) and they're not...It's just a feeling of not in it and as long as I feel out of discord with people that I relate with spiritually, as far as I can't communicate openly and honestly with people that I look to for guidance, for discourse about where I am in my faith, I think in a lot of ways hampers my ability to look at myself.

Sage also clearly acknowledged that this struggle with her relationships with other people was problematic, but she was unclear as to how to make them less important and was not sure if she really wanted them to be less important. Sage continued from the last quote, "Maybe that's part of the point, that I'm focusing too
much on the people and need to stop like holding on to people.” At the end of our last conversation, Sage reflected on her desire to have the kind of outlook where “you could be poor and butt-naked in the middle of winter with nowhere to live and you wouldn’t care” and her inability to attain that state of what she called “joyfulness.”

I see joyfulness as the outward (pause) whatchamacallit, what’s it called, outward, sign of inner peace, inner tranquility, of God working through you and so I feel as though, I’m letting a lot of stuff get in the way that doesn’t need to and like I don’t feel as though people can do anything about that and I don’t know that I want anything done about that...

Through the patterns of faith and identity, a very interesting portrait of the students has been developed. In this portrait, certain pairings are formed, Kashmir and Ophelia and Poke and K.B., indicative of somewhat parallel understandings or experiences. Also, a particular student, Sage, emerges as an exemplar of the future toward which Fowler (1981) believes we are necessarily headed and which Parks (2000) heralds as a worthy faith. However, this is only one way to read these students’ lives.

**Second Theoretical Tale: Intersectionality**

When read through the lens of the Multidimensional Identity Model, developed by Reynolds and Pope (1991), somewhat different portraits emerge. This interpretive framework, allows me to more fully engage the play of external definitions and expectations with the possibility and articulation of identity integration in these students in a way that I could not through Fowler’s (1981) interpretive framework of faith and identity patterns.
Reynolds and Pope's (1991) model emerged from their study of individuals who encompass multiple oppressed identities, people who are lesbian women of color, for instance. Further, it is rooted in an optimal Afrocentric epistemology, as articulated by Myers (1981), and which emphasizes connection throughout all life and denounces separations (Myers, 1988; Reynolds & Pope, 1991). The first option represents individuals who have passively accepted an assigned identification with one aspect of the self, such as black or female or lesbian. The second includes individuals, who also identify with only one aspect of their identity, but this a conscious, internalized commitment. The third option involves those who decided to embrace all aspects of their identities, but live them out in separate and possibly unconnected worlds. The last option represents individuals who have taken their multiple identities and blended them together to form a new identity. By definition, the authors assert that women of color, bisexual individuals and gay and lesbian people of color are examples of communities which have embraced the intersections of their identities (Reynolds & Pope, 1991). Following the first option, the remaining options are presumed to be conscious and internally assigned.

The model is figured as a square divided into four parts, separated by broken lines and with an empty center, which represents the reality and possibility of moving between and throughout the square. The square is also meant to belie the non-progressive, non-developmental, and non-hierarchical relationship among the four options represented there. However, according to an optimal Afrocentric understanding, progression is necessarily implied by the emphasis on connection and
denunciation of separation. Therefore, the last option which involves individuals who
consciously identify with combined aspects of self, would be the most optimal
resolution. Yet, the model remains non-hierarchical, in that there is no set pattern for
moving through the four possible options.

Reading the data from the students' lives that has already been introduced, in a
strict fashion results in an interesting assessment. Although Poke does not qualify as
an individual with multiple oppressed identities according to Reynolds and Pope's
(1991) definition, I have chosen to include him in this analysis, because of the
connection he named between the race and gender facets of his identity. K.B. does
encompass multiple oppressions, because of his class reference as "truly working class." Kashmir, Sage, and Ophelia all encompass multiple oppressions, simply because they
have all identified as women of color. Therefore, all five of the students would be
categorized in the last option, those individuals with combined aspects of self.
However, as suggested by the faith interpretation presented earlier, this masks the very
discreet differences between how these students prioritize and articulate their
identities. Nevertheless, Reynolds and Pope's (1991) model can still inform a different
reading of the data and produce a different portrait of the students.

The entry to the Multidimensional Identity Model comes through the passive
acceptance of an identity aspect assigned to the individual by their society. The
society's perspective gradually loses importance as the individual claims internal
ownership over more and more aspects of their identity. Therefore, the importance of
external definitions and expectations can be said to correlate indirectly with the degree
of internalized commitment to the multidimensional identity. I have plotted this relationship for each of the students in Figure 4.6. All the students first came to value the significance of their multiple identities through external sources. As Poke reflected, "I'd say it took the outside for me to notice it ..." (Second interview, 2/20/01). Sage also spoke of an external prompter when she reflected on her early days in private school, "The negative experience came in the fact that it was very frustrating to see myself as being classified as one of the rest and not being able to identify with the people around me" (First interview, 2/6/01). Ophelia's comments were poignant in their simplicity, "I think of it this way, while I've been here [at Rosse] it seems like umm, well, you get real special when you're a minority here and I never knew being black was so cool you know..." (Second interview, 2/23/01).

Although they all identified an external origin for their later identity commitment, the continued importance and relevance of this external origin, whether that be a romantic partner, friends, or family, varied for each student from low to medium to high.
Figure 4.6: Plot of importance of external definitions by degree of identity commitments.
The variation among the students manifested by this plot in Figure 4.6 is not within their degree of commitment to a multiple sociocultural identity (along the horizontal axis), indeed Kashmir is the only student who has not made a firm commitment to a particular intersected identity. Rather, the variation is apparent along the vertical axis, depicting the degree of importance of external definition and expectations. Kashmir and K.B. are at the top because of their articulations of their dependence on other's perceptions for their decisions regarding identity commitments (Kashmir) or ways of making meaning of experience and making relational commitments (K.B.). Ophelia is not has high as Kashmir or KB, but because she sometimes "lose[s] touch over that ownership," because of other's interest in her uniqueness as a black female, she is positioned medium-high in the range. Sage is positioned more in the middle. Her battle with whether she should care about the close-mindedness of her friends in the Christian community at Rosse was preventing her from releasing that altogether and just being herself regardless. Poke stands out alone at the bottom of the axis. Although it "took the outside" for him to notice it, once he did, "it was all me." He seemed to easily sweep away other's expectations and definitions of him. Poke deferred instead to an internal barometer and kept around him those who supported and accepted the identity he had crafted for himself.

Through this interpretive framework, grounded in the Reynolds and Pope (1991) model, Poke now comes out as the shining example and the parallels among the group have shifted. This is not to say that either this reading of the data or the first is more accurate, correct, or encompassing. Indeed, this assessment greatly differs from
the first interpretation, in terms of both content and complexity. This representation of the students is not adequately complex given the data. However, as stated at the outset of this chapter, any interpretive framework can only hope to show a partial view of the subject and multiple readings and analyses only add to the complexity of the understandings elicited from them (Honan et al., 2000). The simplicity of this interpretation, therefore, should serve as further caution against using any one interpretive framework when analyzing inherently complex issues, such as self-identity through complex data sources, such as narratives of experience.

**Third Theoretical Tale: Optimal Conceptualization**

In this last theoretical tale, I interpret the students’ stories and words through an optimal conceptualization drawn by Myers and her colleagues (1991). In this interpretive framework, “the process of integrating and expanding” one’s sense of self or identity takes center stage. As reviewed in Chapter Two, the authors discuss the myriad ways in which this society and traditional understandings of development reflect what they call a suboptimal worldview that inappropriately places supreme priority on the material manifestations of self and conditions of life. They suggest, among other points, that the “concurrent consideration of multiple oppressions instead of singly considering oppression based on race, ethnicity, sex, sexual preference, or age” is a more accurate representation of a person’s life (Myers et al., 1991, p. 55). The optimal conceptual system holds certain tenets in common with both the spiritual development theory and multidimensional identity. Like Fowler (1981), Parks (2000), and other spiritual development theorists, the optimal conceptual
system marries spiritual and material realities and places primary importance on the spiritual rather than the material (Myers et al., 1991). Also, in common with Reynolds and Pope (1991), the authors suggest that oppression is an “internal construct” that operates “whenever [people] allow their power to be externalized” (Myers et al., 1991, p. 56).

Yet, an optimal conceptualization goes beyond both of these to picture the self as multidimensional, composed of the ancestors, the unborn, nature, and community; intrinsically worthy as unique expressions of divine or spiritual energy; and purposed toward recognition of the self as connected with all of life, other human beings, nature, and community (Myers et al., 1991). In this view, identity development is seen as the lifelong process of continual interaction between the individual and his or her sociocultural environment. In this interaction, the individual encounters repeated opportunities to build a sense of wholeness, encompassing differentiation, coherence, and harmony. The material manifestations of identity, such as race, ethnicity, sex, and age, are used as lenses through which the individual can come to a greater degree of self-knowledge. The fullest manifestation of which is the realization that the individual’s segmented identities are not separate at all and are truly interrelated and interdependent. The whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts (Myers et al., 1991). The model of development they propose identified as Optimal Theory Applied to Identity Development (OTAID), and has six phases beyond infancy: Individuation, Dissonance, Immersion, Internalization, Integration, and Transformation (Myers et al., 1991).
When applied to this study and the students' stories, yet a third picture of the students emerges. Another partial view emerges and the [false hierarchies] of the previous two tales again collapse and recompose. None of the students occupy either the first or the last phases of the model. However, when viewed through the OTAID, none of the students have reached Integration, phase five, either. In this phase, individuals attain a deeper self-knowledge which changes their assumptions about the world. There is a stronger inner security about one's sense of self and relationships and perceptions about others reflect this inner peace. Communities and networks of support are no longer identified by material representations of identity, such as race, age, ethnicity, or sex, because there is an awareness that all individuals can either oppress or be oppressed. Instead, common values and interests prevail as the motivation for forming relationships and evaluating behavior (Myers et al., 1991).

As is revealed in the data already presented, none of the students in the group has yet arrived at such a place of peace and congruence. For instance, Poke talks about how his community has shrunken, not expanded, as he has become more aware of other's racism and less tolerant and willing to "teach" other people. Sage has formed different networks of support representing various facets of her material identity, which would not be able to relate to each other on common intrinsic interests. K.B., who places black men at the "bottom of the social ladder," still feels that his racial identity makes it less likely that he or other black men could be oppressors of other people. These three students, though, together occupy the fourth phase of the OTAID, Internalization.
In the Internalization phase, the individual has attached a sense of worth to those aspects of him or herself, which have been identified as significant or central to the individual’s identity. These central aspects of the self are recognized as one or multiple among many and develop a tolerance of others (Myers et al., 1991). Sage, Poke, and K.B. are all aware of the many ways in which race, class, and for Sage, gender all work to oppress certain groups of people. Sage is particularly aware of the ways that race and gender can work together to oppress all classes of women. Moreover, although she sometimes is frustrated at others’ inability to see beyond their own parochial perspectives, she is yet tolerant of this and does not internalize others’ myopia to the point where she begins to doubt herself. For example, when she was confronted with a negative opinion of sororities, expressed by one of her Christian friends, Sage did not begin to doubt her decision to pledge the QENZ sorority. Instead, she queried her friend further, and later discussed with me that she understood why her friend made that comment. Poke also clearly exemplifies this phase in his stalwart self-confidence with the identity he has formed as a black male and he actively engages himself as a bridge between his white friends and his black friends, enabling understanding and tolerance between the two groups. Poke exhibited much of this activity in high school and his early years at Rosse. At this point, it becomes necessary to address issues of movement through the OTAID cycle. Poke, Kashmir, and Ophelia are not firmly rooted in any one particular phase of the OTAID and the shifts

33 While this is also true of Ophelia, she displays a different movement within the OTAID, discussed later.
in their development suggested by their data, when looked at through the OTAID lens, are not readily accounted for in the model.

The OTAID is portrayed as being neither linear nor categorical, but rather as an “expanding spiral,” where the beginning of the process is similar to its end (Myers et al., 1991, p. 58). The authors suggest that movement through the cycle, while predictable, is bound neither by time limitations nor expectations (Myers et al., 1991). Parham (1989) is critical of previous identity development models, which depicted movement as predictably sequential across stages. He suggested two other alternatives to resolving identity, stagnation and recycling (Parham, 1989). The OTAID effectively accounts for stagnation by saying that there is no set amount of time that individuals can or should spend in any given phase of the model (Myers et al., 1991). However, neither the recycling suggested by Parham (1989) nor retreat or suspension, which seem to be suggested in this data, are explicitly acknowledged.

The possibilities of recycling and regression are both suggested in Poke’s interview data. By the end of our sessions together, Poke revealed that he was beginning to tire of his role as a self-styled “teacher” and found himself becoming more angry and less tolerant of his white peers. This is consistent with the authors’ realization that maintaining an optimal worldview in a suboptimal society is very difficult (Myers et al., 1991). However, Poke’s declaration that “maybe one day [he’ll] be himself again,” suggests more than just a momentary lapse in reaction to an overwhelming suboptimal environmental press. Poke discussed repeatedly how his
inner circle of support was becoming more and more racially homogeneous the longer he was at Rosse and his increasing lack of tolerance with others’ narrow-mindedness.

Recycling might indicate that the individual is re-engaging with previously resolved developmental issues in the face of a traumatic life crisis or a new life experience, such as marriage, the birth of a child, or the start of a new career (Parham, 1989). These life transforming events reintroduce the individual to previously encountered developmental issues in a new way in the context of the new experience. Retreat, suggests a temporary or permanent reaction to perceived or real possibilities for harm, discomfort, or dis-ease. The individual responds by retreating to a previous developmental phase, which was more comfortable and nurturing than maintaining the current developmental pattern. Retreat and recycling are interrelated. What may have begun as a retreat may turn into recycling and what have appeared to be recycling may actually be stopped in retreat. The primary distinguishing characteristic may be the nature of the catalyst for it.

Either recycling or retreat may be suggested by Poke’s comments. The buildup of racially-motivated, unfair treatment (both directly and indirectly experienced) during his time at Rosse, may have caused him to either recycle through or retreat back to the third phase, Immersion. In Immersion, individuals, focus their energy on others like themselves and withdraw from the dominant group, in this case, white people. Whether Poke has retreated or will simply recycle through this back to the Internalization phase cannot be known with certainty in the absence of longitudinal data. However, his comment that one day he might “be himself again” and his desire
that he do so, suggests that this is a temporary retreat which will be ended perhaps when Poke graduates college and leaves the environment of Rosse.

In addition to retreat, I am also suggesting a second alternative to movement within the OTAID that I have labeled suspension. Suspension may be portrayed as a ball hovering between two poles of energy. In suspension, individuals indeed seem to hover between two phases, at any time seeming to be more in one phase than another depending on any number of factors. Suspension seems to best characterize Kashmir and Ophelia's current movements between phases two and three of the model, Dissonance and Immersion, respectively. In phase two, Dissonance, individuals begin to explore those aspects of self that may have been devalued or ignored by others (Myers et al., 1991). This is readily seen in Kashmir's entrance into the black community at Rosse, which was brought on by her conscious decision to check the box marked "African American" on her college application form. Ophelia also reflected this dissonance and is supported by her statements that race was never really a relevant factor in her self-identity until she came to Rosse. Individuals in this phase may also internalize negative views of those aspects and seek to disassociate themselves from these stereotypes (Myers et al., 1991). Although not apparent in Ophelia, Kashmir's pronouncement in our last interview session that she was "sick" of the problems in the black community at Rosse, her withdrawal from the community, and her feeling that she may not date a black man again, all clearly reflect this attitude.

However, there are also elements in Kashmir's and Ophelia's comments which suggest an Immersion orientation. As already reviewed, individuals in this third phase
of the OTAID embrace others who are similarly devalued as themselves and withdraw from or reject others in the dominant group, with its norms and values (Myers et al., 1991). Such an orientation is supported by Kashmir's and Ophelia's comments that the vast majority of their close friends at Rosse are black. Support for an Immersion orientation in Ophelia is also given by Ophelia's submergence into black feminist writers, such as bell hooks, and her resistance to efforts by white feminists at Rosse to equate their position with minority status. For Kashmir, her Immersion orientation works in a very different way. Since Kashmir had not yet resolved her biracial identity, she immersed herself in either a black world or a white world depending on the surrounding environment. Therefore, she never completely disowned or rejected white people, even though her support network at Rosse up to this point had been predominantly black. Reflections of dissonance and immersion appeared throughout Kashmir and Ophelia's comments and it is unclear whether one dominates more than the other. Therefore, it seemed more appropriate to refer to these students as suspended between these phases, and possibly that they are transitioning from dissonance to immersion in their identity development. However, more data collected over a longer period would be necessary to support such an assessment.

Conclusion

Through the OTAID model, we have viewed yet another facet of the students' engagement of issues of identity integration and wholeness. The three lenses explored in this chapter reflect only a small portion of the possible ways in which these students and this topic could be analyzed. The selection of these three particular lenses was
influenced initially by my general interest in the relevance of spirituality, interpersonal relationships, and cultural world view to this investigation of identity integration and wholeness. After listening to these students' stories of self-knowledge and lived experiences, the particular lenses of faith and identity, identity intersectionality, and OTAID resonated most closely with the students' words and experiences.

Hence, an analytical prism has been developed in this chapter based on these three particular analytical frames, which refracted the interview data from each student into a spectrum of colors. Each of the lenses in this prism makes a different and unique understanding of the students more accessible. No one lens can hope to provide the most complete or definitive analysis. In fact, as was shown in the identity intersectionality lens, oversimplification is an apparent hazard when only one narrowly-based analytical lens is used. Therefore, the application of multiple lenses to the data makes the analysis of this study more complete, authentic (tied closely to the data), and honest.
CHAPTER FIVE

INTEGRATING WHOLES

Introduction

In this chapter, I suggest that an analysis of the study's research questions reveals several unifying themes among the students' experiences and struggles with wholeness and identity integration. There were five research foci which informed the structure and content of the four interviews with each student. These foci were 1) the self-perception of multiple sociocultural identities; 2) the embrace or abandonment of certain social and cultural identities; 3) the role of race, gender, and class on the students' lived experiences; 4) the articulation of an integrated identity among the students; and 5) the impact of spirituality on the students' perceptions and development of integrated identities.

Within the individual stories of the students, there were sometimes vast and deep differences, as represented in the impressionistic and theoretical portraits drawn in the last chapter. Yet, these students shared many of the same approaches to the

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34 It is important to reiterate at this point that I do not mean to equate wholeness with homogeneity or sameness. On the contrary, wholeness as I use it in this framework refers to coherence, consistency, and collaboration of unique and disparate facets within one organism. The organism here being the human identity.
issues reflected in the research foci. This theme of consistency vis-à-vis dissonance, which emerged in Chapter Four, has carried through to this chapter, especially as related to the first four research foci. Therefore, the absence of this consistency in the last research focus on the impact of spirituality, may be significant for further understanding of the development of integrated identities.

Self-Perception of Multiple Sociocultural Identities

As developed in the first two chapters, educational anthropology and particularly, Harry Wolcott (1994) has asserted the inherent multiplicity of human social identities. He states that people are capable of effectively identifying and participating in multiple and varied social systems, as part of a larger cultural pool (Wolcott, 1994). However, they are expected and required to only demonstrate a narrow range of that capability in any one setting (Wolcott, 1994). Moreover, as Reynolds and Pope (1991) illustrate in their Multiple Identity Model, although a multiplitious identity may be an inherent part of our social make-up, the conscious acknowledgement of its existence is not. As Myers (1993) and Speight, Myers, Cox, and Highlen (1991) assert, knowledge of self is essential to identity development. Therefore, the first focus was on the extent to which these students consciously acknowledged the inherent multiplicity of their social and cultural identities.

All the students used race and gender variables in their assertion of their identities, then there was some variation as to what other factors were enunciated, whether class or age. Also, race and gender variables were usually used either first or
very early on in the students' descriptions of who they saw themselves to be. This is illustrated by the following sample of quotes:

[If someone were to ask you the following question, 'What is your identity,' what would you say in response to that?] I would probably tell them that I am very black male ... it's impossible to hide that I am a young black male and as I grow older the young may change, but I will always be a black male. So that's pretty much how I identify myself (Poke, Second interview, 2/20/01).

[...if someone were to give you a umm fill-in-the-blank, that says, 'I am blank,' how would you fill in that blank?] The first thing would probably be with my name, (laughter), but after having been here, I guess it would definitely be black male, umm, (pause) probably my age group category, twenty years old, um, (pause) what else? Working class family I guess, inner city, that kind of stuff...It would definitely be that way, that's how it would start (K.B., Second interview, 2/19/01).

[The first question is how, would you] If someone were to ask you, what is your identity, what would you say?] Well, I guess I would start with my name and cause that's always the easiest thing to start with and also start with my age because that, I think that tells people a lot about your level of experience ... umm, I always refer to my gender first because I think that's something that divides people, you know is it a girl or a boy, from the very beginning. Umm, then I would talk about my race. Actually now that I think about it, my race would be something that would just sort of be back there because it's
intuitively obvious that I'm a black woman... (Ophelia, Second interview, 2/23/01).

Even Kashmir, who internalized the greatest degree of conflict over her racial identity answered that since she has been at Rosse, "I identify myself more as a black female..." (Second interview, 2/23/01), whereas before her college experience she would have only answered in terms of her biracial identity, "mixed." The only exception to this pattern was Sage, who still blended multiple social factors in her answer, but did not enunciate her gender identity until I specifically asked about the ways in which issues of race, gender, or class impacted her life. Although she did not specifically articulate herself as a gendered person until asked, I did get the impression that how she understands herself as a racial and cultural being was significantly impacted by how she lives those realities in a gendered body. This was particularly demonstrated in her discussions of her home life and the very gender-defined roles that she is expected to play that grow out of her specific cultural and national heritage.

As illustrated by Reynolds and Pope (1991), the acknowledgement of multiple identities may be either externally imposed or internally owned. Among these students, the multiple social and cultural identities they articulated were generally internalized and valued in their self-identities. Nevertheless, they all pointed to the fact that their awareness of these multiple identities was prompted by external factors, such as the college application process. The following short quotes portray this well: "I'd say it took the outside for me to notice it, but once I noticed it, it's all me..." (Poke, Second interview, 2/20/01); "I guess, I guess it probably started somewhere
around the college process I guess, when you have to do all that reflecting ... you start actually giving names to all the things you’ve been thinking about all the time” (Sage, Second interview, 2/19/01); “...I think checking the box saying I was an African American when I was applying here made all the difference...(Kashmir, Second interview, 2/23/01); and, lastly, “...but after having been here, I guess it would definitely be black male...” (K.B., Second interview, 2/19/01, emphasis added).

However, for a couple of the students, the internalization of their social identities was still beyond their reach. This was most apparent in Kashmir's articulation of how she felt about being “labeled” a black woman: “[How much ownership do you feel over your identity as a black female?] Not much ownership. It was given to me when I came to college and umm, when I leave here (pause) I don’t know how much it will be with me” (Second interview, 2/23/01, emphasis added). Ophelia’s sense of ownership over her identity as a woman who was also black, which was how she would articulate it, was also loose and she suggested that it was impeded by the administration at Rosse College.

I think of it this way, while I’ve been here, it seems like umm, well, you get real special when you’re a minority here and I never knew that being black was so cool, you know, people want to interview you for admissions so you can talk about how comfortable slash uncomfortable but preferably comfortable you are at Rosse. I think sometimes I feel like I’m the one that’s kind of on display. So sometimes I really kind of lose touch of that ownership ...

Sometimes it does seem like I don’t have a much control over my // [It’s like
other people sort of seek to use it for their own purposes.] Yeah, exactly.

Exactly” (Ophelia, Second interview, 2/23/01).

However, despite these departures in Kashmir and Ophelia’s stories, the other three students display a firm internal ownership of their race-gender identities. This internalization comes with an open acknowledgement that it was being in a culturally dissonant environment or applying for colleges that made the racial and gender identities they had previously taken for granted, central factors in their self-knowledges.

These findings seem to suggest that for these students, unlike the women who participated in Jones’ (1997) study, their identities are not as clearly split between a core identity, which is solely composed of personality characteristics, and an external identity which subsumes their social and cultural identity designations as imposed and limiting. Rather, in this group of students, the characteristics that they identify as key elements of their own personalities are also the characteristics that they use to describe what a black woman or black man is. For instance, Sage describes being a black woman as being “strong” and as the one who is “always there to support you” and she describes herself as a “strong leader,” “relationships are very important,” and “very observant, very sensitive, very careful .. really big on not having people hurt” (Second interview, 2/19/01). Also, Poke so intertwines being himself with being a black male that he cannot even separate the two when asked what he would write as a dictionary entry for black male. He answered, “You’re pretty much going to be the outcast” and that “you’re different from everybody else and with that difference comes stereotypes
that you may not fulfill but they push them on you anyway.” He then continued by saying, “But as hard as that is, I could not see myself trading it for anything (pause) I just wouldn’t want to because what that struggle does is that it gives you character, it gives you heart, it gives you so much stuff that I think other people don’t have just because they’re spoon-fed” (Second interview, 2/20/01). The stories told by these students suggest that sociocultural identities are braided together with personality traits to the effect that they see themselves to varying degrees as exemplars of black women and black men.

Choosing to Embrace or Abandon Identities

Connected with becoming self aware of the inherent multiplicity of one’s sociocultural identity is the option of embracing or abandoning certain identities within one’s cultural pool or identity triads. Eisenhart (1995) discusses how people organize culture in their everyday lives and points to the fact that individuals decide daily which facets of their identities they will allow to be seen by certain groups of people or in certain situations. She asserts that in this way, people construct images of self that are related to the learned social and cultural ways of being in the world (Eisenhart, 1995). Such masking is also acknowledged as an aspect of life as a black person in the United States that is almost taken for granted. Paul Laurence Dunbar echoed such sentiments poignantly in his poem, “We Wear the Mask.” Consequently, in this study, I sought to understand how these students chose which identities to embrace or abandon and what factors influenced those decisions.
My interviews with the students seemed to clearly suggest that decisions about embracing or abandoning identities were made most often via relationships, whether with an individual or a group or organizational affiliation. In different ways, both Sage and Kashmir provided excellent examples of this phenomenon.

The groups that I'm in tend to recognize the part of me that isn't in sync with the group. [Okay.] And then I have to almost reassert the fact that I am in the group. While at the same time, helping them acknowledge that I'm not just in the group...So in that sense, (pause) I'm categorized to an extent, but part of my definition is the way that I am different. And if I feel as though you're seeing me as different and it's causing problems, then I'll either re-assert my non-difference or my same parallel that I have with you, but then it makes me mad that I have to do that (Sage, Second interview, 2/19/01).

In this example, Sage suggested that maintaining her relationships with her multiple identity triads was her primary motivation for embracing facets of her identity. She claimed that initially the groups saw what was not like themselves in her and then it was up to her to decide to show them what was the same if she was to maintain those relationships.

For Kashmir, though, this same phenomenon worked in a somewhat different fashion. Because she was still struggling with how and even with whether to integrate her biracial identity, the racial identity that she chose to embrace completely shifted depending on whatever group she was with at the time.
I think that plays a major role in the future of my world just because, you know the more time I share with a particular race, the more I feel a part of that race. You know being here at Rosse the first three years I, you know, felt a part of the black community, I felt like that's who I was, but as the time here shortens and my future away from here is approaching, I don't know what, what is in store for me (Kashmir, Third interview, 4/3/01).

This was consistent with Kashmir's other comments regarding the fact that she felt that her identity as a black woman was a "title" that was given to her upon her arrival at Rosse. In this particular quote, Kashmir was discussing the possibility of weaving together or integrating the white and black racial identities she embodies. She articulated that she saw herself as the force that would have to weave them together and that her decision about who to marry, whether a black man or a white one, would make that relevant.

Both students reflected the general nature and context of embracing or abandoning certain facets of identity apparent in all the students. Relationships with groups, friends, and significant others played a heavy role in determining for these students which parts of themselves they showed to others. However, as demonstrated in Sage's quote earlier, these decisions of inclusion and exclusion were not made without a certain degree of distress and frustration.

On the other hand, there was evidence that disconfirmed this assertion. Poke had made a deliberate decision not to involve himself with any groups or individuals with whom he would feel required to make decisions about what facets of himself to
embrace or abandon. As he said, “Well, (pause) in most cases, if somebody or group of people want me to change how I am, I pretty much just leave them alone in the first place, so it’s really not too much of a loss for me” (Second interview, 2/20/01). If they could not accept all of who he asserts himself to be then they are not worth his time. This would support the second reading of Poke in Chapter Four that he had a more stable sense of self which relied on an internalized “executive ego” (Fowler, 1981) or less externally dependant sense of self than the other students.

These decisions to embrace or abandon certain aspects of identity were also issue motivated. Their decisions were issue motivated in terms of the fact that they seemed to arise when a specific issue of their difference came up. These decisions were also mediated by their own perceived ability to handle what they articulated as the necessary confrontation that would occur were they to choose to embrace an aspect of their identity that was “out of sync” with the group. For instance, Sage illustrated this well in the following quote:

[How do you negotiate situations where you’re asked to be one thing and ignore the rest?] It depends on how I’m asked. [Meaning what?] For example, when my friend made that comment about the sorority school, I questioned her as far as what did that mean, but I really didn’t follow up on it, because I kind of saw a fight of sorts brewing...Umm, depending on my stamina, depending on how many times I’ve been ticked off that day. That determines to the extent to which I’m gonna pursue something. At the same time,
depending on what I feel the point of pursuing it is (Sage, Second interview, 2/19/01).

In reading this quote, it is important to remember that Sage was a member of a predominantly African American sorority, president of the black student organization on campus, and also an active member of the Rosse Christian community. The friend who made the comment about not wanting Rosse to become a sorority school was one of Sage’s “Christian friends.” In a more light-hearted vein, Ophelia articulated a similar decision-making process.

...I think, um, one of my friends I like to joke with him I say um, “You know what?” He’ll, he’ll voice some issue about blackness to me, and I’ll be like, ‘You know what, it’s not time for me to be black today, today I’m a feminist, [right] and tomorrow I’ll talk about black stuff, and the day after that I’m off, I’m not going to talk about any of that stuff, I’ll talk about fashion and um makeup that day’ (Ophelia, Third interview, 4/3/01).

Although she laughed after she made this statement, she made it clear that this was very serious and very real for her in organizing her life. There were days when she simply did not feel like asserting her blackness or her womanhood. Personal stamina cannot be ignored as a relevant factor in these students’ lives and their negotiations with a predominantly different environment.

The students also spoke of these inclusion/exclusion decisions occurring more often with certain groups or individuals than with others. In other words, it was more often in relationships with predominantly white groups of students where these
students felt the pressure of needing to decide whether or not to embrace their racial and cultural uniqueness. K.B. articulated this well and reflected a common perception in the group.

And when I am in predominantly white groups or environments or with friends or whatever, although I, definitely the amount of time that I am in those type of settings have decreased as I’ve been here, it’s probably because in those groups I feel that I have to silence the racial voice or whatever, that whenever I see things that might have racial implications, to not speak on it. Because of that, I guess I have definitely, I definitely felt that split or conflict of identity and that’s probably why I try to steer clear of those type of settings (Second interview, 2/19/01).

For K.B. and the others, it was their relationships with other white students, either individually or in organizations, that placed the greatest amount of identity stress on them. These cross-cultural relationships produced the most distress, confusion, and “alterity.”

By contrast, relationships with blacks or predominantly black organizations usually produced less confusion and were more accepting of multiple aspects of their identities.

…but then, I mean, I don’t feel it // especially not to the same extent, I don’t feel that state of alterity when I’m with my QENZ girls, you know. Unless we start talking about religion or something you know. [Where your out of sync becomes the center of the discussion.] But even then, (pause) I feel more an
exploration than a criticism, criticism is not quite the right word, but more as me having the inside scoop on something else, than me giving up part of myself for something else (Sage, Second interview, 2/19/01).

This characterization of a more accepting black community was echoed by Kashmir, K.B., particularly relative to black females, Poke, and Ophelia, who found it "ironic" that she had come to a predominantly white school and had predominantly black friends.

The outcome for some, particularly K.B. and Poke, had been to discontinue or severely limit their outreach to both individual whites and predominantly white groups or organizations. As Poke said in our third interview, "I'm running out of time to try and teach people new stuff and all that, and I'm kinda // I don't even really care that much anymore [right] unless it's somebody I think is important to me, but other than that I'm, I'm done playing the role of a teacher, at least for right now [right]."

These findings support the findings in Belenky et al. (1986) and Josselson (1987) regarding the centrality of relationships and their influence on identity. The impact of relationships for these students emerged out of a similar desire for connection and fear of isolation that was identified by this earlier research conducted exclusively with women (Belenky et al., 1986; Josselson, 1987). What these findings also suggest is that more attention may be warranted for studying the importance and primacy of relationships for men as well as for women. In this study, both Poke and K.B., along with the women, spoke very eloquently and passionately about the importance of
establishing and maintaining intimate relationships (both romantic and non-romantic) as an organizing life principle and as the means of navigating through life's challenges and their own personal struggles with identity and wholeness. Within this, romantic heterosexual relationships appeared to play a very fundamental role in some of the students' decisions about what identity facets to embrace or abandon and how to articulate their sense of identity. This was particularly true for Kashmir, who found her entrance into a black-female identity was ushered by the black man with whom she was romantically involved. However, the availability and possibility of romantic relationships, particularly in a predominantly white environment, greatly figured in the centrality and formation of a gender identity for the other students as well and will be discussed further in the next section. More research is needed in this area to make these patterns of influence more visible.

Role of Race, Gender, and Class on Lived Experience

Created as multiplitious beings, numerous facets of our identities influence the shape, scope, and character of our lives. However, in a suboptimal society, such as the United States, this reality is obscured in two ways. First, the fact that to an extent who we are structures the opportunities of our lives is resisted in a society enamoured with the myth of meritocracy. Second, the interdependence of our identity facets in shaping how we see ourselves, each other, and our opportunities is often unrecognized. Initially, it has been the writings of women of color and particularly African American women, such as Patricia Hill Collins, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Angela Davis, and Audre Lorde, who have brought to the forefront the intersecting ways that race, gender, and
class have interdependently influenced and, in part, structured the opportunities and self-knowledges of women of color in this society.

Until recently, this discussion had not been broached in the literature regarding college student development and the impact of college on students. Researchers who were cognizant of the need for empirical studies of this phenomenon, such as Diane Goodman (1990) and Susan Robb Jones (1997), have urged other higher education researchers to address this issue of the ways that race, gender, and class intersect in the lived experiences of students. Therefore, this study included this as one of its foci. During the interviews, students were asked about how big a role class played in their lives on campus and how different they thought their lives and campus experiences would be if they had been born the opposite gender.

Although class did not figure markedly in how the students perceived their identities, class did heavily mark their perceptions of their experiences at Rosse and their majority peers. It was merely “a function of how [they] could live” and not part of who they were, as Poke said. Yet, it is important to state that these students pictured white students when they thought about issues of class differences. As K.B. stated,

...[I] definitely intertwine race and class and it’s hard for me to think of, it’s hard for me to conceptualize poor white people. I really didn’t see it that much, although I know it does exist, ... when I do think poor, I think black first umm when I think rich, I definitely think white (Second interview, 2/19/01).
Race and class were often intertwined, except for Poke who was the only one of the students from a solidly middle-class household. For Poke, differences in class among white people were representative of their differing ability to cloak their racism. In reflecting on a recent experience when he was called a nigger by a white person from the local community outside of Rosse, Poke said, “And I was like man, that’s just how it is, I’m like the only difference between there and Rosse is the people at Rosse are smart enough to wait ‘til they get to their dorm rooms” (Second interview, 2/20/01).

As a group, the students did not perceive differences in class as something that was necessarily apparent or relevant among the black students at Rosse. This was suggested by the general absence of a discussion of class differences within the black community. Discussions of class differences always led to characterizations of the white student population. Often those other students at Rosse, those who were white and whom they presumed to have more monetary resources than they had, were described as “spoon-fed” or simply as people who had it fairly easy. K.B. remarked several times about being able to “feel the white male privilege” on the campus. After spending a semester studying at a different university, he also came to the realization of just how “spoiled” the students at Rosse were and even himself. Also, Ophelia’s comments below demonstrate in striking fashion the gulf of comprehension that existed between the lives of these students and how they perceive the lives of their white peers.

But umm for the purposes of staying at Rosse, of being at Rosse, even if my Mom were making the middle class bucks, I’d still be different from my counterparts here who are upper middle class or upper class and umm that does make a
difference in how I, uh how I think about money, you know, what you do with the dollars in your pocket. I don’t understand shopping. I don’t understand the concept of allowance. What is this allowance, where your parents are sending you money for no reason? (Ophelia, Second interview, 2/23/01).

The seeming overabundance of racially-marked economic privilege was a central component of how these students understood Rosse. This “white male privilege” served as a wedge which created a perception of two communities at Rosse, those who had, usually the white students, and those who had not, usually the black students. This was true even of Poke, Kashmir, and Sage who all had prior experience with wealthy peers in their previous schooling.

Gender played an apparent, but not necessarily significant role in the campus lives of these students. All the students, both male and female, remarked that the biggest change in their lives, if they had been born the opposite gender, would revolve around their perceptions by the white students and consequently their social opportunities. As Sage stated,

Well, as far as social interactions um, there’s // I don’t know how accurate our opinion is, but there’s definitely a sense among some of the black women that it’s just easier for black guys. Like as far as, you know getting dates, as far as going partying, finding someone to dance with ... [Why?] Because they’re very appealing to the white girls and the same dichotomy [sic] doesn’t work as far as black girls, white guys (Sage, Third interview, 4/2/01).

Poke noted the same phenomenon when he responded,
Well, as far as at Rosse, it's a lot different because like when you're a freshman
guy and you come here, a lot of people aren't familiar with black people in
general, really want to get to know you or fake want to get to know you, or
whatever, they give you a lot of attention, from guys and from girls, and from
what I hear from my friends that are female and black, they don't necessarily
get that from either direction (Poke, Third interview, 4/3/01).

Yet, what appears to be positive attention for black men in the campus social scene
easily turns into a negative gaze when moved to the general society. This perception
also was echoed by both the men and the women in the group. Poke continued to say,

Um, in general I think like the public, just like walking down the street, like if
I were to walk into Mt. Vernon right now, I think I would get a lot more looks
and lot more negativity than a female, just because I think in their minds, I pose
more of a threat (Poke, Third interview, 4/3/01).

However, the differences in social standing between black men and black women were
not so neat or painless as they may appear here. Both K.B. and Poke spoke at various
times at some length regarding the tacit assumption that black men are more likely to
be sexual predators by the Rosse community. Ophelia's comments on this same issue
nicely contextualize the dual positioning of black men in the Rosse community. Her
words here also reveal black women's invisibility, both on campus and in society,
which Sage alluded to in her comments.

...it just seems like kind of dangerous to be a black male because there's so
many assumptions about um being a criminal, and being, and being dangerous,
and people perceive you as being dangerous then of course you’re going, they’re going to retaliate in some way. So I definitely think that, I think I’d rather be invisible than you know, than constantly watched, you know and at Rosse I kind of feel the same way, you know ... I never felt as a black woman people are out to get me, you know, I’ve never felt that. I’ve felt more as a black woman, nobody’s going to listen to me, you know, that’s it, that’s more of what I felt (Ophelia, Third interview, 4/3/01).

The perception of lacking a voice was very real for these women. Sage even went so far as to surmise that some black women were overly loud and aggressive as an attempt to insert their voices into the conversation. Sage also talked about feeling that her service to the college goes largely unrecognized and Ophelia recounted a period of time during the fall semester when she was quite depressed and felt that no one knew who she was or cared in the least about her. Ophelia also told me that her mother told her to deliberately be loud and pushy so that no one could ever ignore her. Despite Ophelia’s insistence that she would rather be invisible than be constantly watched, invisibility apparently does exact a toll on black women. While not as tangible as the toll on black men, it nevertheless can be just as damaging.

Although these black men and black women experience life in different ways, black men as “exotic dangerous creatures” and black women as “invisible,” these differences did not stand out as significant for the women, by marking their daily existence on campus. Sage, Kashmir, and Ophelia all commented that they “didn’t think about” these issues unless they were asked or something came up on campus,
where they were directly confronted with it. However, for Poke and K.B.,
"constantly being watched" was something of which they were both constantly
conscious and which "really suck[ed]" as Poke put it. K.B. also spoke about the dearth
of positive black male role models and being "on the bottom of the social ladder" as a
black male, which led him to conclude that to an extent "[his] race negates a lot of this
male privilege" (Second interview, 2/19/01). There were both positive and negative
outcomes to being either invisible or the center of attention. Yet, it is very clear from
these students' comments that black men and black women did experience their lives
in very different ways.

Articulating an Integrated Identity

Thus far in this chapter I have suggested that these students generally perceived
themselves to be multifaceted individuals, comprising predominantly race and gender
facets along with personality and other sociocultural variables such as class and age.
Moreover, issues of race, gender, and class greatly colored their experiences as students
at Rosse College. I have also suggested that these students were constantly faced with
opportunities to decide what facets of themselves to either illuminate or hide given
both the intended audience and their own personal stamina. So far the discussion has
centered mainly on their negotiation of their external environment and relationships.
In this section, I now turn to the students' internal processes of navigating and maintaining a consistent articulation of an integrated sense of identity. I used the images of weaving and a kaleidoscope to communicate this idea of identity integration more clearly and it was easily adopted by the students themselves in our conversations. The students generally had no problems accessing that image and understanding what it implied. Yet their own language and experiences continuously defied that understanding and betrayed the persistence of what Myers would call a suboptimal worldview.

The students' self-images of how their own multiple identity facets fit together was much more fragmentary and juxtapositional than they were integrated. Consider the differing implications of weaving a blanket with those of a "collage" (Poke), mixed up chocolate and vanilla swirl ice cream (Kashmir), or a "silhouette of a person [with] curved lines and ... little pieces that sort of intrude on each other and back away [and is] very colorful and very confusing" (Ophelia). While all these images conveyed a superficial sense of integration, they ultimately lacked substantive internal realization, except for Poke. Moreover, this internalized realization was still heavily dependent on the responses of those with whom they are in relationship as demonstrated earlier. As Sage stated, "This has not been a good semester for weaving things together. [Why not?] ... if I feel out of sync with those people, then I'm out of sync with myself..."

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35 It is important to note that by consistent I do not mean to imply a static condition. Rather, by consistent I hope to convey an awareness and expectation of an evolving identity instead of a shifting one.
(Second interview, 2/19/01). This sense of the intangibility and even impossibility of wholeness or integration was repeated by the three other students as well. Take for instance this quote from Ophelia’s second interview on 23 February 2001:

I suppose in the back of my mind I always wonder if it’s ever going to be that way, if I’m ever going to wake up one morning and say, that’s it. This is how you behave as a woman and as a black woman and as you know as an educated black woman. This is how it all fits together. I don’t know if that will happen, I hope it does by my 35th birthday or something. (she laughs) I got it. I knew it would come to me (she laughs again).

Kashmir even stated that she thought it would be impossible for her biracial identity to ever weave together. She felt that to the extent that she continued her association with other black people, she would always be living two separate lives. Poke is the only student who consistently\(^{36}\) saw himself as an integrated multifaceted individual regardless of audience or circumstance.

Nevertheless, it was also generally felt that it was very important to weave the blanket of their identities together. Although this was most often spoken of in terms of wholeness or integration as an ultimate destination instead of as an evolving journey, there seemed to be an implicit understanding among them that they knew that they would not just wake up one morning and “understand the secrets of the universe,” as Ophelia once quipped. Instead, they desired and even hungered to push

\(^{36}\) See previous footnote.
themselves toward a presence of wholeness and of integration, absent of internal
contradiction and defying external ones. In our third interview, Sage said the
following in answer to my question of how important it was for her to be able to
weave herself together:

I tell you it’s pretty important. [Why?] I don’t like feeling torn, I’m not saying
that I can’t handle having to navigate the different aspects, but it would just be
a lot simpler if they all came together, if I didn’t feel the need to separate them
(4/2/01).

Although K.B. admitted that he was having a hard time imagining what a whole
person, an integrated person looks like, he also stated that it was “very important” and
that it was “important for everyone,” because “constantly acting,” as he put it was
“tiring” and just “not cool.” He continued to say that his “life goal” was to “become as
complete a person as [he] could be.” K.B. also further related identity integration or
wholeness with being “complete unto yourself,” such that you are not dependent on
others’ acceptance of you – a goal that he desperately wanted to achieve for himself.

The statement, “I would really like to be able to do it,” was made by both Ophelia and
Kashmir, as well. The students’ comments point toward both the desirability and the
necessity of wholeness and integration in their lives.

These findings suggest that it might be necessary to take another look at the
Reynolds and Pope (1991) Multidimensional Identity Model and break down the last
identity resolution option, internalizing multiple facets of identity. It would appear
that there were at least two dimensions of this option that may be suggested by my
findings. The first is an internalized acceptance of multiple facets of identity and willingness to name them, but only in certain environments perceived as nurturing and supportive. This individual is still susceptible to negative evaluations by others. The second dimension would seem to be an internalized acceptance of the multiple facets of identity and a willingness to name them regardless of the climate of the environment. This individual no longer relies upon or seeks external validation. Such a clarification would be helpful in applying the model developed by Reynolds and Pope (1991) to students encountered by faculty and administrators.

Impact of Spirituality on Perception and Development of an Integrated Identity

As reviewed in Chapter Two, literature on spiritual development and womanist theology suggests that an integrated perception of the multiple aspects of one’s identity is related to a mature and developed sense of spirituality and concept of God (Baker-Fletcher, 1998; Cannon, 1995; Fowler, 1981; Love & Talbot, 1999; Parks, 2000). In this study therefore, I included a focus on the ways in which the students’ understandings of their spirituality impacted and/or influenced their perception and development of integrated or whole identities. As illustrated in Chapter Three, four out of the five students indicated that spirituality was a central component of their identity make-up (see Table 3.6). However, there was wide variation in what spirituality meant to each of them and how it operated in their lives.

There are two interrelated assertions I would like to make based on my findings. The first assertion is that there is a general lack of mature spiritual development as assessed according to Fowler (1981) and Love and Talbot (1999). The
students tend to portray their spirituality as oppositional to religious observances or organized forms of corporate worship. Some of the students spoke of being “forced” to attend church as children and still when they return home from college. For instance, Poke stated, “when I was real little, I was in church a lot, as I got older it was more just the Sunday and then – til now” (First interview, 2/6/01). Similarly, Ophelia commented, “Well, because my Mom is a reverend she has a lot of involvement in the church and because of that, that (pause) really affects where I’m going to be on Sunday ... I think the only time I think about church in my life here is when my Mom calls and asks, did you go to church this Sunday?” (Second interview, 2/23/01). These experiences with religious dogma have pushed them to resist formal or organized expressions of faith and spirituality in favor of individualized articulations, which are expressed as cultural ties, emotionality, or individual moral codes. As Ophelia stated, “And so like now, I think of my faith in terms of tradition” (First interview, 2/19/01). Ophelia continued on to say that she does not want to completely divorce herself from attending church and that she does miss being in that atmosphere, however, she said that she could not go to just any church. The African American spiritual tradition is very vibrant for her and she wants to hold on to that external manifestation of a faith relationship. As K.B. explained it in his discussion of the meaning of spirituality for him,

Me and God are cool, but relationships with other people that’s what I try to do, it’s just you know the Golden Rule, treat others as you would like to be treated and that’s what I try to do, and I believe that if you do that, then I don’t
know, I guess I do believe [in] a heaven and hell, I suppose if you do that you’ll

go to heaven (First interview, 2/14/01).

Poke also spoke of an individualized moral code, in which how he treated others was a

primary barometer of his spirituality. Generally, the students confirmed the existence

of a supreme being that they referred to as God, but spirituality was a generally

amorphous variable that did not live for them as a central organizing principle as


However, Sage disconfirms this assertion and demonstrated a more developed

understanding of the difference between faith and religion, and wove a spiritual

perspective into her understanding of herself and her relationships with others. As she

said in this quote, “...it’s faith on one hand ... and on the other hand I think there’s

something to be said for religion, for having a concrete mode of expressing” (First

interview, 2/6/01). Although she also admitted that spirituality is closely knit to

ethnicity for her, she had not allowed the different mode of expression at Rosse keep

her from continuing her pursuit of God. She said that her “faith has done some

interesting things,” among them investigating what it is she really believes about God

and why. Yet, she “still judges what she sees through her understanding of what God

wants her to be” (First interview, 2/6/01). The self-reflexivity of Sage’s spirituality

represents a more mature approach than what was suggested by the comments of the

other students.

Perhaps as a consequence of their generally amorphous grasp on spirituality, K.B.

and Ophelia saw little relationship between spirituality and their perception and
development of themselves as integrated, whole beings. As K.B. stated, "How it helps me put it together? It works, see that, it's not like, it's not like it helps me put it together, it's kind of like I'm giving my problems to God in that sense and He would just handle it and it would get done, not that it has anything to do with me" (Second interview, 2/19/01). The following comment from Ophelia also supports this interpretation: "Umm, it doesn't seem like it [i.e., spirituality] is...So it doesn't really seem to factor in...I guess you can think of it in this way that when I'm here I don't go to church, I don't think about going to church" (Second interview, 2/23/01).

Again Sage and Poke as well, stand out from the group in their more firm belief that there was a spiritual or divine purpose to how they were put together as individuals. The following quote from Sage communicates this clearly:

Has my spirituality and/or how I see God affected my ability to weave all the pieces together. Yea. [Okay, how?] (mutual laughter) (pause) I think there is a reason why I am pulled the way that I am, umm, I think I can tell how God is moving in my life through the relationships that I keep... (Second interview, 2/19/01).

This is also consistent with her trust in "everything work[ing] out well in the end."

Sage and Poke both firmly believe that there is rhyme and reason to everything in the universe, including themselves, although for Poke this is more fatalistic, as indicated in Chapter Four. Interestingly, the other students also tended to share this hope and trust that everything would all work out, including their present confusion or frustrations with their identities. As Kashmir stated, "Everything happens for a reason

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and things are going to work out the way they need to and just kind of evolve into what they need to be and I'm going to eventually be at a point where I know me and I have an identity..." (Second interview, 2/23/01). In sum, the students recognized that there was a more optimal way of being and seemed to innately trust that they would eventually reach that point.

These conflicting findings could be used to suggest any of three things. These findings could suggest that spirituality is not a critical factor in the perception or development of an integrated self-identity and that Sage's example stands as an anomaly. This interpretation would contradict the assertions made by spiritual development theorists. Secondly, these findings could also suggest that the lack of a mature spiritual sensibility is masking the possible impact spirituality could actually be having on this issue. Such an interpretation would call for an assessment of spiritual development correlated with the student's degree of identity integration, which may assist in sifting out any relationship between these two variables. However, there is a third interpretation that is suggested by these findings. A certain level of spiritual maturity may be required in order for an individual to appreciate and integrate multiple identity facets. Such an interpretation would be consistent with the spiritual development literature, especially the work conducted by Fowler (1981). After talking with these students over an extended period of time and reviewing the literature, I think this third interpretation is the most reasonable one and best fits the data I have collected. Nevertheless, a more thorough inventory of spiritual development which
could be correlated with levels of identity integration is warranted and would provide more support for this interpretation of the data.

Implications

In Chapters One and Three I argued for the necessity of research that was grounded in solid theory and which was relevant for practice. I posited that my findings in this study would be important and would contribute to pushing the field of higher education forward along the path of transforming our educational environments into more humanizing and nurturing places for all of our students, and particularly in this case for black students. After reviewing all the data presented above and in Chapter Four, I feel confident that I have answered my research questions and have gathered data rich enough to suggest some implications of these findings for student development theory and student affairs practice.

For Student Development Theory

The findings in this study suggest three implications for student development theory. The first is that there seems to be a missing component in current psychosocial developmental models that deals with integrating multiple identity facets. This pattern of identity integration is distinctive from, or perhaps an extension of identity management, which has been addressed in college student development literature (see Chickering & Reisser, 1993). When these students spoke of their identity conflicts, it was not in terms of deciding to drink with their fraternity members when they know that they would not drink in front of their parents. Those are more issues of shifting presentations of self in multiple contexts, or having multiple
sets of context-dependent behaviors, which are not necessarily founded in the core beliefs and perspectives of one's identity. Instead, these students articulated their identity conflicts as struggles with where, when, and how to bring their differing racial, gendered, or other perspectives to bear on discussions, relationships, and issues, which did not share those perspectives as predominant foci. As also discussed by Erikson, these are issues of weaving self into and through context, developing a context-transcendent identity, in which the core beliefs and perspectives are the central, rather than peripheral, motivations for thought and behavior.

Secondly, these findings give further support to previous research, which discussed the central and pivotal role of intimate relationships. To date, this acknowledgement has been generally reserved to the development of autonomy (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Josselson, 1987), the development of moral and ethical reasoning (Gilligan, 1977), and Carl Jung's personality characteristics in women. These findings suggest that theoretical understanding and application of the role of intimate relationships should be extended to core issues of identity development and how individuals answer the question, "Who am I?" Further, these findings suggest that it may be time to begin to dismantle the theme of biosocial inheritance that is found in the earlier models. In other words, the primacy and centrality of intimate relationships for men may be more widespread than initially thought. This may be especially relevant for men of color.

Finally, as suggested by Myers, et al. (1991), spirituality needs to be reconnected to our understanding of individuals. Specifically, spiritual development should be seen
in tandem with, and perhaps even as a foundation for, mature psychosocial identity
development in individuals. The research done by Fowler (1981) and these findings
suggest that one of the ways people come to answer the questions, "Who am I?",
"What will I do?", and "Who will I love?" is through their understanding and
articulation of their relationship with a transcendent, organizing principle that some
would call God. This association should be acknowledged in our research and
theoretical models.

For Practice

In addition to implications for student development theory, this study suggests
implications for student affairs practice, particularly at predominantly white
institutions. Student affairs administrators may need to become more aware of the
reality of what it means to be an African American student at a PWI. Several of the
students commented that the administrators at Rosse "had no clue" as to what life was
like for them there. Although implied by the studies done on black students in white
universities, there lacked an explicit recognition of the predominance of race and racial
issues in the lives of black students. For example, the students at Rosse felt constantly
bombarded with the racial implications of perceived sexual misbehavior, commentary
on campus speakers, and even choosing to live together on the campus. Race pervades
the climate at Rosse, from the classrooms to the residence halls to the cafeterias. The
students felt marked on the campus, either as an African American honors scholar or
by the special attention they received from the admissions office. Certainly Rosse is
not alone in this. Administrators at Rosse and other PWIs face the double bind of
wanting to continue to diversify their student bodies, while at the same time allowing enrolled diverse students to just be students.

Perhaps as a result of feeling marked and misunderstood, the students cried out about the need for space, a space to be together to work on intra-community issues, like building unity and effective communication. Oftentimes the ability to claim such a space was made inaccessible because of cost, availability, or campus support. At Rosse, as is true for just about any campus, space is a scarce resource, for which the competition is stiff. Nevertheless, perhaps it would bode well for the wholistic development of our students that we expended some energy and resources into creatively seeking ways of creating “space” for our students to be themselves outside of our gaze.

Third, and related closely to the central findings of this study, the development of student groups and clubs which intersect different identity facets may encourage students as they seek ways to bring the multiple facets of themselves to bear on the issues in their lives. As Sage discussed, it was among the members of her predominantly black female sorority where she did not feel the “alterity” of her differences and was better able to explore and weave together the multiple facets of her identity. Not only should groups like black fraternities and sororities be encouraged, but also groups for black Christians, black women writers, or women of color in science and mathematics. Although some would argue that the formation of such groups would increase racial strife and dissonance on campus, I would disagree. My disagreement considers the first point, that race pervades the campus atmosphere for
black students, and then the second point, that black students often feel “put on display” and without a retreat. Therefore, students should be allowed to come together in groups, in which other aspects of their lives and experiences can be explored through an unabashed racial lens if they choose to do so, without apologetics.

Lastly, several of the students spoke candidly about the lack of mentors and counselors with sufficient life experience and accessibility to help them address the issues they were facing. Moreover, student organizations need faculty and administrators who can serve as effective advisors and mentors, who can encourage greater degrees of complexity and growth in the students. This requires an institutional commitment to the recruitment, hiring, and retention of faculty and administrators of color who care about investing in the lives of students of color. This also means that institutions need to reevaluate their service expectations and bring promotion and/or tenure requirements in line with those expectations. It may also mean nurturing cross-cultural advising matches with faculty and administrators, who are sensitive to the issues and needs of students of color and have the resources to encourage their growth.

Directions for Future Research

After reviewing the data and my findings, I have suggested several directions for future research in the area of identity integration. As is true for any developmental issue, tracing its trajectory requires long-term investigation. Therefore, longitudinal and follow-up studies are necessary to build more complex models of individual experiences with identity integration and wholeness. Consequently, I would like to
approach the participants of this study again after they have completed their degrees at Rosse and re-established themselves in either post-graduate education or careers. Through a new set of interviews, it would be valuable to uncover how their thinking and experiences with identity integration and wholeness have continued to evolve and transform how they see themselves.

As stated in Chapter One, issues of identity integration and wholeness are relevant for all ethnic groups and genders and find expression at institutions other than predominantly white liberal arts colleges. Therefore, I feel this study should be repeated with different groups of students attending different college and university settings. It would be informative to see how the questions and answers change and how different students might use different cultural languages to communicate similar experiences. It may also be useful to develop an assessment inventory that may make including different institutional types in differing local contexts more feasible.

I would also suggest that there be future studies which deal with the role of context in engaging, encouraging, or hampering the development of identity integration and wholeness in their students. Sharon Daloz Parks (2000) has written engagingly on the types of mentoring communities in young people's lives and she has included higher education among them. The college or university context plays an important role in the possibility for awareness of these issues as well as the probabilities for resolving or, more accurately, for positive engagement with identity integration issues. This role, which may be termed the environmental press toward wholeness, deserves further study.
Connected to this would be research around the role of seemingly neutral procedures in prompting identity awareness in students. Most of the students cited their college applications as the ground on which they first began to seriously consider how they might answer the question, “Who am I?” and the implications of their response. For one student, her selection of the box labeled African American versus the box amorphously labeled “Other,” indelibly shaped her life as a student at Rosse. More specific investigation into the role that admissions, scholarship, and financial aid applications play in a student’s engagement with mature questions of identity would be beneficial.

Finally, the development of an integrated identity does not occur in a vacuum, but I believe it is influenced (either as a support or as a hindrance) by the cognitive and other psychosocial development of the student. The ability to think complexly about issues which are “ill-structured” (King & Kitchener, 1994) is fundamental to the development of an integrated identity. Moreover, development of autonomy and mature interpersonal relationships also bears direct relevance to the development of an integrated identity. Therefore, future studies which correlated cognitive and/or these other aspects of psychosocial development with identity integration in students would also be beneficial and contribute to our broader understanding of wholeness as a developmental journey.

Critique of Research Focus

This study did not deal with the sociocultural markers of sexuality, generation, or explicitly with biography. All three are sociocultural constructions of identity that
would be relevant and pivotal in determining the pattern of wholeness development in an individual and the construction of an integrated identity. In this study, I chose to focus on race, class, and gender and this choice is supported by the literature (Goodman, 1990; hooks, 1993; Jones & McEwen, 2000). Yet, research done on people of color by researchers of color is often subjected to charges of essentialism and oversimplification of within-group diversity issues. This charge is itself problematic and represents another type of epistemological racism (Scheurich & Young, 1997). Nonetheless, I wish to address this issue. Those who would critique this study as essentialist would point to the fact that the experience of all African American students has been grouped together, thus assuming a unity of experience across a racial category. Also, by focusing on the particular sociocultural issues of race, class, and gender and the diversity of experiences among students in those categories, other diverse experiences are ignored.

In answer, I am chose to focus on the lived experiences of identity fragmentation and integration as expressed by African American students on a predominantly white campus, because I feel that this is a distinctive experience (Allen, Epps, & Haniff, 1991; Kunjufu, 1997). Moreover, I believe that race is still a legitimate analytical tool of the human experience in racially stratified societies, like the United States (Maynard, 1994). I agree that race as a category of identity may have meaning only in its social construction and therefore may not be considered ‘real’ (Appiah, 1992), however, as Maynard (1994) argues, “to deny the significance of ‘race’ like this
also obscures the ways in which it has ‘real’ effects, both in material and
representational terms” (p. 10). She continues,

“The issue is not how natural differences determine and justify group
definitions and interactions, but how racial logics and racial frames of
references are articulated and deployed, and with what consequences.” Such an
approach is useful because it can be used to chart the nature of the concept’s
shifting boundaries, while also permitting analysis of its ontological effects”
(Maynard, 1994, p. 10).

An underlying framework of this study was to investigate how the racialized
frame of reference of African American students on a predominantly white campus
delimits their experiences of themselves as possessing ‘real’ integrated identities and
selfhoods. The likelihood that the meaning of being ‘raced’ will shift among the
students who participate in this study is expected and welcomed. The effect of this
shifting sense of a racialized self as an African American on the central issue of
multiple sociocultural identity awareness and integration was analyzed.

Further, the purpose of my focus on the impact of race, gender, and class
categories as operational definitions of identity and as a means of diversifying my
sample of respondents was not to presume that these are the only factors at work in
the lives of African American students, nor that these are the only significant factors. I
was and remain fully cognizant of Judith Butler’s (1995) caution that “every time that
specificity is articulated, there is resistance and factionalization within the very
constituency that is supposed to be unified by the articulation of its common element”
(p. 49). However, I was not seeking unification or generalization of experience, as explained earlier. Rather, I sought to authentically represent the experiences of African American students attending a predominantly white campus.

The stories and experiences that were translated here were not meant to be universal, in the sense that they say all that needs to be said. Rather, according to OT, these stories have served a universal purpose that lies in the fact that these experiences, though representative only of the particular voices of the students who spoke them, are not particular only to these students (Myers, 1993; Stake, 1994). Indeed, these students can be found on campuses all across the United States with different names and different backgrounds, and with similar backgrounds and similar social perspectives. One test of the authenticity of this study will be in the rejoinder of those reading and hearing these voices of “That sounds like me” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

Lastly, the paradox of simplicity versus diversity, represents a competitive binary opposition. Although presented as mutually exclusive, they are in fact interdependent and cooperative, “they derive their meaning from a particularly established contrast rather than from some inherent or pure antithesis” (Scott, 1994, p. 286). According to Joan Scott (1994), “the antithesis itself hides the interdependence of the two terms” (p. 287). Simplicity is made possible only by the existence of diversity, while diversity grows out of the constraints of simplicity. To paraphrase her articulation of the paradoxical relationship between equality and difference: Simplicity is not the elimination of diversity, and diversity does not preclude simplicity (Scott,
1994). Therefore, I fully acknowledge that there is more that is relevant both in the integration of multiple sociocultural identities, as well as in the impact of other diversity and sociocultural identity markers on one's ability to integrate and construct a synthesis or symbiosis among them. However, there is still much to be learned from the students represented here for all African American students, especially for those studying at predominantly white campuses. Further race, gender, and class are legitimate representational terms, whose particular frames of reference do operate with certain impacts and consequences (Maynard, 1994).

Conclusion

This study has been a journey of discoveries. I have discovered how much I have yet to learn about doing research. There is no end to the ways in which I have reconceived this study, changed the interview schedule, and adopted new research questions in my mind. I have also discovered that I enjoy talking with students and conducting qualitative research. I have discovered how similar and yet different my college experience was from those of the students with whom I spoke. I discovered a piece of myself in each of these students, some pieces I had forgotten about and others which still actively live within me. As much as I discovered these students, I discovered myself. That has been the most fascinating and humbling discovery of them all – how much further I have yet to travel myself toward an optimal ideal of wholeness and integration. I can never thank Poke, Sage, Kashmir, K.B. and Ophelia enough for letting me see a piece of themselves and for reflecting an image of myself
back to me. I fly higher because of them and I can only hope they will one day say the same.

_Rhymes and Reasons_

before there was deep
You knew me
out of the foundations of the world
gave rhyme to me
You composed the melody of my soul
You rhymed me together
You made me
me

blending
folding
weaving
sans apparent logic
black wo/man poor/rich educated
it had rhyme
but carried no reason
not in this world
what was the reason

I tried to play with it
change the rhyme
rearrange the parts
but the melody didn’t fit
I lost my rhyme
with my reason
I lost me

outside of my reason
my rhyme recomposed itself
the melody was sweet and soft and strong
I sang my melody
I danced my rhythm
I showed it to you
you did not understand
so I hid my rhyme

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and played you a note you liked instead

but my melody kept on rhyming in my mind
  I had to stop talking to you
  so I could hear my rhyme
  I realized I liked my rhyme
even if you couldn’t dance to its beat
I figured I’d let my rhyme out of my head
  one more time

I saw melody and harmony
  alto soprano bass tenor
weaving in and out of each other
  blending with each other
  chasing each other around
  and it was good!
  I saw the reason
  and it was good!

you still didn’t get it
but he did and she did and they did
so maybe I’ll keep playing my one note for you
  and save my song for them
  and for me
  and maybe one day
the rhyme will be so insistent in my head
that I’ll have to sing the song for you too
even if you still don’t get it

cuz I finally put a reason with my rhyme
  and the reason is this
    You made me
    me
    and I’m in You in me
  and it’s all good
    let’s dance!
APPENDIX A

RECRUITMENT SCRIPT AND CONSENT LETTER

Recruitment Script

The following script was read to the participants selected for the study, either in person, or over the phone, as was the case with Kashmir.

Hello, my name is Dafina Stewart and I am a doctoral student in the College of Education at The Ohio State University. I am currently working on my dissertation and my topic is on how black students at a PWI combine issues of race, class, and gender in how they see themselves as individuals and how issues of race, class, and gender interact in their daily lives on campus. I hope to have at least 4 students participating and perhaps more. I’m contacting you, because I feel that as (position held) of the (name of organization) you have some really vital and significant experiences to share and can shed some light on this topic.

Participating in this study means that I would need to meet with you individually 3 times for 45 minutes to one hour and then a fourth time with the
other participants for one hour\textsuperscript{37}, for a total of up to 4 hours. These meetings would take place over a period of 2 months, not including the college’s spring break in early March, and will be scheduled at times which are convenient for you. In our individual meetings, I will be asking you questions about your life history, your perspectives on your racial, gender, and class identities, and how these multiple identities interact in your campus life. The focus group meeting will be an opportunity for the whole group to discuss together ways in which the campus student affairs staff may currently support or hinder your exploration of your multiple identities.

If you agree to participate in this study, I will ask you to complete a survey so that I can collect some demographic information from you, which will help me to describe the students to others in my dissertation. Also, agreeing to participate means that you agree to me audiotaping our discussions and that all of our conversations will be kept in strict confidence. I will ask you to choose a pseudonym for me to label your survey and interview tapes and transcripts. You also would agree to keep the identities of the other participants confidential after the focus group meeting and to keep the discussion in that focus group completely confidential.

\textsuperscript{37} The original design of the study included a focus group interview with all the participants. This was modified to allow time for another individual interview session with the participants.
If at any time you should decide to discontinue your participation with this study, you may do so at no risk or consequence to yourself and the recordings and transcripts of any conversations we have had will be destroyed and not included in the data analysis.

Lastly, you're probably asking what do you get out of helping me with my study? Unfortunately, I cannot promise that you will gain financially as a result of being one of the participants in this study. In fact, the only tangible benefit would probably be that I'll provide pizza for the focus group discussion. However, I do hope that participation in the study would afford you an opportunity to reflect on some issues that may already be or are becoming very important to you as you progress toward the goal of attaining your bachelor's degree. In reflecting on these issues myself, I have learned a great deal about how I see myself, how others may see me, and how those things impact what I choose to do and why. Hopefully, your self-learning will be as significant for you as mine was for me.

Please take some time to think about this invitation and ask me any questions you may have. You can contact me at 614.688.8122 or 614.577.8007. If you decide to be one of the participant's in this study, please return to me by February 10th your signed consent form and completed demographic survey, which I have given you. Thank you!
Consent Letter

A copy of the consent form, which was reviewed and signed by all the participants, is on the following page.
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

I consent to participating in research entitled:

Awareness and Integration of Multiple Sociocultural Identities Among African American Students at a Predominantly White Institution

Dr. Leonard Baird, the Principal Investigator, or his authorized representative, Dafina Lazarus Stewart has explained the purpose of the study, the procedures to be followed, and the expected duration of my participation. Possible benefits of the study have been described, as have alternative procedures, if such procedures are applicable and available.

I acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to obtain additional information regarding the study and that any questions I have raised have been answered to my full satisfaction. Furthermore, I understand that I am free to withdraw consent at any time and to discontinue participation in the study without prejudice to me.

Finally, I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Date: ____________________ Signed: ____________________ (Participant)

Signed: ____________________ (Principal Investigator or authorized representative)

Witness: ____________________

SECTIONS:

Cultural Studies  Quantitative Research, Evaluation and Measurement  Educational Administration and Higher Education  General Professional Studies
APPENDIX B

DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

Awareness and Integration of Multiple Sociocultural Identities Among African American Students at a Predominantly White Institution

Dafina Lazanus Stewart
Ohio State University
School of Educational Policy and Leadership
Higher Education Program

Participant Survey

Pseudonym: ____________

Part One - About You

1. How would you define your racial category?
   Black _____
   Bi-Racial _____
   Other _____

2. How would you define your ethnicity?
   African American _____
   African Latino _____
   African Caribbean _____
   African European _____
   Other _____

3. Male _____ Female _____

4. Heterosexual _____ Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgendered _____

5. How old are you? _____

6. What year are you in school?
   Junior _____
   Senior _____

7. How would you describe your hometown?
   Urban _____ Rural _____ Suburban _____

8. How would you describe the racial composition of your neighborhood?
   Mostly Black/African American _____
   Mostly another race/ethnicity _____
   Racially or Ethnically integrated _____

9. How would you describe your parents' socioeconomic status?
   Working Class _____
   Middle Class _____
   Upper Class _____
10. What is your mother’s highest level of educational achievement?
   Unknown
   Did not complete high school
   Has a high school diploma
   Some college
   Has an associate’s degree
   Some graduate school
   Has a master’s degree
   Has a doctoral/professional degree

11. What is your father’s highest level of educational achievement?
   Unknown
   Did not complete high school
   Has a high school diploma
   Some college
   Has an associate’s degree
   Some graduate school
   Has a master’s degree
   Has a doctoral/professional degree

12. What is the highest educational level to which you aspire?
   Undecided
   A bachelor’s degree
   Some graduate school
   A master’s degree
   A doctoral/professional degree

13. Do you expect your class status to change once you receive your college degree?
   Yes ___    No ___

Part Two – Campus Involvement

14. In how many campus organizations are you an active member?
   1 – 2 ___
   3 – 4 ___
   > 4 ___

15. I have a great deal of interaction with Black students on this campus.
   Strongly Disagree
   Disagree
   Not sure
   Agree
   Strongly Agree
16. I have a great deal of interaction with African American faculty on this campus.
   Strongly Disagree ______
   Disagree ______
   Not sure ______
   Agree ______
   Strongly agree ______

17. I have a great deal of interaction with Black administrators on this campus.
   Strongly Disagree ______
   Disagree ______
   Not sure ______
   Agree ______
   Strongly agree ______

Part Three – Identity Issues

18. Which of the following facets of identity do you consider to be the most important or most central to how you see yourself as a person? Check all that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facet</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
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<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
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<td>Ethnicity</td>
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<td>Class</td>
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<td>Geographic Origin</td>
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</table>

19. Of the facets you chose above, which of these do you feel is supported by your present school/campus environment (including faculty, staff, and students)?

   ____________________________________________________________________________

20. How have student affairs professionals helped and/or hindered your exploration of multiple facets of your identity?

21. Do you think your experience would be different if you were at a different type of school (size, location, student body)?
   Yes ______  No ______

22. In your college experience, do you feel you have had to choose or pick out only certain aspects of your identity in order to be accepted in certain groups?
   Yes ______  No ______
APPENDIX C

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

Stage One

1. What is your most memorable childhood experience, positive and negative?

2. What kind of schools did you attend as a child? What did you like most about them? What did you like least about them?

3. Do you have a sense of spirituality? Where does it come from? How does it organize or operate in your life?

4. How did you come to attend Rosse College?

5. What does it mean to you that you are pursuing a college education? How many other people that you graduated high school with are in college right now?

6. What are your career aspirations? What is your major?

7. Where is your hometown?

8. Of what campus organizations are you a member?

Stage Two

1. How would you answer this question, "What is your identity?"

2. What image would you use to describe how you see your identity facets?

3. How did you come to see yourself in this way?
4. Have you ever felt any conflict in your identity, as you have described it, while you have been at Rosse? In what ways?

5. How do you negotiate situations in which you are asked to choose or pick out certain identity aspects?

6. Have you been able to weave these identities together somehow?

7. Has your sense of spirit impacted your ability to weave these identities together?

8. What does it mean to you to be a black man/woman?

9. How does that image conflict with what others think you should act, think, or feel as a black man/woman?

10. Do you feel any sense of ownership of your racial-gender identity?

11. How big of a role does class play in your self-concept?

Stage Three

1. How is your experience as black and female/male different from what you suppose your experience would have been if you were black and male/female?

2. How significant are those differences to you?

3. How do you define education, in general, and higher education, particularly?

4. How has your education here at Rosse changed you as a person?

5. How as your Rosse education changed your images of what it means to be black and female/male?

6. How important is it for you to be whole? Why?

7. In what ways do you feel supported in your identity at this institution?

8. In what ways do you feel unsupported in your identity at this institution?
Stage Four

1. What do you depend on when it feels like your world is falling apart?

2. If you could remake yourself, what could you change?

3. Any other comments you would like to add?
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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