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“WHO DO YOU THINK YOU’RE BORDER PATROLLING?”: NEGOTIATING “MULTIRACIAL” IDENTITIES AND “INTERRACIAL” RELATIONSHIPS

by

MELINDA MILLS

Under the Direction of Charles Gallagher

ABSTRACT

Research on racial border patrolling has demonstrated how people police racial borders in order to maintain socially constructed differences and reinforce divisions between racial groups and their members. Existing literature on border patrolling has primarily focused on white/black couples and multiracial families, with discussions contrasting “white border patrolling” and “black border patrolling,” in terms of differential motivations, intentions, and goals (Dalmage 2000). In my dissertation research, I examined a different type of policing racial categories and the spaces in-between these shifting boundaries. I offer up “multiracial interracial border patrolling” as a means of understanding how borderism impacts the lives of “multiracial” individuals in “interracial” relationships. In taking a look at how both identities and relationships involve racial negotiations, I conducted 60 in-depth, face-to-face qualitative interviews with people who indicated having racially mixed parentage or heritage. Respondents shared their experiences of publicly and privately managing their sometimes shifting preferred racial identities; often racially ambiguous appearance; and situationally in/visible “interracial” relationships in an era of colorblind racism. This management

included encounters with border patrolling from strangers, significant others, and self. Not only did border patrolling originate from these three sources, but also manifested itself in a variety of forms, including benevolent (positive, supportive); beneficiary (socially and sometimes economically or materially beneficial); protective, and malevolent (negative, malicious, conflictive). Throughout, I discussed the border patrolling variations that "multiracial" individuals in "interracial" relationships face. I also worked to show how people's participation in border patrolling encouraged their production of colorblind discourses as a strategy for masking their racial attitudes and ideologies about "multiracial" individuals in "interracial" relationships.

INDEX WORDS: Multiracial Identities, Interracial, Border Patrolling, Partner Choice, Romantic Relationships, Family

“WHO DO YOU THINK YOU’RE BORDER PATROLLING?”: NEGOTIATING “MULTIRACIAL” IDENTITIES AND “INTERRACIAL” RELATIONSHIPS

by

MELINDA MILLS

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2008

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“WHO DO YOU THINK YOU’RE BORDER PATROLLING?”: NEGOTIATING “MULTIRACIAL” IDENTITIES AND “INTERRACIAL” RELATIONSHIPS

by

MELINDA MILLS

Major Professor: Charles Gallagher
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Office of Graduate Studies
College of Arts and Sciences
Georgia State University
December 2008

DEDICATION

To my Mom and Dad,
who enjoy each other's company every day
and inspire me to find the kind of love that always seems brand new
and, like theirs, will last for decades.

To Maria, Karen, and Baby Evan.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

"The state of identity is multileveled."[1]

Research Overview and Questions

Several years ago, while working out with an Asian Indian female friend of mine, a white woman friend of hers joined in our casual conversation. The two of us had been discussing a few men, indicating to one another our various interests. As we continued our conversation with our usual discretion, the white woman asked for a description of our romantic interests. Steering away from the most obvious marker, race, I opted instead to provide a somewhat detailed account of the attire one man in particular had been wearing. This man was standing in what I thought was plain sight, but not to the white woman who, unbeknownst to me at the time, had already imagined who might match my own ideal. Not only did I discover a day later that this white woman had in fact seen the person I had described but had not seen him as someone in whom I would have a romantic attraction to, in part because she saw me as black, not biracial, and presumed that I should or would only want to date a black man, rather than whomever I choose, and who respectively chooses me.

I share this example to illustrate the very social dilemma I tackled throughout this research: the negotiation and navigation of "multiracial" "interracial" borders[2]. That is, how do members of this population decide how to identify; experience their racial identities; and exercise their choice of romantic partner, given the racial parameters that regulate these identity options and romantic partner choices? In "thinking mixture" and "thinking the border," how do these individuals confront the racial borders socially

---

[1] Guillermo Gomez-Pena quoted in interview with Coco Fusco (1995:153)
[2] I borrowed and built on the title of Childs's 2005 book, *Navigating Interracial Borders*.

constructed around their identity and partner choices, and the intersection of the two? For these individuals, what does "multiracial" mean, and what constitutes an "interracial" relationship? Do different racial borders exist for multiracial people, depending on their racial composition?[3] To what extent, if any, are multiracial people aware that some members of their own interracial families of orientation may be border patrollers, communicating their racial perception of the multiracial person's identity, and explicitly indicating their romantic partner choice preferences for said multiracial person? Finally, do multiracial people themselves engage in border patrolling, doing the dirty work of others by policing their own identity and partner choices?

Navigating Multiracial Interracial Borders

As the personal anecdote above illustrated, many multiracial people often occupy what Gloria Anzaldua (1987/1999) calls the borderlands, an interstitial place (Sandoval 2000) that locates many multiracial people between socially constructed singular racial categories.[4] At times, this liminality creates curiosity, and at other times, anxiety. In order to satisfy this curiosity or anxiety, people engage in border patrolling or perpetuate borderism. Dalmage defines "borderism" as a "unique form of discrimination faced by those who cross the color line, do not stick with their own, or attempt to claim membership (or are placed by others) in more than one racial group. Like racism, borderism is central to American society. It is a product of a racist system yet comes from both sides" (Dalmage 2000:40-41).

---

[3] By this, I mean that a White/Asian multiracial may confront white/nonwhite borders, and/or white/honorary white/collective black borders, while a Black/Asian multiracial may confront nonblack/black borders, and/or

[4] These categories include White, Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native (or Native American), Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander and Some Other Race. While the category Hispanic/Latino/a can include individuals of any race, it is also a racialized category as well.

For Dalmage, “both sides” refers to whiteness and blackness, and manifests as “white border patrolling” and “black border patrolling.” I transform “both sides” into “all sides,” offering up the idea of “multiracial interracial border patrolling.” That is, I shifted the focus from her examination of black-white multiracial families to individuals of various racial combinations in fluidly interracial families. I centered my analysis on individuals with multiracial parentage and heritage, rather than multiracial families. In my work, multiracial or racially mixed parentage included people whose parents belong to racial groups that are socially constructed as different; this includes parents who claimed a multiracial identity or had parents who belong(ed) to racial groups that are socially constructed as different.[5]

Rather than reinforce the idea of mixture as “something new,” I also included individuals who described their heritage as racially mixed. This accounted for the possibility of multiracial parents claiming only one race, while their children (the respondents) attempted to reclaim two or more races. Including individuals with racially mixed heritage also acknowledged that those families often consist of members who compromise their “monoracial” integrity. Accommodating both parentage and heritage also recognizes that many individuals may or may not have grown up in families its members (or even others) considered “interracial” or “multiracial.” I explored these nuances and contingencies in the interviews, to see the foregrounding and backgrounding of racial diversity and mixture in identity, family, and partner choice.

Focusing on individuals (versus couples or families) allowed me to ask about relational and familial experiences, but gain a solid understanding of those experiences from the perspective of the “multiracial” person. This is important particularly at a time

[5] I relied partially on the work of Rockquemore and Brusnma (2002) to describe this population.

when multiracial identity and people are sustaining public interest and little research exists that reflects on individual *and* relational experiences of multiracial people of various combinations. Instead, most work chooses a particular racial combination (or way of being multiracial) as its starting point.

Because the borderlands represent a shifting social location where many, but not all, multiracial people reside, everyone who acknowledges racially mixed parentage or heritage does not necessarily assert a "multiracial" identity per se (see Rockquemore and Brunsma 2002) or consider themselves a part of an "interracial" family.[6] Thus, it is important to understand that members of the multiracial population remain differentially situated on the borderlands. Lee and Bean (2007) make this point by discussing the possibility of *multiple* color lines sorting individuals into racial hierarchies. Different racial combinations create numerous preferred racial identities (Rockquemore 2005). Shifting racial hierarchies create different racial realities for people of different racial combinations, with the social location and social status attached to these combinations informing the preferred racial identities that people embrace.

People with multiracial parentage or heritage of various racial combinations often experience multiraciality and interraciality contingently. They may regard their heritage as racially diverse, or find that in some social settings this heritage is foregrounded. Conversely, contemporary racial logic sometimes disallows visibly mixed individuals any other identity besides a multiracial one. Being denied the option to distance oneself from mixture inevitably and inadvertently reinforces the racial divide and the notion that people are the sum of their parts (Williams-Leon and Nakashima (2001) versus some

[6] Furthermore, the racial diversity of interracial families can shift as well. Over time, families may shift from "interracial" to "monoracial," depending on a variety of factors.

multiplicative assortment (all of the above). Thus, this project questions such racial logics to grapple with racial paradoxes of the ampersand: being both/and; either/or; & neither/nor.

Though scholars have attended to multiracial matters in terms of liminality and fluidity, few have considered how complex ancestries get claimed by some, collapsed by others, or ignored or made invisible to "colorblind" others. Moreover, existing literature has not fully addressed how multiracial people adopt the rhetorical devices of colorblindness, as a strategy for deflecting attention away from the unearned privileges awarded them because of their exalted social status as what I call "exotic erotic quixotic" members of "Generation E.A.[7]" (LaFerla 2003).

Understanding how these individuals produce racial discourses about their experiences helps illuminate how they too learn to provide palatable explanations for the patterns that emerge in their identity options and relationship histories. Investigating the choices, behaviors, and attendant racial discursive practices of members of the multiracial population also draws attention to the ways such discourses connect and re-connect them to (or locate/re-locate them in) racial categories of their racial combination and beyond.

The continuing debate about who counts as mixed or who is multiracial (Doyle and Kao 2007; Harris and Sim 2002; Jones and Smith 2001; Morning 2000; Perlmann and Waters 2002; Rodriguez 2000), in combination with shifting racial hierarchies (Lee and Bean 2007) and situational visibility/legibility (Buchanan and Acevedo 2004) of both multiracial individuals and interracial relationships frame the process of border patrolling. Since no one else has dimensionalized this border patrolling to include multiracial people themselves, I take up the charge here. Throughout this work, I

[7] Ethnically Ambiguous

consider how some multiracial people participate in and experience borderism, and possess racial ideologies that possibly encourage an "auto-borderism" or the racial policing of self and partner choice.

In addition, competing racial paradigms, or different ways of seeing race (Rodriguez and Cordero-Guzman 1992; Landale and Oropesa 2002), necessitate negotiations of racial identities, relationships, meanings and categories during social interactions. These negotiations expose how various racial imaginations differentially shape how people envision, interpret, and reinforce racial borders (Dalmage 2000; Denton and Massey 1989).

For people whose racial lens sorts into white and black, who fail to "read between the lines," to see shades of gray (beige, brown), border patrolling becomes a task that involves maintaining a false dichotomy, whether white/residuals/black (Gans 1999); white/nonwhite (black) (Hacker 1992); black/nonblack (Yancey 2003); or white/honorary white/collective black (Bonilla-Silva 2004). Failure to read between the lines also means that border patrollers place multiracial individuals into single race categories, or into a racial group that is not a part of the multiracial person's ancestry. Thus, this practice of borderism does not always match the many ways that multiracials identify, especially in the case of shifting, situational (protean) identities (Campbell 2007; Korgen 1998; Maxwell 1998; Rockquemore and Brunsma 2002); incipient identities[8]; and honorary memberships (see Twine 2006).

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[8] Incipient identities reflect the process of "becoming" in that some multiracial individuals increasingly acquire information about their familial biographies, in an effort to solve "mysteries of histories." This information, and a growing desire to recover mixture or "choosing to select a varied multiracial identification that acknowledges a great diversity of racial mixing" (Campbell 2007: 926) partially explain this process of becoming. We can turn to Hansen's (1952) discussion of the third generation's attempts at cultural maintenance and preservation (of family diversity), achieved through efforts to recover the forgotten past. An example of this incipience came from Miki, who described how the convergence of

The policing that occurs at the level of identity involves others working to decipher racial multiplicity and sort out these individuals into the "most appropriate" singular racial category. The policing also occurs at the level of romantic relationships, such that the aforementioned investment in racially singular categories includes an attendant investment in endorsing racial homogeny (Kalmijn 1993, 1998). This racial policing, or "border patrolling (Dalmage 2000),"[9] exposes an investment in the notion of fixed racial groups, and attempt to maintain the imagined distinctions between races. Some may even see "multiracial" as a separate or distinct racial category, rather than a blending or overlapping racial positioning. Border patrollers maintain myths of white purity, and contaminated and contaminating non-whiteness (Douglas 2002).

Multiracial people potentially encounter several levels of border patrolling. In my case, I experienced border patrolling at the level of identity, given the white woman's inability to see us as racially similar, with my whiteness partially overlapping her own. In addition, I experienced border patrolling at the intersection of identity and partner

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experiences (borderism from others, the impact of her Japanese grandmother's death, and her own maturation) motivated her to claim being both white and Asian (Japanese), and "really feel like I need to embrace it and learn about it." Other respondents expressed this desire for reclamation and recuperation of the composite parts of their heritage, such as Sophie, who was adopted into a white family that had also adopted biracial black/white children. Contrary to an Asian becoming American, Sophie described her experience as this: "I'm an American becoming Asian."

[9] "The manner in which people react to individuals who cross the color line highlights the investment, the sense of solidarity, and perhaps the comfort these observers have with existing categories. Perhaps most important, the reaction shows the wide acceptance of racial essentialism as the explanation for the color line. When the color line is crossed, the idea of immutable, biologically based racial categories is threatened. The individual who has crossed the line must be explained away or punished so that essentialist categories can remain in place. Ironically, if race were natural and essential, individuals would not have to engage in borderism. The act of borderism is one of the many ways in which individuals construct or "do" race…. All members of multiracial families face borderism, although as individuals we face specific forms of discrimination based on our race, physical features, gender, and other socially significant markers. Borderism consists of three interacting components: *border patrolling*, discrimination that comes from both sides; *rebound racism*, faced by interracially married whites and white-looking members of multiracial families; and *intensified racism*, faced by interracially married blacks….They are inextricably linked and are always grounded in a larger racist system. As a primary means of re-creating, reproducing, and clarifying the color line, borderism shows how individuals and institutions continue to create race." (Dalmage 2000:40-2).

choice, with her (mis)perception of my race (blackness) predetermining whom I should racially partner with (other blacks) (given social expectations of homogamy). Finally, the combination of the two created a third level of border patrolling, as the inability to register my multiracial (black and white) identity despite perpetual public attention to my "exotic" and ambiguous face, resulted in someone else presuming my race dictates my love interests or overly informs my mate selection.

Conceptually, border patrolling has primarily been discussed in terms of people with socially defined singular racial identities or social locations. With little literature exploring how people with multiracial parentage or heritage navigate both multiracial and interracial borders (see Twine 1996; Roberts-Clarke, Roberts, and Morokoff 2004), I embraced this challenge, as a means of contributing to conversations about racial multiplicity, liminality, and fluidity. People located interstitially present a potential problem to border-patrolling others, particularly when their interstitial position is not constant, nor constantly legible to others. Thus, being racially mixed, particularly beyond black and white, complicates societal desires to racially sort into a dichotomy (whether white/black; nonwhite/white; black/nonblack). Furthermore, when racial markers fail to situate a multiracial person into a single racial category, people who lack intimate knowledge of the racially and ethnically ambiguous person's racial identity, family heritage or parentage, and racial/ethnic affiliations may border patrol. Strangers generally gather behavioral cues; try to decipher and decode racial markers; and otherwise filter information during social interactions with multiracial people to determine a multiracial person's racial location. This information then allows them to

border patrol as they see fit. This location, in the border patroller's mind, is always singular and static, never plural and fluid.

The experience of having multiracial parentage or heritage often means negotiating racial mixture during social interactions with others, interactions that validate or invalidate identities (Cooley 1902/1956; Mead 1934). This negotiation often entails helping others read racial multiplicity, or resolve nagging curiosities, such as "What's different about you?" or "Do I look like someone you know or no one you know?" Quite commonly, border patrollers expressed their curiosity of my respondents' racial identity by issuing a variety of questions. Several respondents spoke about the (daily) frequency with which they were asked, "What are you?" or "Where are you from?" Facing such frequent interrogations could arguably "heighten the feeling of otherness" (Root 1999:442).[10] I argue that they also reflect a tendency towards "race talk" (Myers 2005) since direct engagement with and public discussions of race or questions about others' racial heritage, are considered rude or intrusive, unnecessary even.

Because colorblind narratives continue to grip this nation but do little to satisfy people's curiosity, people present themselves as having sufficient racial etiquette, which allows them to publicly explore their racial curiosity through thinly veiled questions that skirt around race, through excessive politeness (Houts Picca and Feagin 2007), or other strategies designed to acquire information and curb anxiety about ambiguity and multiraciality. Discursively, race talk enables people to navigate racial conversations

[10] Root's assertion assumes that these questions originate from monoracial people, rather than other multiracial people of the same or different combinations. Acknowledging the possibility of "interpellating the same/difference" or having multiracial individuals attract the attention of other multiracial people remains important in illustrating how we have a collective interest in race and racial ambiguity that does not necessarily exclude multiracial people. In interpellating difference, the questions may sound the same but the social interactions may be experienced more positive, through a mutual or reciprocal exchange of information regarding racial identity and heritage.

while appearing interested in other issues, not necessarily race. The ability to slip into race talk also allows people to address their anxiety about ambiguity and curiosity about multiraciality, all the while appearing polite, not policing. Relying on race talk then supports colorblindness, and facilitates the reproduction of racial categories, which endorse racial borders.

People who attempt to reproduce racial borders border patrol multiracial individuals and fail to recognize the multiplicity of selves (Rosenberg 1979) that people possess. This failure to accommodate "the sum of our parts" (Williams-Leon and Nakashima 2001) prevents an understanding of the composite and sometimes competing parts of our social selves. Ideally, this multiplicity merges differing parts into a coherent whole (Stryker 1989, 1991), though some argue that multiple identities are hierarchical (Stryker 1980; Rosenberg 1979; Burke 1991; Stryker and Serpe 1994). "Identities incorporated into self are viewed as ordered in relation to one another such that one identity rather than another can be said to have more (or less) of some quality or characteristic" (Stryker and Serpe 1994: 17). Arguably, when strangers border patrol others' racial multiple selves, they ignore or deny the reality of multiplicity. Alternately, some border patrollers do recognize this multiplicity but refuse to make space for it. They believe in the singularity of racial groups or categories, and apply the same logic to social selves.

When strangers border patrol people's racial multiplicity, they do not want to admit to a multiracial reality, or consider Stryker and Serpe's (1994:17) footnoted assertion, "The possibility that two or more identities may exist at the same location in a hierarchical order should be recognized explicitly." Instead, borderists prefer collapsing

racial differences into similarity and singularity. In doing so, they make individuals with multiracial heritage or parentage ostensibly easier to deal with, conceptually and interactionally. Collapsing difference into coherence, and the multiple into the singular, allows border patrollers to reify racial divides.

Additionally, I saw a need to extend discussions about interracial relationships by acknowledging the many adult mixed-race children who continue to form their own families of procreation. This work attempts to fill these voids, and counter the disappearing acts of adult multiracial people who are not always readily recognized in discussions of interracial relationships, and by extension, in society. In this work, I studied how people with complex racial biographies negotiate these levels of border patrolling. Working through this task enabled me to center the voices and experiences of multiracial people, showing how they navigate multiracial interracial borders through discursive practices, such as resistance to and reproduction of the color line. Spotlighting multiracial realities involved demonstrating the careful maneuvering around racial borders socially erected to police both racial identities and romantic relationships.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW, THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODS/METHODOLOGY

How Do You Solve A "Problem" Like Racial Mixture? Making Mixture Appear and Disappear

"According to the racial zodiac, 2000 is the official Year of the Mulatto"[11]

With the changes to the 2000 Census allowing people to choose more than one race, the multiracial population was reinvented as "something new" (Morning 2000; Rockquemore 1998; Williamson 1980) and gained heightened visibility as an ostensible "first generation" of multiracial people[12] (Daniel 2002). Despite these institutional changes, evidence suggests that multiracial individuals continued to confront contestations, as people debated who counts as multiracial (Morning 2000). Regardless of how people chose to identify on the Census, they still have to engage in a public presentation of their racial selves. While this presentation of self is often in congruity with one's identification (how one formally identifies on such forms), that is not always the case. In these moments of incongruity (where a difference exists between identity and identification), negotiations must take place. These negotiations can intensify even more, in instances where an individual's identity, physical appearance, and other's perception fail to align. "When face and soul collide," multiracial individuals, especially ones who are racially ambiguous and "nonvisible minorities" (Buchanan and Acevedo 2004) encounter borderism. This occurs because their phenotypic features contrast with their identity, which contrasts with the way others perceive them. Being invisibly mixed

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[11] Senna (1998:12).

[12] The term describes a person who has one parent of one socially defined race and another parent of a different socially defined race, regardless of their own racial mixture. This term, and the increasing literature dedicated to exploring the experiences of "first-generation" multiracial people enabled the reinvention of mixture. It also facilitated the historical amnesia and revisionism about race mixing and exposes the extent of our societal investment in socially constructed racial categories as singular and static.

and racially ambiguous creates anxiety, causes people to patrol racial borders in an effort to situate such individuals into singular categories.

Rather than recognize singularity and multiplicity as socially constructed, border patrollers in these situations attempt to appease their anxiety by regulating the racial realities of others. On the basis of beliefs about racial purity (and its evil twin-contamination), racial border patrollers work to reify racial categories that seem stable, but in actuality have changed on every Census form, since its inception, and change over time, space, and place.

Nevertheless, the instability of racial categories and the fluidity and flexibility of racial identities do little to dissuade border patrollers from racial regulation. Instead, they work to maintain the racial order of things, and do so by refusing to make space for multiplicity, multiraciality, and interraciality. In some ways, the US Census engaged in a kind of border patrolling by providing the option to choose two or more races and then making the multiracial population effectively disappear in most of the Bureau's reports, outside of one's specific to the "Two or More Races" population. Although members of that population are younger than the general US population, and thus fewer (about 4 in 10 or 37 percent) reported having never been married (Jones 2005), the report neglected to illustrate the racial composition of those marriages that do exist (which they do for "interracial" relationships among the single race population. So while we know that about 46 percent of the "two or more races" population were married, we are left to puzzle over who they married. What further compounds this disappearance of multiracial people in interracial relationships is the recent collection of information on the "two or more race" population. That is, we do not know how many previously reported

"interracial" marriages involved (0-2) multiracial people. Prior to the Census 2000, multiracial people in interracial relationships (dating, cohabiting, and marital) appeared for all intents and purposes as single race people. This categorization undermines arguments about the steadily increasing number of interracial relationships (see Jones and Smith 2001; Greico and Cassidy 2001, 2004; Lee and Bean 2004, 2007; Yancey 2003), since we do not know for certain that these "interracial" relationships were regarded as such by its members, or even consisted of individuals who considered themselves racially different from one another (see Brunsma and Rockquemore 2001; Rockquemore and Brunsma 2002; Rockquemore 1998, Root 1992, 1996; among others)

This hiccup in the recording of data on the "two or more races" population produces the space for further inquiry by exposing these gaps in lived experience and institutional racial formation (Omi and Winant 1994). In other words, where data on the "two or more races" population and romantic relationships meet[13], my research on "multiracial" identities and "interracial" relationships emerges. Given the glitch in data collection on both (identity and dating history), it is important to remember that the reported 7.3 million or 2.6 percent of the population provides a glimpse into the multiracial population, rather than concretely captures the complexity of that population. Given the shifting subjectivities possible, people who claim "two or more races" in one

[13] As a result, 2.4 percent of the US population (or 6,826,228 people) reported a formal identity of "Two or more races" on the Census 2000 form. As Grieco and Cassidy (2004, 2001) point out in "Overview of Race and Hispanic Origin: Census 2000 Brief," "The Two or more races category represents all respondents who reported more than one more. The six race categories of Census 2000 can be put together in 57 possible combinations of two, three, four, five, or six races" (Grieco and Cassidy 2004:229). Of the 6,826,228 people who checked the "two or more races" category, 93.3 percent of them (6,368,075 people) reported two races; 6.0 percent of them (410,285 people) reported three races; 0.6 percent (38,408) reported four races; 0.1 percent (8,637 people) reported five races; and 823 people reported six races (White; Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race) (see Jones and Smith 2001).[13] A total of 63 options are possible, once the single race categories are included.

moment may choose differently in another (Ali 2003; Ang 2004; Lowe 1996; Root 1996; Rockquemore and Brunsma 2002). This is so for anyone, but perhaps more so for the "multiracial" population who might "choose to racially self-identify with only one of their racial backgrounds" (Rockquemore and Brunsma 2004:90) and thus claim a singular identity in one historical moment or social setting. "For these individuals, biracial refers exclusively to their ancestry yet has no meaning whatsoever for their personal self understanding. If asked, these individuals will readily share that they have parents of different races; however, that information is not salient to their self-categorization and/or group membership" (Rockquemore and Brunsma 2004: 90-91). At other times, multiracial people can also opt for other identities (border,[14] blended[15] or synthesized[16], protean, transcendent, and beyond) (Rockquemore and Brunsma 2002) but these identities can either be socially validated or invalidated based on a number of factors. That is, in certain social settings, multiracial people who assert their preferred racial identity (Rockquemore 2005) are allowed to do so without contestation. Conversely, identity invalidation occurs when others contest, refute, or reject the multiracial person's preferred racial identity.

The flaws in formal identification and social identity parallel one another, in that the complexity of racial identities is often captured and ignored both formally and socially. Being of two or more races on paper or in practice does not ensure the visibility of that multiplicity. Furthermore, people's choices are often arbitrary, or ever-changing, with their racial combinations differentially locating them closer to or further from

[14] Also discussed by Gloria Anzaldua (1987)
[15] Also discussed by Maria P.P. Root (1992)
[16] Daniel (1996)

choices and constraints. They experience racial regulation more or less, depending on their social proximity to privilege and distance from disadvantage.

While Lee and Bean (2007) argue that shifting racial hierarchies exist, Bonilla-Silva (2002) racially triangulates society into “whites,” “honorary whites,” and “blacks.” Furthermore, he argues that honorary whites enjoy access to white privilege in a way that is off-limits for collective blacks and that most light-skinned multiracials, or who Gans (1999) calls “residuals” fall into this category. I argue that shifting racial hierarchies, coupled with fluid racial identities, and competing racial paradigms facilitate border blending for some multiracials, while prohibiting it for others. It is my contention that the more visibly mixed or likely to straddle the three categories people are, they more likely they will encounter border patrolling.

Thus, Dalmage’s (2000) discussion of racial border patrolling focusing primarily on blacks and whites may have been fitting almost a decade ago. Now, however, our increasingly triangulated society suggests that border patrolling has taken on new forms (perhaps with white, honorary white, and collective black border patrolling). Using Lee and Bean (2007) as a basis for my argument, I contend that there are multiple color lines to be policed, multiple racial borders to discover and navigate (Rockquemore 2005; Childs 2005). Rather than focus solely on what provokes the most public reactions, I expand my focus of border patrolling to focus on how subtle and insidious the process can be, especially as racial mixture (in identity and partner choice) may be situationally legible. Doing so not only complicates what identity counts as “crossing the color line,” or what coupling counts as “interracial,” but recognizes that identities and relationships

policed as racially diverse or mixed may not be regarded as such by the individuals involved (from the inside).

Dalmage posited, “White and black border patrollers may both dislike interracial couples and multiracial families, but their dislike comes from different historical and social perspectives. Moreover, border patrolling tends to take place intraracially: whites patrol whites, and blacks patrol black and multiracial people” (Dalmage 2000:44). While I agree with her assertion, I also see border patrolling as much more nuanced and multidimensional. How, for example, do people border patrol multiracial individuals within and beyond the black/white binary—the brown skinned white girl (Twine 1996), the blonde-haired, blue-eyed black girl (Mahtani 2001), or the white person of color (Alvarez 1998; Vidal-Ortiz 2004)? How does fluidity in racial identity, or shifting racial selves, impact people’s policing of porous racial borders? How does being in/visibly mixed impact encounters with border patrollers? That is, how do multiracial individuals experience border patrolling in their own romantic relationships, not simply as members of their families of origin? How do their own racial identities, loyalties, and partner choices undergo potential racial regulation, inspection, and opposition?

In these paradoxical, heterotopic (“other spaces”) (Foucault 1967), Spanglish (Morales 2003), third spaces of race (Bhabha 1991; Luke and Carrington 2000), “which drop” (Gallagher 2006) of blood do people border patrol? What does border patrolling look like when directed at someone who asserts a border or protean versus singular or transcendent identity? In my exploration of these paradoxical positions or experiences, I expose how paradoxes look and feel differently from the inside out than from the outside

looking in.[17] Discussions of borderism have not yet grappled with these complexities. Often border patrollers impute identities onto others by relying on racial markers to decode a person's identity and racial location. This imputation ignores the variety of racial options multiracial people choose, by assuming one "best" identity for multiracials, a presumption refuted by Rockquemore and Brunsma (2004). Rather than prescribe the "best" identity, scholars such as Rockquemore and Brunsma contend that a variety of racial identity options are possible, with no *one* identity option the ideal or best choice. Their contention/position therefore does not privilege one option over all others, or confer higher social status to one option. Rather, they recognize multiple (multi)racial realities and multiple racial identity options.

Border patrollers believe in this ideal, best choice and use racial cues to police accordingly. Rockquemore posits:

> We all fit into some neat conglomeration of social categories and it's just too confusing if we can't take people at face value. Racial passing has a particular hold on our collective imagination because we assume that individuals belong to one, and only one, biologically defined racial group. This assumption disallows the possibility of being "mixed-race" and has historically necessitated elaborate rules and regulations in order to classify what folks *really* are. The one-drop rule, a uniquely American norm that reflects our particular history of racial formation, dictates that people with any black ancestry whatsoever are black. Given the explicit racial hierarchy in the U.S., racial passing has always referred to a person who was really black pretending to be white. (Rockquemore 2005:17).

[17] As Foucault explained, heterotopic space constitutes a different space, "a space that is other, another real space as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled" (Foucault 2002: 243). Heterotopic spaces provide an uneasy and imperfect, though useful, analogy for understanding the interstitial social location of multiracial people in this society and in their negotiations of romantic relationships. This "other space" of race, Morales (2003) suggests, is a "Spanglish space" which does not require "choosing affiliation with a particular race" but rather is "a space where multiple levels of identification are possible" (Morales 2003:17). This Spanglish space embraces "heterogeneity and randomness" (Morales 2003) and makes multiple affiliations possible. In this sense, terms such as "white people of color" capture this heterotopic heterogeneity without appearing oxymoronic. They also show how hybrid lives can cultivate "paradox as habitus," such that these seeming irreconcilabilities are resolved through everyday negotiations of race.

One problem of presuming a “best choice,” beyond the need to racially locate multiracial people into singular categories, involves the racial ideologies and outdated logic guiding this behavior. Borderists often apply the one-drop, instead of the “which drop” rule. That is, they would more likely racially sort a black/white biracial into blackness rather this whiteness. Another problem associated with this involves the differences between chosen identities and imputed ones, as well as any incongruence in the appearance of multiracial people (Buchanan and Acevedo 2004). During social interactions, people try to acquire information to make sense of and reconcile any incongruity with (disjunctures between) the multiracial person’s ambiguity, identity, and appearance.

Furthermore, border patrolling is so much more complex in this colorblind society. That is, people have developed very sophisticated ways of voicing support, supportive opposition, and opposition (Childs 2005) to racial mixture at the level of identity and interracial relationships. According to Bonilla-Silva (2002), a variety of discursive strategies exist for people to engage in “smiling discrimination, which allows people to mask their prejudice and racist ideologies while maintaining an appearance of impartiality. With the expansion and contraction of racial categories (Gallagher 2004a), we see the situational racial accommodation of preferred kinds of racial mixture (mixed with white), at the exclusion of blackness. Persistent anti-black discrimination and racial alienation suggest a societal effort to maintain systemic white privilege and power. Such behavior also betrays common racial etiquette designed to divert attention away from race matters and conceal existing racial inequalities and divisions, ones precisely though not exclusively maintained by practices such as border patrolling.

In this work, I tackle the challenge of dimensionalizing border patrolling. In some ways, white border patrolling and black border patrolling, conceptually, are not enough to help us understand "multiracial border patrolling," or exactly how people with multiracial heritage or parentage feel policed by others. The concepts are satisfactory, if we understand "white" as broadly inclusive of Asians, Latinos, and Native Americans, and "black" as narrowly focused on individuals with African ancestry (a position I do not advocate establishing at this point). However, this is not the way Dalmage present the terms in her work. The application of these two terms (white border patrolling and black border patrolling) proves useful primarily for those individuals who fit the black/white binary, or are white-looking and black-looking multiracial people who are perceived and treated accordingly, which is not to say some multiracial people are neither. Because multiracial individuals serve as "the nation's racial Rorschach tests," they are likely to experience border patrolling from a variety of sources, and also for a number of reasons. That is, some multiracial people are likely to confront the contradictory presence of colorblindness and border patrolling, or the regulation of race along color lines. This contradiction exposes people's perception of the "same/difference" (Zack 1997). In the color-blind mind, people all look the same, while simultaneously remaining different, particularly to border patrollers who see racial divisions as fixed and static.

In her description, Dalmage referenced white and black (looking) people being punished for crossing the color line and encountering discrimination from "both sides." This description solidifies a black/white binary, without making space for a different kind of racial classification system. What of the new color line that locates multiracial people into a transitional "residual" category before relocating them more permanently into a

white or black one (Gans 1999)? Or Bonilla-Silva's (2004) Latin-Americanization of America, in which multiracial people fit into the tri-racial hierarchy, possibly falling into all three categories, white, honorary white, and collective black? Or George Yancey's (2003) contention that the black/white color line now looks black and nonblack?

Perhaps Lee and Bean (2007) best summarize the dilemma when they posit, "If the problem of the 20th century was the color line, the question of the 21st century could be one of multiple color *lines*" (Lee and Bean 2007:3). By considering these shifting color lines, they were able to document shifts in racial meanings, as well as "perceptions about the permeability and rigidity of racial/ethnic boundaries," or "where group boundaries are fading most rapidly and where they continue to endure" (Lee and Bean 2007:3). They continue,

> More fundamentally, multiracial identification constitutes a significant harbinger of social change because seeing and identifying oneself in multiracial terms (and particularly being able and willing to designate oneself in such terms officially) reflects a jettisoning of the *exclusive* and *absolutist* bases of racial categorization that have long marked racial construction in the United States…. Multiracial identification thus provides an important analytical lens through which to gauge the placement, strength and shifts of America's color line (Lee and Bean 2007:3).

Their results show that racial categories curiously expand and contract contingent upon the individuals being considered for inclusion or exclusion. Scholars continue to demonstrate how blackness is broadly defined, in contrast to the specificity with which we understand who is Asian or Latino. Hypodescent pressures people with known blackness to claim a black identity (Khanna 2008; Lee and Bean 2007), while allowing people with Asian and Latino heritage to choose from a wider range of options.

Allowing Asian and Latino multiracials to freely choose (Xie and Goyette 1997) while constraining the choice of black multiracials (Lee and Bean 2007) is not only

unfair, but it also supports and solidifies the black/nonblack divide (Yancey 2003). The devaluation and stigmatization of blackness also remains (Loury 2004). Asian and Latino multiracials increasingly opt for white specifically, or racial/ethnic identity more symbolically, in ways that contrast how identity is more instrumental in the everyday lives of black multiracials.

Lee and Bean (2007:19) posit,

> Experiences with multiraciality among Latinos and Asians are closer to those of whites than to blacks. Furthermore, that racial and ethnic affiliations and identities are much less matters of choice for multiracial blacks indicate that black remains a significant racial category…. The findings thus suggest that a black-nonblack divide is taking shape, in which Asians and Latinos are not only closer to whites than blacks are to whites, but also closer to whites than to blacks at this point in time.... In essence, rather than erasing racial boundaries, the country may simply be reinventing a color line that continues to separate blacks from other racial/ethnic groups (Lee and Bean 2007:19).

While I agree with Lee and Bean's assertion that the shifting color line continues its anti-black alienation, their discussion of multiracial people masks the complexity of mixture in this country. Lee and Bean (2007:3) contend, "Currently, 1 in 40 Americans identifies himself or herself as multiracial, and by the year 2050, this ratio could soar to one in five (Farley 2001; Smith and Edmonston 1997)."[18] They extend this argument, adding that "increasing nonwhite racial/ethnic diversity occurring through immigration, rising intermarriage, and the growing multiracial population—suggests that the traditional black-white color line may be losing salience" (Lee and Bean 2007:3). While they pose the question about whether new nonwhite immigrant groups (mostly Asians and Latinos)

[18] Their presentation of information, as well as that of others (including the U.S. Census Bureau), suggests a sudden birth of a multiracial population. It is important to acknowledge here that prior reporting on race did not aim to and thus simply did not capture this racial complexity. While I think discussing what is different about contemporary understanding of mixture and who claims to be a part of the multiracial population remains important, I also find it equally important not to manufacture "mixed-race" as a new category, rather than one that has been in existence for quite some time.

will get sorted out as white or black, or "more closely resemble whites or blacks in the United States at this point in time," I pose another: Can we ever consider multiracial, interracial, and immigration matters all at once? How would doing so change the course of conversations that otherwise compartmentalize these issues? What happens when we make them multiplicative, rather than additive, social phenomena, thereby acknowledging the intersections of these categories: multiracial, interracial, immigrant? Doing so might draw attention to the racial and ethnic diversity that exists within and across these categories but that get masked by categorical labels such as "Asian" and "Latino."

While I do not address all of these concerns here, I will raise one final concern. When did "multiracial" come to mean "mixed with white"? Lee and Bean aptly accommodate this guiding assumption by inferring the possibility of a new racial hierarchy (Gans 1999) with "multiple color *lines*." (Lee and Bean 2007:3). Ironically, Lee and Bean's examination of multiple color lines erased much of the multiraciality that exists beyond biracial. This erasure results from their focus on Asian-white and Latino-white multiracial individuals. Guided by regional trends in intermarriage and patterns of race mixing that make accessing these type of mixtures more accessible in their part of the nation, they neglect to acknowledge how much more varied "multiracial" can be. They are not alone in this, as many researchers make border patrolling moves for various purposes. Their exploration of "multiracial" exposes the limitations of existing terminology to describe, discuss, and explore multiracial lives and identities (see Rockquemore and Brunsma 2002).

In the “Notes” section of their article, “Reinventing the Color Line,” Lee and Bean (2007) offer the following clarification: “For purposes of discussion and analysis, we employ the often used terms Asian, Latino and black even though we recognize that these categories are socially constructed and a great deal of ethnic heterogeneity exists within them.” Given the very subject of this article, I found their failure to acknowledge *racial* heterogeneity within these labels curious.

To my mind, many race scholars have made similar moves, working to acknowledge mixture, but erasing its existence prior to 2000. Yancey (2003) and others perpetuate similar lines of thinking, neglecting to acknowledge in discussions about “thin” and “thick” racial identities and interracial relationships, that some people might already assert a multiracial identity. In part this reinforces racial categories as racially singular, cohesive, and homogeneous, let alone ethnically so. This also ignores that prior to the 2000 Census multiracial people were sorted into and sorted themselves formally into singular categories. However, we cannot be clear whether they did so for enumeration purposes only (asserting a formal identity different than their instrumental one), or simply in the absence of a variety of choices (being able to “check all that apply”).

Rockquemore (2005:18) posits, “Most people do not have the cognitive schema for “biracial,” or I would argue, “multiracial.” What complicates this lack of such a cognitive schema is multiracial people both fitting and not fitting into singular race categories and society’s inability to understand racial ambiguity. Looking clearly ambiguous or having an appearance incongruent with one’s identity creates a dilemma for and confuses those reliant on phenotype to decipher/determine race.

When multiracial people do not “look” a certain race, or they look like several races, they complicate some people’s ability to decode this multiraciality. When Rockquemore (2005) writes that she is “black by self-definition, white by phenotype, and biracial by parentage” (2005:17), she is highlighting how her appearance proves ambiguous enough to be read racially different by different groups, in different contexts, for different reasons. In part, she argues and I would agree, people in the U.S. are quite ill-equipped and unwilling to deal with this ambiguity, as expressed by the generalized anxiety with ambiguity we observe regarding multiracial individuals. Discursively this gets expressed in questions about ambiguity such as “What are you?”

As Lee and Bean (2007) posit, Americans appear much more comfortable with Asian and Latino multiracial ambiguity than with black multiracial ambiguity; they are much better equipped (socialized) to detect African ancestry than other racial/ethnic ancestry. That people can detect and make space for a “hint of Indian” in a white-looking white-Asian multiracial, but contest the same in a multiracial black (especially when such mixture would likely not even be detected as something other than black) reinforces, rather than reinvents, a color line that demarcates blackness from all other racial groups. Everyday racial discourses reflect this way of seeing in the ways that blackness is commonly understood to be a mixture of many, all the while remaining intact blackness. Whiteness, with its hints of Asian and Latino, can be either/or, but not confined to one category.

Race scholars have captured this differential (Sandoval 2000) in discourse and in lived experience. In comparison to black multiracials, Lee and Bean (2007) assert, multiracial Asian- and Latino-Whites assert racial identities that largely go unchallenged.

Furthermore, others do not "automatically ascribe a monoracial Asian or Latino identity to them. Instead, their multiracial identities are more readily accepted than the multiracial identities for blacks. Moreover, unlike black-white multiracials, Latino-white and Asian-white multiracials are often identified as white, which in turn, affects the way they see themselves."

Other's disbelief at the racially mixed parentage of Asian-white and Latino-white multiracials suggests that members of these groups "look" white or have a white phenotype. But what happens when this is not the case, and nonwhite racial markers compromise the multiracial person's appearance? Drawing on literature that discusses racial ambiguity, I would further complicate the existing conversation about the reinvented color line and the legibility of whiteness.

When the face of mixture remains a racially and ethnically ambiguous one (LaFerla 2003; Buchanan and Acevedo 2004; Lee and Bean 2004; Morning 2003; Winters and DeBose 2003; Wu 2002, 2003; Wynter 2002; Zhou 2003), where one's features "do not necessarily fit into any easily definable category" (Rockquemore 1998:208), the black/nonblack divide might emerge to explain multiracials' racial realities. However, I see Bonilla-Silva's (2004) tri-racial hierarchy or one that Gans (1999) describes that positions many multiracial people as "residuals" having better appeal, if only because of its accommodation of this ambiguity that does not immediately relocate mixture into white or black. In fact, people often misperceive others' appearance, interpreting racial ambiguity and its attendant mixture as monoracial. "Clearly ambiguous" multiracial individuals can encounter intensified border patrolling,

in the form of racial policing from a variety of different groups who perceive the clearly ambiguous as one of their own.

If people rely on racial markers to border patrol, and these markers float on a racially mixed person, then people may patrol this ambiguity from different racial groups. That multiracial individuals interpellate (Althusser 1971) or hail members of "similarly different" race groups illustrates the social construction of race and the illusion of racial purity and fixity. Interpellating a diverse set of others also indicates that though multiracial identity often gets flattened, collapsed into neat and cohesive categories, it also illustrates its connective potential. As people misread multiracial ambiguity as similarity, this misreading makes possible a connection on the basis of perceived racial sameness, rather than difference. This is not to say that all people always prefer such similarity, but that evidence exists to support this tendency towards homogeny and homophily (Hunter 2005; Korgen 2002).

What is an "Interracial" Relationship?

To complicate these matters, we move next into a discussion of what constitutes an "interracial" relationship. The language to describe mixed race people in interracial relationships remains limited, since most of the literature on interracial relationships focuses on monoracial individuals. Much of the discussion regarding mate selection and partner choice establishes as its unspoken starting point that individuals possess a singular, not multiple, racial identity with little to no intimate knowledge or intimate familiarity with racial multiplicity. Despite the popularity of mate selection as a topic of research, few scholars have centered their investigative efforts on how multiracial people partner (see Root 1999 as one notable exception). Multiple color lines and shifting

identities further complicate matters, making “interracial” relationships situationally so (contingent on the identities of the individuals involved). This position diverges from that of Root (1999), who contends that any relationship a multiracial person is in is interracial.

Producing the space for mixed race people to illustrate the ways their identities and those of their partners converge and diverge in romantic relationships centers such voices. This space also leaves room for mixed race people to contest and stretch the definition of “interracial” relationships, as shaped by our own racial subjectivities and experiences, to include or exclude, as the case may be, their presence as participants in these intimate relations. I made space for these differential assertions in this work.

Additionally, such discussions are predicated on racial difference as defined in a hegemonic way, with people’s perceptions being privileged over the ways individual members of interracial families might define difference. As a result, members of interracial families are discussed as having different racial realities, as related to their racial difference. But what about those family members who see themselves as racially similar to one another, even though others see the family as racially distinct and diverse? The triangulated racial hierarchy outlined by Bonilla-Silva’s work, among others, suggests that this is increasingly possible, since light-skinned Asians, for example, occupy an honorary white status, which draws their experiences closer to whites. In an interracial white-Asian family, all of the members might identify as white or “like white” (honorary white), with the family member’s racial identities and statuses calling into question the definition of the term: “interracial” family.

Acknowledging how these racially interlocking and overlapping parts fuse to create different kinds of experience in relation to relatives expands the narrative about interracial families and provides greater context for understanding how multiracial individuals experience border patrolling individually and relationally. If what *feels* like an ordinary (not interracial) family on the inside *looks* like an interracial family on the outside, racial negotiations must take place in order to resolve what look like discrepancies or inconsistencies. Understanding these negotiations requires paying attention to how family members assert and experience their own and one another's racial identities, and as I do in this research, how "mixed-race" individuals understand themselves and their romantic relationships racially.

Thinking about the ties that bind (Collins 1998a) facilitates further understanding of how race and family systematically support one another, a point that Segrest (1994) disagrees with. Collins posits:

> Overall, by relying on the belief that families have assigned places where they truly belong, images of place, space, and territory link gendered notions of family with constructs of race and nation (Jackson and Penrose 1993). In this logic that everything has its place, maintaining borders of all sorts becomes vitally important. Preserving the logic of segregated home spaces requires strict rules that distinguish insiders from outsiders. Unfortunately, far too often, these boundaries continue to be drawn along the color line (Collins 1998a: 69).

Borderism reinforces the idea that boundaries should not be crossed. Interracial relationships have the dubious distinction of dissolving racial borders, yet the way we collectively conceptualize them reinforces racial differences. Firstly, the U.S. Census began accounting for racial mixture in individuals by allowing the checking of more than one box. Prior administrations of the Census did not allow people to acknowledge racial mixture. If we couple that fact with the aforementioned oversights included in the 2000

administration regarding the Bureau's intent to collect and then report on marital patterns among the mixed race population, we can begin to see flaws in the information many rely on in their work. An examination of interracial relationships that draws conclusions on the basis of these falsely fixed and finite categories overlooks, for example, the number of people who, if given the chance, might have checked "two or more races" in the 1990 Census. If we consider this possibility, then we begin to see how the process of data collection gets complicated. Any number of those individuals, whose race gets reported in a singular way in the 1990 Census, irrespective of how they live their race (assert their racial identity), get anchored into a racial group (placed into one racial category). This anchoring becomes problematic when imposed upon, versus chosen by, the individual. Thus, the celebration of interracial relationships, as part of the journey of assimilation, and evidence of eroding racial boundaries, is dubious if and when these boundaries do not socially exist for some individuals involved.

Assuming that interracial relationships serve as symbolic evidence of progress seems a hastily made conclusion when people ignore the possibility that many members of "interracial" relationships may not consider themselves members of such relationships[19]. Instead, they may see how their mixed race identity overlaps with their romantic partner, an overlap that can and often does cancel out any existing social differences and distance. This may not be experienced or understood as evidence of

[19] Childs (2005) makes this point to illustrate the social construction of whiteness and blackness, as related to "whites" and "blacks" in "interracial" relationships. I extend this conceptual problematizing of "interracial" by suggesting that the social construction of singular races includes and excludes multiracial people, with "multiracial" itself a contestable concept, in addition to "interracial." Both Childs' and my position underlines the contingent character of "interraciality" and contrasts with that of Maria Root's. Root (2001) contends that multiracial people can only be in relationships that are considered interracial; her contention intends to validate multiracial identity and racial difference but ignores the identity variation of multiracial individuals. It also makes "marrying out" (Davis 1991, Schwartz and Rutter 1998) seem stable, rather than situational, for multiracial people because of their potentially shifting identities.

assimilation, but an always already pre-existing social proximity to one's partner, who is externally read (by the Census, among others) as racially distinct from the mixed race individual. Were it possible, even desirable, to uncover these nuances in the 1990 Census (and previous) administration and data on interracial relationship patterns, we might find a somewhat more sobering account of this presumed racial progress.[20]

Furthermore, the Census 2000 offers little information on what constitutes an interracial relationship, other than to say:

> Marital patterns often differ by race and Hispanic origin (Table 1). Census 2000 allowed respondents to choose more than one race. With the exception of the Two or more races group, all race groups discussed in this report refer to people who indicated *only one* racial identity among the six major categories: White, Black or African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and Some other race. The use of the single-race population in this report does not imply that it is the preferred method of presenting or analyzing data. The Census Bureau uses a variety of approaches. (p.2-4).

Because the U.S. Census only recently (in 2000) allowed people to check one or more races, data collection on interracial marriages remains flawed at best. To elaborate, I will present an example, to illustrate how Yancey's (2003) (and others') discussion may be misleading, as far as trumpeting rates of interracial marriages as indication of societal progress. If a multiracial white/Asian person could not, in the 1990 Census, recognize her racial mixture on this form, then she may have chosen Asian, despite identifying as mixed (white/Asian). When she marries a white man, is her marriage considered

[20] In his book, *Who is White?*, Yancey (2003) advances his argument about a racial hierarchy that sorts people into black or non-black categories to explain how Latinos and Asians are increasingly enjoying honorary white status. This occurs predominantly through intermarriage, as rates in both groups marrying whites continues to grow. Yancey presents his argument by building on this idea that celebrates Latinos and Asians approximation of whiteness, and their assimilation successes. What Yancey overlooks involves his discussion of this trend.

interracial? Is his?[21] Does the whiteness that overlaps between the two make the union monoracial? Understandably, the Census cannot capture the nuances of flexible identities, but why not present information on interracial relationship for the multiracial population? To ignore marital patterns among those in the "Two or more races" category is to ignore how over 6 million people partner.

In social interactions, the flaw in this racial coding and decoding process occurs at the intersection of perception and identification, and the resulting misreading of race that often occurs when mixed race people come under such inspection and surveillance. Misreading involves seeing similar skin tones racially different people (i.e. black/Asian and Latino) as "the same" and seeing different skin tones in racially similar people as "different" (i.e., a light-skinned and dark-skinned black). This misreading may then result in the passing of "sameness" and the policing of visible difference, despite the possibility of the former being "interracial" and the latter not.

Ambiguity and ubiquity cloud the process of deconstructing codes. Taking cues at face value provides border patrollers with a false sense of security since they believe in

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[21] This refers to Jessie Bernard's concept of "his" and "her" marriages. In her book, *The Future of Marriage* (1972), Bernard explores how women and men experience marriage differently due to gender differences. Her discussion highlights how men report more marital satisfaction than women, with the latter complaining more about various aspects of marital life. While conceptually the terms "his" and "her" marriages remain useful for pointing to the ways patriarchy and/or other social forces differently shape marriage, the discussion does not uncover how these differences might be minimized or intensified by other social locations of each partner (i.e., race, class, nationality, sexual identity, age, and so on). Given that, further research must investigate how these factors influence the extent to which "her" and "his" marriages differ. Picking up this line of inquiry involves acknowledge the axes that allow for connected experiences or commonalities in terms of some experiences and divergences in others. Understanding, for example, experience partially in terms of empathy, we can see the multidimensionality of both and how one partner might connect to the other at some points or axes and not others. Additionally, each partner can cultivate a variety of empathies, stemming from individual experiential familiarity with an issue or culling knowledge and intimate understanding about an issue. These empathies include, but may not be limited to, ethnic, racial, generational, and cultural. The ability or desire to empathize with one's partner may mitigate any tensions or conflict stemming from otherwise different experiences socially. Focusing too centrally on the gendered component of "his" and "her" marriages overlooks how other social positions intersect with gender to facilitate or compound marital experiences individually and relationally.

an illusive stasis of racial groups. A mixed race person embodies evidence that corporally refutes claims or beliefs of racial purity. Furthermore, their involvement in relationships creates a border patroller's worst nightmare, when her/his anxiety about (multi)racial identity intensifies (rather than dissolves) at the intersection of partner choice. Border patrollers who confront ambiguity, for instance, in both members of an interracial couple cannot easily rely on the "more obviously" or less "clearly ambiguous" mixed race person to do the decoding of the other. In these situations, both members must negotiate the resistance and opposition expressed through racial border patrolling. This opposition stems from the very racial trespassing (as enacted by border crossing in the form of involvement in interracial intimacy) that dissolves and erodes borders, while making them expansive and accommodating of difference at the same time.

The border patroller may conversely feel falsely reassured that the couple s/he sees is monoracial, a thought that comforts until knowledge of them potentially "passing as monoracial" gets revealed to disrupt such visions of racial homogamy. When a multiracial interracial relationship gets read as a monoracial one, border patrollers prematurely breathe a sigh of relief, believing that yet another couple has obediently followed the rules.

Within a colorblind society that stubbornly sets parameters around appropriate romantic relationship partners' race and intensely polices these racial borders, a mixed race person's racial identity and other's perception of that identity delimit and limit partner choice on the basis of race. In an ideal world, individuals of any racial background could freely choose to be with whom they love or desire. In this society, given people's anxiety with race mixing, at the site of embodied mixture (product of

interracial intimacy) and agent of race mixing (participant in “interracial” relationship), multiracial people confront a double patrolling phenomenon. As “dirty double crossers,” multiracial people blur the boundaries of race as they embody this mixing (ambiguity, fluidity, etc.), and through their involvement in their own romantic relationships (which more often than not get read as interracial, whether the mixed race person and his/her partner think of it as such).

Social norms and expectations relating to homogamy and endogamy then get disrupted, and destabilized when we add mixed race people to the miscegenation equation. For mixed race people who articulate shifting subjectivities, partnering with a racially similar partner proves partially impossible. To the degree that the partner’s identity undergoes similar shifts that disallow a racial “match” with the multiracial person, such a relationship would be interracial (when overlap occurs, and not when identities diverge rather than converge). In this sense, then, a relationship is “interracial” or not contingent on the identities of its members, identities that can be in constant motion or possess a static quality. When identities are in flux, a multiracial person may, in ways that parallel a protean identity, have a mutable interracial relationship that feels monoracial in one moment and multiracial in another. That is, mixed race people have different interpretations of their relationships, seeing them as monoracial in some cases but not others (points I elaborate on later).

The strength of Root’s claim that any relationship involving a mixed race person constitutes an interracial one lies in recognizing the mellifluous and malleable qualities of identity and the differential experiences of mixed race people (even of the same racial combination, or partially overlapping races). The weakness of her claim stems from

mixed race people being denied their agency to articulate their feelings and perceptions about being in romantic relationships. This claim also does not allow us to account for the variation in our racial identity articulations and/or experiential differences created by regional, geographic, historical shifts in racial formations and understandings of race. This stance might also oversimplify variation by glossing over how globalization differentially impacts the mixed race population as flows of people facilitate fragmentation and connection, dislocation and relocation (Appadurai 1996; Hall 1999). This conjuncture and disjuncture enables a liquidity in identity, which might impede and/or accelerate the quality and ability to engage in social relations among diverse groups of people.

Racially ambiguous multiracial individuals might likely encounter or elide the panopticon of racialized surveillance that is border patrolling when they form romantic relationships. Looking for cues to racially decode the clearly ambiguous, people sometimes turn to the romantic partners of multiracial individuals as evidence or indication of their heterosexual alliances (Twine 1996). If the romantic partner's race remains similarly illegible, this can compound the border patrolling the couple experiences, individually and relationally (i.e., in situations in which *both* members of the romantic relationship are multiracial). Few scholars have developed discussions about the racial (individual, relational, and familial) realities of couples consisting of two multiracial individuals.

In addition to thematically exploring questions regarding how people with mixed race heritage assert their racial identity (if this assertion differs from previous generations, and what variations exist among mixed race people), I also posed related

questions regarding the perception of identity option choices versus constraints; social support and validation versus opposition and invalidation; and policing or blending. How does the multiracial body become a site for policing and patrolling of racial borders? Do we use our bodies as a political tool of power to potentially disrupt or transgress discourses through embodied resistance realized through interracial intimacy and romance? Do we choose romantic partners who clarify, legitimate, or complicate our racial identity; and to what degree does each unique racial combination of our relationships stabilize or destabilize our racial identity?

How do visibly or invisibly multiracial people respond to or even resist this racialized policing, if at all? Do we internalize disciplining discourses by border patrolling others along racial lines, in terms of their identities and romantic relationships? Do we claim all of the composite parts of their racial identity, or opt for an identity that creates the least amount of tension, conflict, or competition? How situational and relational is our racial identity?

How does our racial identity impact how others view us, in terms of alignment and opposition to them, and how does this shape the way we see people of various races as potential partners? What ways do we acknowledge difference or create similarity through the designations we give to our romantic relationships? What counts, in other words, as an “interracial” relationship for a multiracial person, and how do we make such determinations of similarity and difference by race? How do we deal with the possible misreading that results when others see us and/or our romantic relationships in a manner that differs from our own views? Given the continuing significance of race and racial hierarchies that privilege whiteness and reproduce white supremacist ideologies (Bonilla-

Silva 2003a, 2003b; Ferber 1998; Fine, Weis, Powell, and Wong 1997; Frankenberg 1993; Gallagher 2004a; Gans 1999; Roediger 2002; Yancey 2003; among others), how do multiracial race people interpret the mixed messages regarding expectations of racial homogenous, homogamous, and endogamous relationships (Dalmage 2000; Root 2001; Luke 1994; Rosenblatt, Karis, and Powell 1995); and the particular policing or racial border patrolling (Dalmage 2000) of those who blend and blur boundaries of racial identity and interracial intimacy through their various subject positions and selection of romantic partners? Finally, I consider whether mixed race people, as members of interracial families, internalize the effects of border patrolling and continue the process, whether intentionally, or inadvertently. Through my examinations, I attempted to unravel these questions, paying particular attention to the social construction of race, symbolic interactionism (Cooley 1956a, 1956b; Berger and Luckmann 1966; Blumer 1969; Goffman 1967, 1963; LaRossa and Reitzes 1993; Thomas and Znaniecki 1918-1920), and critical race theory (specifically colorblindness, border patrolling, and multiracial identity theory).

Finally, I considered the riddle, When is an interracial relationship so? By exploring how the boundaries of "interracial" relationships can expand and contract in tandem with identities, I unpacked yet another paradox revealed in my investigation of multiracial experiences: being mixed in a romantic relationship does not ensure nor eliminate its interraciality. Rather, "it depends", since multiracial people sometimes consider their romantic relationships (regardless of the race of their partner) monoracial, or at least "not interracial"[22]; interracial at times, depending on the articulation of the

[22] In a conversation with a colleague, Beth Cavalier, she made me aware of the notion of "positive absence" and in that vain, I extend the same logic to the term "not interracial" for lack of a more effective

multiracial person's identity (with little consideration given to the partner's potentially shifting identity) (which makes the relationship interracial in some moments but not others); or always interracial because of the consistently multiracial identity that at least one of the members of the interracial couple asserts.

Measuring Mixture, Exploring Mixed Matters

My decision to conduct this empirical exploration of mixed matters directly stemmed from first-hand experience with navigating the color line. As a multiracial member of an interracial family who found my identity and partner choices under the persistent panopticon (Bentham 1843; Foucault 1977) of racial surveillance (Foucault 1977) as expressed through other's curiosity, I used this experiential knowledge as inspiration for my investigation. Asking others in seemingly similarly situations about their experiences navigating race, I considered the convergent and divergent ways that respondents were "mixed like me." That is, I utilized both my multiracial positionality and familiarity with the literature on multiracial identities and interracial relationships to relate to respondents of various racial combinations[23] and interpret their narratives from various perspectives.[24]

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description. Similar to Fine's "presence of an absence," positive absence acknowledges the absence of a quality, without attaching or assuming anything pejorative (a negative absence). In some ways, positive absence could be understood as an extension of a simulation, since an implosive irreference of images occurs in which the idea of "interracial" takes on more meaning than the reality of being "interracial" in terms of relationships. This hyperreal interracial imagery encourages a disqualification of real interracial relationships. This parallels the disqualification of racial mixture that occurs as the real gets dismissed when read against the imaginary. To this end, multiracial identity then seems less real than the representations of mixture that we produce.

[23] Because many multiracial people already fall under a lens of inspection in society, I was careful about not intensifying this in the research setting (Fine 1998; Hall 1998; hooks 1998; Denzin and Lincoln 1998). I tried to avoid "othering" my respondents by refusing to replicate the racialized surveillance that often makes them a spectacle. Achieving this goal involved not subjecting respondents to "authenticity tests" or other obstacles designed to prompt them to prove themselves racially. Trying to gauge authenticity would work under the rhetoric of, "How mixed *are* you?" Doing so would counter the larger goals of exploring what mixture means to various people of different (degrees of) racial combinations. Creating such a litmus test of mixture would undermine these goals, essentialize race, and remain counterproductive to the

I conducted in-depth, open-ended, face-to-face, confidential qualitative interview conversations (Blum 1999) that lasted an average of one hour. Both the respondents and an interview guide (see Appendix A) that allowed me to address specific topics of interest informed the interview conversations. Attending to and incorporating topical areas of interest generated by the respondents attempted to democratize and decolonize the process (Reinharz 2000; Smith 1999). In creating an iterative and interactive environment, I invited respondents to identify omissions and oversights in the interview guide. Using a guide provided some structure and consistency, but flexibly accommodated emergent and relevant themes I initially neglected, but eventually noticed. Thus, the guide provided a starting point from which to ask questions and establish rapport, as well as an opportunity to introduce and explore previously unexamined issues.

In conceptualizing these interview conversations as a space for consciousness raising and honest exchanges, I employed feminist methodologies throughout, in order to encourage respondents to critically reflect on their lives and feel empowered by the interaction (Babbie 1998; Phoenix 2001; Reinharz 1992; Sandoval 2000; Smith 1999; Twine 2000). Having an awareness of real or perceived power differentials between researcher and respondent (Acker, Berry, Esseveld 1983; Fine 1997; Reinharz 1992; Sandoval 2000; Smith 1999; Twine 2000) allowed me to remain sensitive to and

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research endeavor. Instead, exploring the multifaceted dimensions of mixture opens up the research experience to be enjoyable and rewarding for all involved.

[24] I drew from the readings of Collins (1991), Gallagher (1999), Harding (2003), Hartsock (1993), Johnson-Bailey (1999), Stanley and Slattery (2003), Twine (1999), and Wise (1999) to understand interview dynamics that made my multiracial social location both a currency and liability. I cannot assess the exact impact on the quality or validity of the interviews, but I recognize that respondents related to me differentially, depending in part on their perception of me as multiracial (and my specific racial combination as like or unlike them). Thus, I had to negotiate these same/differences (Zack 1997) throughout the interview process.

supportive of respondents in their efforts to extricate some of their experiences for my inspection.

Before scheduling any interview, I first screened potential participants to ensure that they qualified for the study. This screening involved asking a few quick questions about their racial identity and relationship history, to determine whether they asserted a multiracial identity or acknowledged racially mixed ancestry. Before conducting each interview, I requested participants' consent to ensure that they willingly agreed to participate in the research process. I attempted to accommodate the schedules of the participants, and located a quiet meeting place for the interview conversations to occur. To ensure that respondents qualified for the interviews, I asked a few questions about their racial identity and relationship

I later transcribed the interviews verbatim, analyzing them using grounded theory methods (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 1997; LaRossa 2005). I began with open coding, conducting a paragraph-by-paragraph analysis of the interviews which I had transcribed verbatim. In fracturing the data during this microscopic analysis, I identified concepts related to the respondents' relationships, for example, such as "attention" and "reactions/responses," analyzing the data for indicators of these concepts.

Some indicators for "attention" included compliments and comments about mixture. In coding indicators of "attention," I discovered related concepts concerning contexts and contingencies, such that attention was directed at respondents on individual, relational, familial, and collective levels; and came from a variety of people in a variety of ways. It was important to differentiate the types of attention that respondents received in order to uncover variations by quality (positive, neutral, negative); frequency

(common, uncommon); and source (strangers or significant others). Making these distinctions also enabled me to examine and establish linkages between variables such as "type of attention," "intensity of attention," "frequency of attention," "source of attention," "perceived motivation or reasons for attention," and so forth.

Some indicators of "frequency of attention" included the following: "everyday of my life someone asks me if I'm mixed;" "it [antagonistic questioning] has become like *so much* of my everyday"; "all the time some people just ask, and some people don't ask;" and "every single time I meet somebody" [they ask about racial identity]. I considered the frequency of attention in relation to the racial (and other) characteristics of the person attending to the respondent, drawing comparisons between respondents' racial combination and the race(s) of the person attending to them. By comparing and contrasting experiences, I was able to uncover patterns and variations in those patterns partially on the basis of respondents' racial combinations. I dimensionalized categories as a means of showing this variation in the respondents' experiences as embedded in the data.

Once I completed the open coding process, I began to axial code by focusing my energies on process and interaction. As LaRossa (2005:847) posits, "A full-scale examination of process necessitates also, in grounded theoretical terms, the investigation of causes, contexts, contingencies, consequences, covariances, and conditions (Strauss and Corbin 1998: 153)." Investigating "the six Cs" remained a central component of the axial coding process. I searched for relationships between the existing concepts and categories, trying to identify the connections between people's reactions and responses to the respondents individually and also relationally. I also considered strategies employed

by respondents during their interactions with others, paying particular attention to their responses to and interpretations of these interactions.

With categories such as “public responses/reactions” and “racial discourses,” I dimensionalized them by looking for positive, negative, and neutral responses and discourses. After some time, I realized that these dimensions paralleled the supportive, supportive opposition, and opposition that Childs (2005) described in her book on interracial relationships. This realization facilitated my application of the concepts to identity as well, such that people could be supportive, express supportive opposition, or oppose whatever racial identities the respondents asserted. During the selective coding stage, I was able to identify border patrolling as the central organizing theme and developed the dimensions of border patrolling as applicable to identity and partner choice through my analysis and examination of racial discourses. I considered whether respondents experienced others’ reactions as affirming or an expression of curiosity; with indifference; or with resentment. Did other people interact in ways that validated the multiracial person’s identity and romantic relationship? Both? Neither? How did the respondent’s racial identity influence others’ perceptions of race, such that the respondent evaded or faced intensified scrutiny publicly?

Taking a microscopic look at the transcripts also allowed me to see that a variety of people had reactions to the multiracial respondents’ identities and partner choices. Adding this dimension facilitated my arrival at the theory that the patrolling of racial borders is neither solely negative nor singular in its source or origination. Instead, I discovered many types of border patrolling, and that many different groups engage in this behavior discursively. Weaving these connections allowed me to arrive at the core

category of "multiracial interracial border patrolling," with the conditions including the actors involved: outside in (strangers); outsiders within, insider others, insiders without (significant others); and the self/the respondents (inside out). Delineating the various types of border patrolling allowed me to see that exploring racial borders served different purposes. This exploration then translated into the types of border patrolling for which I found evidence: benevolent, beneficiary, protective, and malevolent.

In the end, I drew a sample of 60 individuals[25] (8 men and 52 women) who ranged in age from 18 to 57 (at the time of their interview). I advertised my research project through the distribution of flyers, and relying on snowball sampling to acquire additional respondents. All but two of the respondents had at least some college education, with the majority of them having attended a large urban research institution in the Southeast. The majority identified as heterosexual, while two reported being bisexual or "questioning."

While I made efforts to encourage men's involvement in the research project, I was less successful at securing their participation, in comparison to their female counterparts. An admitted shortcoming of this research, the gender imbalance suggests that men may be more reluctant to participate in interviews if they view interviews as the space intended for women, not men. Many men expressed an interest in participating in an interview, but remained tentative in their commitment to scheduling an interview. I suspect that some men might have imagined the interviews as a space for (further)

[25] I largely centered my recruitment efforts on "first-generation" mixed people, those with self-identified monoracial (white, black, Asian, Native American, Latina/o) parents; but also included those who self-identified as mixed who had parents who asserted a singular identity with acknowledged multiracial heritage (a singular mixed identity)[25]. This allowed the latter group to reclaim and recover mixture that may have been masked, denied, or unclaimed by the parents, or disallowed by society at the time (for example, given the persistence of the one drop rule).

contestation and invalidation, of their racial authenticity, and their masculinity. In possibly viewing interview questions as extensions or replications of the interrogations they face in their everyday lives, these men would not likely participate for these reasons.

As Kenney (2002), Kivel (1996), Bradshaw (1992) and others have argued, multiracial women are often sexualized and exoticized; such sexual objectification and the surrounding myths might convince men that they have little to contribute to or discuss in the interviews. Men with racial heritage might feel gender-specific pressures related to their racial identities, with these very pressures dissuading them from participation. Unfortunately, their lack of participation impedes my understanding of any significant differences in the ways that they assert racial identities and make partner choices, but points in the direction of future research (for this lack of participation warrants its own investigation). The limited number of men in my sample precluded me from comparing the identity and partner choices of men and women with multiracial parentage or heritage.

Given the existing difficulties of discussing racial matters in the South, I was ultimately satisfied in having drawn a sample of 60 people. That is, my initial intention to establish gender balance in the interviews became secondary in relation to simply locating individuals who matched my criteria and were willing to participate. The very qualities of identities and relationships that I wanted to study- liminality, fluidity, flexibility, and racial negotiations- both facilitated and hindered the location of participants (since the recruitment required me to screen potential respondents by "figuring out" if they should be included in the investigation).

The exploratory quality of this research accommodates this gendered asymmetry but strongly suggests the need for triangulation in future research. Had I acquired additional (sufficient) funding, I would have hired at least two other interviewers, in an effort to offer potential respondents more variety in whom they could connect to (in terms of race, gender, and sexuality) during the interview conversations. Despite this limitation, I think the gender asymmetry possibly suggests that women may feel socially motivated to "be nice" by participating in such research, while men may not. The imbalance may also support existing research that suggests women uniquely experience racial mixture, since so much attention focuses on women and their bodies (Rockquemore 2002). Finally, the gender asymmetry serves as motivation to continue this research, but devise new strategies for recruiting men.

In terms of racial parentage, 16 noted having Black/White parentage, 13 noted having White/Asian parentage, 3 reported having Black/Asian parentage, while 2 noted having Black and Hawaiian parentage (as they distinguished the latter category from "Asian"). Five respondents reported Black/Native American heritage, while two reported White/Native American heritage.[26] Three mentioned having White/Latino/a parentage, while four respondents reported Black/Latino/a parentage. One reported White/Black/Latino/a heritage, another White/Black/Asian/Native American heritage, and 2 others noted having White/Black/Native American/Latino/a heritage. Five respondents reported Black/White/Native American heritage. One reported having White/Other heritage; another reported Black/Other heritage; and yet another reported having racial ancestry from all groups (White/Asian/Black/Native American/Latino/a).

[26] Here I use "heritage" instead of "parentage" to highlight that these respondents spoke about their family heritage more generally, and differentiated between having relatives (versus parents specifically) of certain combinations.

To explore their romantic relationship history, I established additional criteria for respondents. Not only did respondents have to acknowledge racial mixture in parentage and heritage, but they also had to report some (past or present) involvement in romantic relationships that preferably lasted at least 6 months.[27] Initially, I wanted respondents to consider themselves a member of an "interracial" couple. After some investigation, I realized that, although the U.S. Census (2003) categorizes any relationship involving at least one mixed race person to be an interracial one, not everyone defines her/his romantic relationships accordingly. With the term "interracial" relationship under contestation, I facilitated conversations of what a debatably "multiracial" "interracial" relationship looks like from within.

This investigation allowed me to gain insight into how respondents experience their identities individually and relationally, independent or and in relation to their romantic partner. Respondents shared their racial logic regarding the social construction of interracial relationships, offering explanations of what constitutes mixture in identity and relationships. When contradictions emerged, they attempted to resolve any inconsistencies and cognitive dissonance by providing a glimpse into their racial reasoning. Understanding this racial logic helped me make sense of their experiences and interpret mixed matters from that vantage point.

In doing so, I considered the degree of internalized oppression that enabled the sedimentation of racial hierarchies that preserve illusive of white purity and establish view whiteness as property (Harris 1993) into which many must possessively invest (Lipsitz 1995). During the interviews, then, I conceptually explored both identity and

[27] I allowed for a few respondents who had unrequited romantic interests in others into the sample, finding their discussion useful with respect to the partner choices available to racially mixed people, their romantic desires and their experiences with racial border patrolling.

partner (and their interplay), as respondents experienced them in their singularity and multidimensionality, simplicity and complexity. In many ways, conducting these investigations entailed "researching the unresearchable," as Suki Ali (2003) suggests; and illustrated why research on "mixed" race matters.[28]

To more fully understand the racial location of these respondents, I asked questions that allowed them to situate their lives (Lamphere, Ragone and Zavella 1997), by reflecting and commenting on the impact of race in their everyday experiences. Many of these questions addressed their preferred identities, families, and romantic relationships and dating history, as well as what racial interpellations and contestations they encountered. These questions ultimately enabled me to further understand the social construction and contestation of race, and how racial meanings shifted and boundaries were policed. Thinking the (raced) body differently created the space for me to explore these racial locations in relation to dislocations and migrations as well (in terms of sense of belonging nowhere and everywhere) (Deters 1997). Other questions addressed how respondents believed others' racially perceived or misperceived them; how they publicly

[28] Researching race then involves recognizing the possibly different racial paradigms through which people view and understand race (Rodriguez and Cordero-Guzman 1992). The complementary and competing racial meanings people apply to concepts of race also expose the extent to which negotiations of race, racial identity, and belonging involve negotiations of meanings, as well as experiences. Add to this the possibility of shifting, or articulating a protean identity. Sampling, then, exposed the paradox of the "mixed race population" and the problems with trying to recruit people who might assert a singular identity one time, a biracial identity at another, and so forth, a point made by Johnson and Burrows (May 2003) and Zack (1997) among others. This reminded me that, in studying this "multiracial population," to be sensitive to and aware of these shifts, and cautiously yet carefully evaluate whether potential respondents meet the criteria. This entails not essentializing a mixed identity, imposing strict meanings of mixture on potential respondents, and not policing their identity articulations in ways that may prove all too familiar to them (serving as a disincentive for research participation). For me, these considerations meant not disqualifying respondents who articulated what seemed, at first blush, like a singular identity. Instead, their choices sometimes required me to ask questions differently or more creatively, to at least identify racially mixed parentage, if not heritage. Doing so allowed me to gain greater awareness of how multiracial people fashion, refashion, and reinvent their identities during social interactions (Goldberg 1997). The process also exposed the difficulty in measuring mixture.

and privately experienced race; and what group memberships they claimed, earned, or were denied.

Making these inquiries facilitated my examination of how respondents socially anchored themselves into racial groups through blending and amalgamation (Doyle and Kao 2007), or felt this imposition from others through border patrolling. I wanted to know the following: what motivated or informed these decisions to racially locate or socially situate oneself in one way or another, as well as what prohibited or impeded one's ability to migrate from one racial location to another; how (or if) they racially identified, addressing the dimensionality of their public and private racial sense of selves individually and relationally; what corresponding labels they chose or if they adopted racial labels that captured their racial singularity, multiplicity, or border infractions, as Twine (1996), and others have found in their work; and if any opted for "other" in positive and affirmative ways, embraced a race-less or transcendent identity (Rockquemore and Brunsma 2002) informed by a colorblind ideological position; or expressed a disidentity (Munoz 2003), such that they chose "outside" of their racial combination to reflect a racial reality counterintuitive to expectations.

In the following chapters (3-5), I illustrate how multiracial individuals negotiate multiple color lines from the outside in (strangers), the outsider-within or insider-other (significant others), and from the inside out (self). In examining the different types of borderism that people engage in, I realized that all individuals in what Dalmage dubs a "racially divisive society" can participate in border patrolling. This realization helped me to see how borderism then stems from two unlikely sources: members of interracial families, and specifically multiracial members of interracial families. Not only do

"outsiders" or the people I refer to as on the "outside in" border patrol, but so too do interracially-involved individuals and the offspring of these individuals. Strangers were people the respondents considered peripheral but possibly a part of their everyday lives. For the respondents, strangers did not include family members. This differs from significant others, who include nuclear/immediate family members; extended family members; close friends; or others deemed significant by the respondents.

The terms "outsiders within," "insider others," and "insider without" have all been developed to capture the liminal position of members of interracial families. I borrow the term to reiterate this point, and designate the direction of the border patrolling as stemming from one's family of orientation or close kinship networks ("like family"). I believe the term also serves to differentiate the respondent from those "significant others" experientially and in terms of their racial realities as "multiracial" within "interracial" families. Finally, the term "inside out" marks the internalization of borderism by the respondents themselves. Rather than encountering border patrolling from other sources, the respondents themselves can become as policing of their own identity and partner choices. This type of border patrolling does not exist in isolation, but instead is connected to, and possibly the result of facing the other/either two types of borderism.

While Dalmage's discussion suggests that borderism is a relatively negative or adversarial interactional form, I argue that various forms of border patrolling exist. These forms include benevolent, beneficiary, protective, and malevolent. Benevolent border patrolling captures the behavior of others who explore racial borders out of curiosity, rather than out of a desire to regulate race or reinforce racial divisions as "real" rather than socially constructed. When people reify racial differences when interacting

with multiracial individuals, and they are attempting to create a fit into a racial category that a multiracial person may or may not claim, that is malevolent border patrolling. This type of border patrolling solidifies the idea of singular racial categories, and generally ignores multiplicity or rejects the social reality of multiraciality. Beneficiary border patrolling involves behavior or discursive practices that attempt to *benefit* from policing racial borders. When individuals consistently assert a racial identity that has greater social status and value than an alternative choice, or they opt for romantic partners that similarly elevate their social status, these individuals are benefiting from such choices or arrangements. The difficulty of detecting beneficiary border patrolling lies in people's reluctance to embrace responsibility for such behavior; and society's seduction with colorblindness.

Rather than acknowledge any racialized component or dynamic to patterns in partner choices (i.e., only dating Whites when one is White/Asian), individuals often rely on colorblind discourses to provide alternate explanations for these patterns. This "anything but race" perspective, Eduardo Bonilla-Silva argues, captures the slippery slope and dangerous character of colorblind discourses. Childs (2005) extends this position, noting how often respondents neglect to register racial discrimination or the racialization of experiences that are clearly so to other observers. Finally, protective border patrolling captures the ways that people appear to be protective of multiracial individuals. Most often, parents and close relatives engage in this behavior, so one could conceptualize the term as somewhat synonymous with "parental border patrolling." Again, the colorblind discourses produced through protective border patrolling deflect race. Instead, they focus on cultural maintenance, concerns about the decency, morality,

or commonality in values (compatibility), but seldom explicitly express concerns about race (all the while being concerned about race matters).

CHAPTER THREE: BORDER PATROLLING FROM THE OUTSIDE IN

"The Invisible"

They don't even know that I'm here.
They don't even feel that I'm here.
They see me, but they don't see me.
I'm here.

- Rudolph Kieran[29]

"I'm always entertaining people because I already know it's coming and it's always, there are always questions."[30]

In this post-Civil Rights Era of colorblindness and normative racial etiquette, detecting policing racial discursive practices requires good attention to detail. Given these social expectations of politeness, people "know better" than to publicly express problematic racial attitudes. They avoid engaging in frontstage racism (Houts Picca and Feagin 2007) for fear of reprimand, or worse--facing accusations of racism. Despite this, people often forget such social graces when confronted with what seems a racial anomaly- a multiracial person. Quickly they abandon all etiquette, opting instead to satisfy their racial curiosity piqued by the puzzling embodiment of racial mixture. In attempting to resolve these puzzles, or "problems of mixture," people deploy discursive practices that deftly allow them to navigate racial terrain and acquire enough information to "solve" the racial dilemma of to what racial group said multiracial person "really" belongs. They do so by border patrolling, which allows people to acquire racial knowledge about multiracial people in order to determine the categorical "best fit" (which seldom allows for articulated identities of two or more races).

[29] In Salkey (1971:107).
[30] Observation made by Juanita, a respondent.

Amidst claims about the increasing ease with which people assert a multiracial identity, and experience malleable identities as well, we can still witness multiracial people confronting social barriers. This raises questions about the relative ease and difficulty that multiracial people of various racial combinations experience in asserting their identity and partner choices. Who encounters these barriers? Who does not? Who erects them? Who does not? What explanations exist to account for differential encounters with border patrolling? How do we make sense of borderism in a colorblind climate, as well as one with an allegedly increasing number of multiracial people who may be on either side (both sides) of the border patrolling fence? How do we make sense of these paradoxical social realities, while offering up possibly new, even optimistic interpretations?

While most discussions of border patrolling focus on the more pejorative or negative forms, with underlying animosity, suspicion, or rejection guiding the borderist behavior (see Dalmage 2000; Shibata 1998), I found evidence of border patrolling taking on new dimensions. In my data analysis, I discovered that border patrolling not only possesses different qualities or forms, but also stems from a variety of sources. The forms include benevolent, beneficiary, and malevolent, while the sources include generalized and significant others, as well as multiracial individuals themselves.

My research adds nuance to the discussion of borderism by illustrating how people's policing behavior during racialized social interactions reflect curiosity, as well as animosity. People expressing interest in others' racial identities and attendant ambiguity (in many cases) sometimes sounds like attempts to clarify the color line. I demonstrate how some multiracial people interpret these expressions as benign or

benevolent, seeing these interactional experiences as indicative of others' efforts to educate and familiarize themselves with unfamiliar (multiracial) matters. My contention is that multiracial people continue to experience the more typical kind of border patrolling, in which they must "choose sides" or definitively declare a singular race for borderists' satisfaction, with borderists sometimes relocating multiracials into racial categories outside of their heritage.

Policing racial borders becomes more pronounced in situations involving multiracial people, particularly those racially and ethnically ambiguous ones. Looking racially and ethnically ambiguous operated as both a blessing and a curse (Bradshaw 1992; LaFerla 2003; Streeter 1996, 2003). As a blessing, many were able to blend borders, traveling easily between otherwise conflictive or exclusionary groups. As a curse, some encountered border patrolling from a variety of sources, since they were perceived differently, depending on the social setting and audience.

Conversely, for visibly mixed individuals who more clearly wear their multiracial heritage on their bodies, these questions often serve as the beginning of interesting conversations with strangers, or conversely, the onset of intrusive interactions with strangers. Occupying the paradoxical space of being "clearly ambiguous" then is a double-edged sword, in that mixed racial markers produce the opportunity for others to socially and conceptually engage such mixture, but also react in invalidating, rejecting, and opposing ways. For invisibly mixed individuals, the experience of being border patrolled in many ways hinges on how they identify (including whether they engage in their own kind of auto-border patrolling, a topic I address later), but also how they align themselves racially and socially to others. An important point here involves

acknowledging the variety of identity options available to individuals with multiracial parentage and heritage (Doyle and Kao 2004, 2007; Gaskins 1999; Herman 2004; Kao 1992; Korgen 1998; Lee and Bean 2004; Rockquemore and Brunsma 2002; Qian 2004); the shifting nature of these racial identities (Rockquemore and Brunsma 2002; Twine 1997); the differential freedom with which those individuals can assert their preferred racial identity (Davis 1991; Lee and Bean 2007; Rockquemore 2005; Herman 2004; Harris and Sim 2002; Xie and Goyette 1997; Russell, Wilson, and Hall 1992; Waters 1990); and the degree to which certain racial identities are valued, while others are devalued in this society (Rockquemore 2005).

For many of my respondents, being visibly mixed occasionally or constantly required a kind of confession (Foucault 1978), or disclosure about their mixture. Since strangers often approached the respondents in my sample seeking further clarification on the specificities of individuals' racial biographies, the respondents were expected on many occasions to delineate their racial composition. Posed with variations of the question, "How mixed are you?," respondents experienced inquiries that inspired a "coming out" process. This disclosure enabled respondents to publicly claim their racial identities (but denied those who did not want to disclose information the opportunity to remain silent). The confessional "coming out" (Foucault 1978) worked to solve the "problem" of mixture for those lacking the cognitive schema for mixture (Rockquemore 2005). By disclosing racial family biographies to others attempting to acquire this information, respondents satisfied such curiosity but sometimes reluctantly shared personal information.

"Resolving 'Other' status" (Root 1999) sometimes reflects an underlying antagonism about race mixing and racial mixture. However, attempts to resolve other status also include people's sincerely benevolent interest in detecting mixture to develop or further their personal understanding of and familiarity with racial multiplicity. I take up this discussion first, then turn to malevolent border patrolling.

I argue that, particularly with racially and ethnically ambiguous multiracial individuals, border patrolling often intensifies during the formation of romantic partnerships. When *both* members of a couple look ambiguous enough to provoke public anxieties about race mixing, border patrolling also intensifies in the presence of visible racial difference (the appearance of an "interracial" couple). Racially blurring boundaries in this way usually provokes borderists' public and private anxieties because many of these "dirty double crossers" blur borders (by virtue of their multiracial birth and through their often liminal racial location) *and* through their partner choice (often without notice). Otherwise, racial ambiguity buffers some couples from encountering borderism, because of their undetected/able racial differences. Most often, this experience involved being (mis)read as siblings. The "uncoupling" that occurs in border patrolling arises when others do not register "interracial" couples or families as such, but instead presume these families are strangers to its own members. Steinbugler (2005) described this divisiveness as "visual dislocation."

Being perceived as similar enough to be siblings, multiracial people and their partners can avoid being visually dislocated from one another. Their *similar* physical appearance masks any *differences* in their racial and ethnic backgrounds. This disjuncture allows the couple to proceed as a "monoracial" versus "interracial" one, and

enabling their "crossing the color line" (Reddy 1997). In appearing ostensibly "monoracial," these couples circumvent the danger and risks attached to visibility (Steinbugler 2005).

For visibly mixed people and couples, visual dislocation can also compound feelings of invisibility and invalidation for multiracial individuals struggling for affirmation of identity and relationship. Fluid and flexible identities compound border patrolling in cases where multiracial people are read in ways contrary to their preferred racial identity at any given time or in any social location. The practice of border patrolling disciplines subjectivities and partner choices, while cementing social norms regarding racial singularity in identity, and racial homogeneity in romantic relationships.

When Strangers Border Patrol Identities

> Because of possessing multiple selves the individual may find he is required both to be present and to not be present on certain occasions…. The individual finds himself being torn apart, however gently. Corresponding to the oscillation of his conduct is the oscillation of his self. (Goffman 1967:110).

> There is a point at which you realize that to defend this monolithic concept of identity…in a process of ongoing border crossings and reterritorialization and deterritorialization is absurd (Gomez-Pena in conversation with Fusco 1995: 153).

Respondents of various racial combinations in my sample, they experienced what Rockquemore (1998) calls the "'What are you?' experience." While I illustrate how border patrollers validate and invalidate the identities of my respondents through these interactions, I focus in the first section on benevolent border patrolling, and illustrate how "questioning an individual's identity reflects two types of problematics involving the link between identity and appearance. First, the 'what are you?' question can be a result of an ambiguous appearance…. The second type of problematic is that addressed by the above example, which could better be termed the 'what are you really' question" (Rockquemore

1998:206). I agree with Rockquemore when she asserts, "Others may approach the question of the biracial individual's racial background to clarify a discrepancy between the appearance and the professed identity" and that "there can either be a renegotiation of the identity, or an interactional rupture can take place in which no shared meaning can be agreed upon" (Rockquemore 1998:206). Rather than solely envision this questioning as antagonistic, I argue that people often inquiry benevolently about multiracial individuals' ethnic and racial backgrounds in order to resolve the ambiguity or ostensibly "Other" status of multiracial individuals.

Benevolent Border Patrolling: "So, What Are You?" and "Where Are You From?"

> See, I find people get offended when they're asked that question ["What are you?"], but I never did because I'm always happy to say, "Oh, well, you know, I'm half black and Indian." I'm happy about who I am so I'm always, you know, ready to tell people who I am, what I'm mixed with, and I'm happy to, um, take care of their curiosity…because I'd rather them know what I am, than for them to think in their minds, "Hmm, what is she? Is she Latino? Is she Middle Eastern? She's something." (Jessica, black-identified black/Asian Indian woman)

> I know I confuse people….Just because I've had people from/of all different nationalities come up to me, and with my job, I'll have people who are Asian come up and speak Japanese to me. I've had people who are Spanish come up and speak Spanish to me. I've had Korean people come up to me and speak, you know, Korean, so I've had the whole thing. I'm just kind of used to it. A lot of people think that I'm Hawaiian, too. (Theresa, a White/Asian Filipina woman)

Many multiracial individuals often cross more racial borders than usually imagined, since many look like members of racial groups apart from their racial combination.[31] As the above and following quotes and other respondents' narratives

[31] The respondents in my sample asserted a variety of racial identities, and referred to themselves with a variety of racial labels (often in addition to the existing racial categories). Some referenced themselves as "white," "black," "Asian," "mixed," "brown," "Flip" (Filipino), "Black Hispanic," "Black Panamanian," "Blackerican" (Black and Puerto Rican), "Blasian" (Black and Asian), "Anglo Indian," and more. In choosing these labels, the respondents were able to acknowledge and communicate how they understood their racial sense of selves at that moment in time. They also discussed how they negotiated this racial sense of self during interactions with others who had little intimate information about their racial

indicate, multiracial people often encounter border patrolling because of their ambiguous appearance. For many respondents, then, the experience of encountering borderism involves enabling others to solve what I call "curious racial equations" of their multiracial lives.

These equations include "Black + Asian + Native American = Hispanic; White + Asian = Hispanic; and White + Black = Hispanic. Increasingly, these racial equations make multiracial seem like the new Hispanic, a point Ann Morning (2000) discusses in her work. She notes that puzzling over mixed race identity has helped us understand a much larger population: Hispanic people. I argue that we can also learn how fluid multiracial identities are, when the misreading of them temporarily allows people to blend into a group or groups not their own. Attending to this flexible accommodation helps us understand how multiracial people publicly negotiate these misreadings.

For example, people frequently misread Flora, a black/white biracial woman, as Hispanic, offering reasons why they perceived her as such, and very rarely as "mixed with white and black." Another respondent of the same racial combination, Ellen, shared similar experiences of being misidentified as Hispanic, and frequently approached by

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inheritance. These negotiations proved particularly interesting, given the changing contemporary racial landscape and that specific to the South.

With much of the experiences the respondents shared having taken place in the South, one must keep in mind that the local racialization process often diverges from other parts of the country. The geography of race in the South contrasts, for example, with that of the West, in that a white/black racial polarization persists in the former, with new waves of immigration agitating this tendency towards white and black (Jones and Smith 2001). These flows of new immigrants not only erroneously make "Mexican" synonymous with "Latino" but also suggest that in places like Atlanta, a tri-racial system exists that positions Latinos as "not white" and "not black." Not only then does this support the idea of three racial groups, it erases the existence of overlapping categories and the possibility of Latinos being of any race(s). Furthermore, this social construction of race largely masks multiraciality. This contrasts with the geography of race in the West, where immigration flows have increased the number of Asians and Latinos there, as well as interracial marriages, but also made more visible the multiracial populations that are recognized as such much more easily there than in the South (Farley 2001; Lee and Bean 2007; Rockquemore 2002). Thus, the ongoing debate about which racial hierarchy best applies continues, and impacts how others racially see (or refuse/are unable to see) others.

people "speaking in Spanish, thinking I'm Spanish…or Hawaiian, Puerto Rican, Dominican Republic[an]." Ellen jokingly reflected on black people's racial reading of her:

> Well, the blacks ask me, not to be vain, but they say, "You look good." "Well, yeah, I know that." "Well, what are you mixed with?" They come up to me with "What are you mixed with?" They don't simply say, "You gotta be Spanish or just black." [They guess I'm] Black or something. "What are you mixed with?" [They know] I'm mixed with something. Because how beautiful can you be [if you are not mixed]. "Yeah, you're mixed with something."…. [When they realize that you're not Spanish] "Oh, you're not one of us?!"…. And I just smile. (Ellen, black-identified black/white biracial woman)

Respondents of various racial combinations (Black/White; Black/Native; White/Latino/a American/White) reported this misidentifying experience. Most compassionately responded to others' racial misreading, or seemed tickled over the many groups in which they could blend and belong (on the basis of appearance).

Others described how geographies of race changed the way people read them racially:

> When I lived in Puerto Rico, people would just automatically come up to me, started speaking Spanish to me, say I looked Cuban or something. And I'd be like, "No, not really."…. People generally, when I first meet them, we're talking and stuff and then they're kinda surprised and like, "Where you from? Where are your parents from?" and I have to kind of break it down and explain it to them…. In Puerto Rico…this group of girls came up to me and started talking to me, "Where are you from?" "Um, Georgia." "Oh, that explains it!" I'm like, "What are you talking about? That explains *what*?" They're like, "Your accent." Apparently, I have a Southern accent but I didn't really realize it until we moved out of the South but then I had to explain it again because they were confused that I looked Latino, had a Southern accent, didn't speak Spanish… (Zach, white and Asian Filipino man)

The experience of benevolent border patrolling involves curiosity without the usual antagonism of racial policing. As the term implies, these social interactions allow border patrollers to explore the racial realities of multiracial people, without imputing

fixity on identity. Without access to these border patrollers, I cannot specify their intentions. However, I do want to point out the possibility of people masking their individual racism by employing benevolent border patrolling as a mechanism for relocating racial mixture to its "rightful" place. However, the accounts of many respondents suggested that they interpreted and experienced benevolent border patrolling most often as a sincerely innocent interaction. These conversational exchanges allowed others to discuss racial mixture as it continues to take on new meanings.

For those individuals whose racial identity and physical appearance or phenotypic features are in incongruence (Rockquemore and Brunsma 2002), social interactions and racial negotiations often take on the added dimension of resolving this incongruity. Buchanan and Acevedo (2004) describe this as a process "when face and soul collide." They discuss this experience in people "who closely identify as a race, ethnicity, or culture that is incongruent with their physical appearance." They describe incongruence as follows:

> This can occur in one of three ways: (1) when someone is multiracial, and, therefore, not easily placed in a single racial/ethnic category, (2) when one physically resembles a racial/ethnic group other than his or her actual classification, or (3) when a person has acculturated to a racial/ethnic group other than his or her own. (Buchanan and Acevedo 2004:120).

In addition, individuals who look racially and ethnically ambiguous generate attention from benevolent border patrollers who try to disambiguate race. As described in Fulbeck (2006:96):

> "Really? You don't look Thai. Well let me look again. Yeah now I can see it around your eyes. You know Thai food is my favorite. Were you born in Thailand? Do you speak, what is it, Thai-wanese? Do you dream in English or Thai-wanese? You really don't have an accent at all." (Thai, Indian, Scottish, Lithuanian woman in Fulbeck 2006:96).

One of my respondents, Dakota (White/Asian) echoed this experience:

> Usually when I am talking to people, and I say I am Korean, nobody even believes me. And after a few minutes, "Oh, I can kind of see it in your eyes." When I was younger, I used to get a lot that I looked Mexican or Indian. People sometimes say, "Are you Española (Spanish)?"

The disbelief, coupled with the questioning, captures how people discursively police racial borders.

For Lexie, like so many other White/Asian respondents, being racially misread was a "daily incident" (Scales-Trent 1995) since people tried to situate her mixture into singularity. As far as borderists could see, her mixture (and others') approximated "brown" (Rodriguez 2002), that curious racial equation in which White and Asian equaled Hispanic.[32] This equation explained why she quipped, "Where I'm from, it's the most ethnically un-diverse place in the world so everyone asks and approaches me as if I'm Hispanic…. Because someone can look at me and tell that I'm not full Caucasian, there's always a curiosity." That is, the people residing in her residential area saw her as different: neither white nor black.

Several other White/Asian respondents noted that they were misidentified as Hispanic (specifically Mexican). For example, Timothy, a White/Asian Korean man, shared, "A lot of people where I live, it's kind of a country town, so they think I am Mexican or something, and a lot of Black people think I am just White, and are surprised

[32] As Matt Kelley, a White/Asian multiracial advocate and founder of MAVIN, discussed in an interview with Nakazawa (2003), his experiences of being perceived by others as Hispanic facilitate his understanding of that reality. While he will never know exactly what being Hispanic is like, he has developed racial and ethnic empathy as a result of his experiences "in a group" but not "of a group." His situational self as Hispanic not only illustrates the social construction of race, but also highlights how multiracial people create more slippage between racial borders than the simple sum of their parts.[32] Like Kelley, many of my respondents discovered and navigated not additive, but multiplicative racial borders.

when they find out that I have Asian in me." These misperceptions[33] and misidentifications made negotiating race and ethnicity questions messier in situations where respondents chose two or more races. Affirming multiraciality conveys the importance of the borderlands (Anzaldua 1987) and can counter borderism.

Theresa reported having some Asian ethnic group members "talking to me automatically but it's not as often as Hispanics….I have had a couple of people, I've had Filipino people ask me if I was Filipino, and you could tell that they are full-blooded and when I say yes, then they kind of get excited, like, 'Oh, a long lost family member,' kind of thing…. And then we start talking about food." Conversely, some people "who've looked full-blooded, they'll say, 'Are you mestiza?', which is mixed. And I say, 'Yes,' and they go, 'Oh.' But it's not like, 'Oh!' (excitement). It's like an, 'Oh.' (disappointment)."

In interacting more with Hispanics, Theresa found that many of them think that she is Hispanic, and by extension, that she fluently speaks Spanish. While they are not disappointed after discovering that she is neither Hispanic, Theresa noted:

> They're kind of surprised. I think they're disappointed that I can't speak Spanish fluently with them. I mean I can speak a little Spanish to help them but I'm not fluent in it unfortunately. And so I think they get disappointed in the fact that I can't *speak* their language but I never really felt that they were disappointed that I *wasn't* Hispanic.

With what I call a "twice blended" family (in racial and structural composition), Theresa ostensibly benefits from looking a "little Latina," given that her "bonus son" (her

[33] I qualify my use of "misperception" here by acknowledging that some of the White/Asian Filipina/o respondents understood themselves as having partial Spanish heritage, while others did not. With Filipino/a ethnicity being a combination of Chinese and Spanish, the racial equation makes sense (see Root 1997).

own reference for her stepson whom she lives with, cares for, and has custody of) who is "half Mexican," facilitates this blending in both visual and familial ways.

> I think it's been good for him. He did, he did not have a close relationship with his mother and she actually passed away several years ago. And so his main relationship has been with his father and I guess for me, because I'm not just white, I feel like we kind of have something in common. And he calls me mom and he introduces me to his friends as mom and a lot of people say, "Oh, he looks just like you." And you know, he's brown. And he's actually darker than I am. He's pretty brown. So there are some similarities between he and I that we kind of look like a family that fits because he is brown. So I think that that kinda made him feel comfortable, as me being, I guess, his stepmom.

Being a "family that fits" alludes to Theresa's ability to minimize the border patrolling that might arise in a more visibly mixed family. For example, if she and her husband both looked white and her "bonus son" looked brown, people might border patrol them by asking about the relationship between the three[34]. Theresa's intermediary position between her husband and bonus son allows her to serve as a bridge between the two. This bridge deflects borderism, as she blends between white and brown.

In addition, Theresa's cultural, but not necessarily racial, literacy (Twine 2003; Twine and Steinbugler 2006) has helped her to in raise her Mexican bonus son.

> I do feel like there are some things about his culture that I want to learn more about and I, we actually have a really close relationship with his grandmother, um, his mother's mother. She's like my mom, and I love her to death. And so I talk to her about that. All the traditions, um, and mostly food. We talk about the things that they fix and that kind of thing. I get recipes from her.

Rather than ignore her son's Mexican heritage, Theresa incorporates it into her family. She reported recognizing the importance of doing so, and saw how much he enjoyed that, along with some things that his maternal grandmother and great-grandmother cooked for him. Finally, Theresa and her husband ensured that their son went to school where his

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[34] This type of border patrolling involves "visual dislocation" (see Steinbugler 2005), a topic that Dalmage (2004c) also discusses in "Mama, Are You Brown?"

peers would not tease him. Having experienced her own kind of school menace, she knew the importance of "fitting in and feeling good"[35] in school. She noted that her bonus son's school peers would make "comments, like, 'Are you going to sit in the back of the truck on the way home?' *That* kind of stuff." This covert racism, cloaked in racetalk (Myers 2005), reminded her of being called names and facing more overt discrimination and differential treatment because of her mixture and her (partial) Asian identity in particular.

Kim, a white/Asian (Thai) woman who remained relatively unaffected by border patrollers, reported having never been accused of "acting white" or otherwise inauthentically crossing racial borders (according to the illogic of borderism). She posited,

> I don't relate to one more than the other. I don't, in different situations, try to say I'm one over the other; it's just me, all the time…. I mean, most people seem to think that I relate more to being white than Asian but…especially Asian people. I guess because I don't speak Thai. What culture I know is pretty much genealogy. I've never been to Thailand. I don't know Thai and haven't been to Thailand. The only time I feel uncomfortable is probably when sometimes my mother, during Thai get-togethers, I'll be put in a room with Thai parents and their American kids, so a Thai mother, and Thai father, and their American kids who were brought up knowing the language and I feel out of place.

Because she does not know Thai, Kim noted, "I just feel out of place. I'm not really made to feel that way." Many respondents, particularly white/Asian multiracial ones, reported similar feelings of regret regarding cultural literacy and language ability. Not knowing how to speak Thai, Korean, or other Asian languages led many to conclude that they were "not really Asian enough" (see Ang 2001). Root (1997) posits:

> Mixed-heritage Filipinos are the physical embodiment of the Filipino's contact with the colonizer. Thus, in the contemporary context, more so than in previous moments in history, the mixed-heritage Filipino is placed in a liminal position

[35] A nod to Layli Phillips's article of the same name.

> between two cultures…which are basically in tacit agreement that American is better than Filipino and which continue to define "American" as white…. Despite the diversity of physical appearance embodied in looking Filipino, many children of Filipino descent of cross-cultural and/or interracial marriages in the United States experience gatekeeping comments such as "But you don't look Filipino" or "You're American, not Filipino." What are the costs of these comments to those persons who are the object of scrutiny for the moment? (Root 1997:82-3).

Being border patrolled about one's racial identity can compound and exacerbate feelings of inauthenticity. This type of border patrolling captures what Rockquemore (2005) describes as the "What are you, really?" phenomenon. As people gather cues about multiracial individuals, they are doing so to decide where these individuals are *really* racially located. As indicated above and discussed below (see Chapter Five), some multiracial individuals themselves even engage in auto-borderism by authenticity testing themselves (evaluating whether they are "really" Asian, black, mixed, and so on). People border patrol to alleviate anxiety or curb curiosity by sorting out or collapsing multiraciality into singularity. Border patrolling works to restore the racial order by situating mixture into one category.

Like a number of respondents of various racial combinations who reported being asked, "What are you?" and "Where are you from?," Lexie fielded questions from a wide variety of people[36] who probed her for details about her mixture, or questioned her to try to figure her out racially ("'Are you Hawaiian? Spanish? French? Italian? Greek?'") She even admitted to occasionally fabricating enticing narratives to satisfy others' curiosity, perhaps because none correctly identified her multiracial heritage or recognized her as having Korean heritage ("They'll name every Asian country except Korea and then I'll have to fill it in. Ko-re-a!!!").

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[36] She specifically mentions that "other Asian Americans" also ask, which suggests they make an effort to forge an Asian panethnicity (Espiritu 1992) with her.

> "Where you from?" "Ah, Georgia???" (She laughs, heartily.) Usually that's the first line. Usually, I laugh the same way. I kind of snicker at it. "I'm from McDonough."…."No, really? Where are you from?" "Well, my name *is* (popular American name)." Usually, I'll say, "Well, I'm mixed. My mom's Asian. My dad's American[37]." And that usually satisfies their curiosity and they don't pry further…. When I was younger, I'd be like, "Oh, I'm from South America. And my dad's from Antarctica" because I know that it's just a stupid question and I'd just make up what I wanted, and I would say, "Oh, no. I'm from France and Portugal." You know. Whatever country I learned in Geography that week, is probably the country I'd list.

In contrast to Arturo Madrid's (2006) conclusion that such questions directed at "missing persons" are intentionally "Othering," Lexie had her own interpretations and responses to these typical questions benevolent border patrollers ask. She sympathized with people's curiosity since "they're not used to it [multiracial people] and knew to reinterpret others' questions as such. While her school friends know that she is part Korean, strangers do not. Consequently, "they always guess wrong."

Because she looked "more Asian" when she was younger, she was often "visually dislocated" from her white father (Steinbugler 2005).

> When I was younger…and my dad would visit the school, they'd be like, "That's your dad?" And I'd be like, (sounding tentative) "Yeah, that's my dad." And they're like, "All right." He has bluish eyes, like hazel-colored eyes. He has mousy brown hair, pale skin, white guy.

In the entire family's presence, Lexie did not experience this visual dislocation because others could "match the kids" to the parents.

This contrasted with her experience of not being visually dislocated when with her entire immediate family.

> They can look from one parent to the other parent and say, "Oh, that's why they look that way!" When it's just my dad and my brother, people kind of second

[37] This illustrates Root's (1997) point about "American" equating "white." Espiritu (2001/2004a), Findlay (1999), and Liu (1998) also elaborate on the euphemistic use of the term.

> look, because he does look a little more Asian, and my dad is *not* Asian (she laughs). So they kind of stare for a second. They're figuring it out, like, "Hmm." My sister and I, we're a little more ambiguous. I mean you can tell we're different but seeing us with our dad isn't quite as drastic, I guess would be a way to put it… My mom could be paired with any three of us and no one would question it because we all have her hair, and her eye color and you know, we're all short.

Lexie's family was more understandable in its composition as an interracial family, than its individual parts. The sum of all parts of Lexie's family facilitated others' understanding of the relation between members of this interracial family. Thus, she encountered mostly benevolent border patrolling in this regard. Fortunately, many respondents interpreted this attention as benevolent border patrolling, rather than more oppressive and antagonistic. Appearing ambiguous allowed respondents like Lexie to receive attention from others who tried to make sense of this ambiguity.

Another White/Asian respondent, Miki, similarly interpreted interactions with others wondering if she is "Spanish or Mexican…because of the dark hair." Miki, who asserts her multiracial, "one-quarter Japanese," identity explained, "When people ask, they probably figure I'm American…. Anytime someone asks me, 'What are you?' it's always positive."

For Sarah, a self-identified "Anglo Indian" (British/Asian) young woman, being white and Asian meant fitting poorly into a black/white binary, a lens through which borderists try to view her multiraciality. She suspected that people racially perceived her in this manner:

> I think as white probably, because every--you're either white or black in this country, it feels. So I think as white and it just goes back to the stereotyping (which is you know, I "talk white," "dress white"), I think sometimes people may think I'm Spanish, but not Indian ever. But I think what you're asking, I really think white.

She described her experiences in fielding questions from others:

> Do you know what? That's what throws people off because people say, "Where are you from?" and then I say, "England," and then they look at me like I have 7 heads because it's not what they want to know….Like people will say, "You're really pretty. Where are you from?" But they might just be saying, "Well, you're pretty" just to figure out *where* I am from. A lot of people notice that I am different, but it's not ever in a negative way, I don't think although I've told you about some of the negative experiences I've had but most of the time it's quite positive, I think, which is probably not common for most people….I think it's mostly positive and I love it! I would not want to be all Indian and I would not want to be all white. I love to be mixed.

Growing up in an interracial family, Sarah, whose white mother re-married a Malaysian man, was familiar with others' border patrolling her yet positively interpreted people's attempt to racially decode her and her family. She discussed the different reactions that she and her mother have had to people border patrolling them as a family:

> Every day somebody says, "What are you?" (In response) I just will answer but my mom will say to them, "Just a human being." It *really* makes her mad but it doesn't make me mad. I don't mind. It's just curiosity. It really pisses my mom off because when we go out to eat, it'd be my sister and I who are half white and half Indian, my dad who's Chinese, and my mom with a British accent, so people are like, where are these people from, like "Who *is* this family?" She gets so mad. I don't mind….I don't know what they think. I really don't know. We look nothing alike. She has a British accent. My sister and my mom look alike even though my sister's darker…her features, she's like a darker version of my mom. People don't think that I look like my mom….Egh. I don't care because I know that we have a good relationship. It doesn't bother me but it irritates her.

Other respondents made interpretations similar to Sarah's about strangers benevolently border patrolling by asking questions. Gloria, a black/white biracial female respondent in her 20s, sometimes opts for "Other" and often gets misread as black and Puerto Rican. She was one of the few white/black respondents to describe experiences of benevolent border patrolling. Gloria noted that people ask questions because they are "look at you and can't figure out what you are, so they just ask. So I tell them so they know." She also mentioned that people often tell her, "'You have a nice complexion,'

and usually think I'm from Florida or California or the islands…I usually don't get 'black and white.' Everybody gets that mixed up." Though they incorrectly access her racial identity, they often compliment her, which may mask more malevolent border patrolling, but gets interpreted as well-intended.

Tracy, a black and Asian (Filipina) woman, received similar compliments about her complexion. She reported feeling that borderists are just "curious, like, 'We can't really pinpoint exactly who you are' type of thing…. When people ask me, I say I'm Black and Filipino…. They'll say, 'That explains your pretty hair.'" Though Tracy described her enjoyment and pride in being both Black and Filipino, she also acknowledged the attendant difficulty in asserting a mixed identity. Formally, "if they let me check 2 boxes, I put African American and Filipino, because I'm 50/50." She did not want to ever "feel like I'm not identifying either" and always asserts a multiracial identity socially. However, Tracy (and other respondents) noted experiences of identity invalidation from some black people who "always question what I am."

Understanding borderism as benevolent allowed Tracy and others to maintain their border identities (Rockquemore and Brunsma 2002), despite the identity invalidation she faced (in her case, from some black people). In Tracy's estimation, benevolent border patrollers simply possess an interest in learning about her racial mixture and she interprets these interactions accordingly. That contrasts with malevolent border patrolling seeking to invalidate and negate such mixture.

Although a variety of people express an interest in her racial mixture, Tracy noted the differential responses that she receives from women and men. Women border patrolled out of what Tracy called "social curiosity," while men expressed more romantic

or sexual curiosity. "More black men approach me in the romantic sense or dating sense type thing." As (McClintock 2008) noted, black men are less likely to form homophilous "hook-ups" and relationships than black women. The differential responses and varying patterns in partnering short- and long-term (Joyner and Kao 2005) point to the importance of intersections of gender, race, and class (Collins 1991) in the border patrolling experience. Notably, many Asian people "kind of have it pinpointed; I guess because they can tell." This experience appears to affirm Tracy's multiracial identity.

Allison, a transracially adopted black/white biracial woman (adopted into a white family), felt similarly about benevolent border patrolling.

> Well, the question, "What are you?," it doesn't really bother me. I mean it's just, you know, curiosity. Innocent curiosity. You know, and it's not like, they're not going to be like, "I'm not going to tell you anything about me. What are you?" (said in mock mean voice). I'll be like, you know, "So, what's your ethnicity?" It's just a conversation starter, I guess. Well, I think it's polite if someone asks you a question about yourself, you try to show interest in them, so even if they're white, I'll say, "So what's your ethnic background?"…. From what I've found, people aren't genuinely mean. Very few people you come across I found are mean. So they're not going to, out of the blue, offend you knowingly. I'm sure I offend a lot of people. You know, I'm pretty blunt and stuff.

Since she sees herself as biracial, rather than black, Allison understands the line of inquiry from some black people and does not feel a sense of identity invalidation. Her adoption into a white family is not what complicates this issue, but rather her knowledge of being biracial by birth- or having one black parent and one white. Thus, when others say, "I know you're not black," she perceives this as people reading her racially as part black or "not all black" (validated identity), as opposed to not black (invalidated identity).

Because people will matter-of-factly say, "So you're not black. What are you?," Allison reluctantly concluded, "You know? Well, I guess I'm not black….And my

parents, they always told me I was biracial. So as a classification, just like the words, if I were to hear black or biracial, well *that's* [black] not me but *this* [biracial] is." She further explained,

> I consider myself half black, but I don't, to me to be black you'd have to be 100 percent, 2 parents. Like my biological mom, my biological dad. Like to me it'd be like going up to a black person and saying, "You're half black, right?" Yeah, I'm half black, but the other half is black too. You know? Me, I'm half black, but I'm the other half white… It's on my birth certificate. On my birth certificate, they have that racial classification, because I know that my mom was white; she's having a brown child. And I think that, my [adoptive] parents are white, but when they were adopting kids, the child they adopted had to be at least half white, or something. I remember that from somewhere. I might be completely wrong.

Allison connects more to "biracial" than "black" because she feels like she would not be able to "get away with blackness." This differs from identity invalidation for individuals wanting to assert a border identity (Rockquemore and Brunsma 2002), as opposed to a black identity. That is, Allison felt her blackness (not border identity) would be invalidated were she to assert that identity. She suspected that she'd "get laughed at" if she claimed a singular black identity. "I mean I have biracial hair. I'm light--ish. People would know that there's a lot of white in me. So that would discredit my being all black." Consistent with her logic and aligned with her biracial identity, Allison also declared that she would never claim a singular white identity, "Because I'm not white. I went to the doctor with my mom one day and they like filled out the form for me and put that my ethnicity was white, and I was like (laughs heartily), 'Clearly, I'm not white.'"

While Allison believes that some people perceive her as white, she offered her assessment of the situation:

> What I've found is that white people usually just think I'm all black. And black people know that I'm not all black…. I wouldn't say that anyone would think I was white. I know that because of my parents. Some people will meet me, and they'll be like, "Oh yeah, this is our daughter." And they'll be like, "Damn,

> you're really tan." You know, but it's only because I have, like if they were to see me walk down the street, they'd say, "Oh, she's brown." Some people, I know that was a response that I got once. Um, actually once my friend's dad [who knew my parents] was like, "Man, that's [Allison]? …She's really tan!" And then I got it at the doctor's office. I think when they see 2 white parents, they're like, "She's obviously white." You know? It's like 2+2=4 is white because white plus white equals white. But they didn't ever say just that I'm white.

Being in a family composed of two white parents, three white siblings, and two biracial siblings, Allison suggested that she is sometimes read as white because of the "tan" others imagine she has, or because she is granted honorary white status. While she could be a "brown-skinned white girl" (Twine 1996), she thinks this option off-limits, instead recognizing that she becomes white by association with her white family members. Being "white by proxy" begins to explain why others sometimes police Allison's blackness, or point out (rather than refute) that she is not "fully black." "Well, in my experience, I've never been black enough to be black, but white people seem to care less."

Instead of interpreting others' questions as imposing or interrogating, Allison positively viewed this as others' curiosity, an opportunity to exchange information, even if solely to be polite (on her behalf). This kind of etiquette stands in stark contrast to the racial etiquette that discourages racial discourses. Racial etiquette silences questions about whiteness, while directing attention to the racial "Other." Nevertheless, she indulged this curiosity confidently and graciously. She disrupted the usual unidirectional flow by reciprocating the questions, a clever and subversive strategy for exposing and destabilizing whiteness as a perpetual referent (Daniels 1997; Lipsitz 1998; Anzaldua and Keating 2002) and drawing attention to the symbolic ethnicity/ies many whites possess (Doane 1997; Waters 1990).

One of Allison's brothers, Andrew, a Black/White biracial young man, shared his experience with benevolent border patrolling: "Someone told me, actually, that I look French. I don't see that." He concluded, "They're so puzzled." This bewilderment makes sense on some level, given Andrew's ambiguous appearance and interesting racial composition of his family, but does not excuse others' reactions to racially mixed families. With two white parents, three white siblings, and two biracial siblings, Andrew described his racial identity as "in between white and black." An apropos analogy to his interstitial life as a member of a once-white, now multiracial family that adopted three black/white biracial children, Andrew clarified that the term biracial is "just a word that people use. I just put black. Or sometimes I make my own box and then I put mixed, or biracial."

As the youngest of my respondents at 18 years of age, he was also one of the more reserved participants who shared minimally but importantly. Repeatedly, Andrew expressed indifference about discussing race matters, claiming "it's a non-issue; it doesn't bother me. Just like you're black, you're white, you're mixed with whatever. Like Latino. So what?" His comments suggested a disinvestment in race and racial meanings, and a weariness around discussing race, masked by indifference, that possibly stems from enduring borderism.

His comments also lend support to emerging scholarship by Brunsma, Delgado, and Rockquemore (forthcoming) about identity matrices, or highly dimensionalized multiracial identities, including social, political, and formal identities, and the potential disjuncture between them. While I initially interpreted his comments as possibly indicative of a transcendent identity, I later interpreted his narrative as expressing a

protean identity that includes this transcendent identity. This description differs from previous discussions of identity options, even as these options are described as not mutually exclusive (Rockquemore and Brunsma 2002).

Existing discussions of protean identity point to individual's shifting racial subjectivities and the fluid expression of the composite parts of one's identity. Andrew's comments suggest that part of the way he asserts this racial composition includes transcending race. For him, then, a protean identity includes being biracial, black, and/or raceless. Andrew's protean identity, ambiguous appearance, and membership in an obviously (visibly) interracial family provoked public, mostly positive, attention. Thus, people encountering him mainly benevolently border patrolled him to sort him out racially. Being border patrolled also enabled Andrew to actively assert a shifting racial self to negotiate this policing.

Bobbi, a 20-year-old black/White biracial[38] respondent who grew up in a military family with a black father and an Asian stepmother, and spent several years abroad, noted how relocating to the U.S., and the South specifically, required a shift in racial paradigms and racial interpretations. She also described needing racial re-socialization in order to relearn localized racial meanings (Rodriguez and Cordero-Guzman 1992). When she first moved to the US, and people asked, "What are you?," she "always said 'American'."

> That's when I first kind of realized, "Okay, there's definitely a difference (here in the U.S. and in the South) and I kind of need to decide I guess, which one [race] I'm gonna be"…. I never understood the question until they actually said…You know I wouldn't mind if someone came up and asked, "What race are you?" That doesn't offend me at all because I like to share with people.

[38] Bobbi's biological mother is white.

After having lived in the US for a while, Bobbi began to read between the lines of the "What are you?" question. Now when people ask her this, she in turn will "ask them to rephrase the question and then I tell them I am mixed with black and white."

Because people make racial maneuvers to avoid asking about race, they offend Bobbi with their sinewy and evasive way of questioning her about race without directly doing so. Bobbi's narrative not only illustrates the kinds of racial and ethnic alliances that are possible particularly in the form of "honorary memberships"[39] (Asian, Hispanic) but also the extent to which the geographies of race shape the meanings attached to racial categories and behaviors (Brunsma 2006; Frankenberg 1993). Her inferred confusion about others' questions reflect not a confusion about herself racially, but how being racially mixed means something different in the US (in comparison to Germany, in her interpretation and experience), and in the South, given the racially charged residue that remains from various historical events.

By reciprocating interest in others' racial identities, Bobbi was able to navigate these globally different racial terrains. She learned that "growing up military" worked to diffuse much of the racial charge and shift importance away from race in ways that intensified once she returned to the US (given the centrality of race in shaping social life here). Her reciprocity in inquiry also disrupted the typically unidirectional focus on multiracial individuals who often feel obligated to satisfy border patrollers' sense of entitlement and appetite for information.

[39] Honorary memberships (Twine 2006), while conceptually new yet not unique to multiracial people, may reflect one aspect of their multiracial reality. I provide this example to show the kinds of experiences that some multiracial members of interracial families might have that other members fail to fully understand or have little racial literacy regarding. This points parents and others in new directions concerning racial socialization, and exposes how cyclical socialization within these racially mixed families remain.

Notably, few respondents initiated this iterative interactional style of inquiry. Some might see this discursive strategy as interactional vandalism in its disruption of normative borderism that often targets multiracial people. That is, when serving as a racial spectacle, multiracial people lose their vocality through this objection, but can restore it by reciprocate these racial inquiries.

One of a few exceptions was Campbell, a black/white biracial woman in her 20s, indicated that if she "did not know for sure" about someone's race, she too would ask. By reciprocating the border patrolling discursive practice of asking, "What are you?" to others, she activated some agency by making people aware of the imposition. "I think that's when people realize that, when you ask them it back, that it is kind of a stupid question." She also responds sarcastically when people ask questions about her race. In choosing what seem like colorblind comments ("I'm human" or "I'm a girl"), Campbell minimizes and displaces race, even though these interrogations center around race. Instead, she observed: "If they don't know something—I don't think they mean any harm by it." Graciously accommodating questions about race proves a double-edge sword in reproducing the racial spectacle and surveillance, while (hopefully) facilitating others' understanding, of multiracial people.

That many respondents failed to reciprocate this behavior points to their familiarity and docility (Foucault 1977) with borderism. It also speaks to the degree to which the respondents expected these interrogations and surveillance as benevolent border patrollers proverbially scroll down the "laundry list" of races, hoping to arrive at the right one. That people perceived the respondents in racially varied ways, despite minimal changes in their appearance, points to possibly competing racial paradigms

impacting people's racial perception of them. Their ambiguity often invited others to racially locate them in categories close to their own, or to impose some group position onto them. Multiracial respondents commonly interpellated or hailed (Althusser 1971) a number of racial groups (their own and others)[40]. This interpellation meant that members of various racial and ethnic groups generally saw said multiracial people as similar versus dissimilar to them. Because these interpellations often involved individuals misidentifying multiracial people, the former ended up imputing identity onto the latter. Some respondents seemed unaffected by this imposition, rejecting or remaining ambivalent about the imputation. Others reacted more negatively to these interactions, particularly in instances that proved much more antagonistic and invalidating. In the next section, I discuss such instances.

Malevolent Border Patrolling: "'I Thought You Were White. We Just Thought That You Liked To Hang Around A Lot Of Black People, Just Trying To Be Black'"

> Despite the fact that I'm black and white, most people think I'm Hispanic. So that makes me even more mad when they say, "Can I get someone who can speak English?" I'm like, "I can speak English just fine, sir." Yeah. "What can I do for you?" But then I forget that my age is something too. Most people don't think that, you know, when they walk into a floral shop, that I'm the person running it. Like in any form or fashion, so they're usually like, "Can I speak to a designer?" or "Can I speak to someone who knows more?" "You know I'm actually it." …Sometimes I get shy and I just completely shut down….Yeah, someone thought I couldn't speak English and that's why I was so quiet. "Oh she just can't speak English" and I remember I looked up and died of laughter. I just said, "Oh, no? I can't speak English?" "I just didn't really know you." And she goes, "Oh, I thought you were Hispanic and you just couldn't understand me." I was like, "No, I can." (Flora, black/white biracial woman)

[40] With her racial and ethnic ambiguity, Allison interpellates a variety of groups who perceive her as similar to them. "It's usually Dominican people think I'm Dominican. Puerto Rican people think I'm Puerto Rican. Ethiopians talk to me in their language and then sometimes black people will be like, 'Well, what are you?' Because they know I'm not black but they're not sure what other ethnicity I might be." In being hailed by a variety of racial and ethnic group members, Allison experiences vicarious validation of her multiracial identity (since few people correctly assess her as black/white biracial).

> Well, I experience, people saying things that are mean, and I think people forget a lot of times that I am half Indian and they'll say, I mean I dated this guy and he went into this gas station and something happened and she said, "Oh, these dot heads." [Sarah, Anglo-Indian identified young woman]

Some multiracial respondents invited and entertained others' curiosity and responded with patience and humor. Others found less amusement in the attention of others. Because they often saw the curiosity as intrusive, critical, or bothersome, these respondents were less accommodating of others' questions and comments. I differentiate the more abrasive and explicit racial interrogations and interactions from the "kinder, gentler" innocence of benevolent border patrolling. The harsher, more abrasive interactions generally possess a malicious or critical component, and thus I designate it as "malevolent border patrolling." Unlike the benevolence of "smiling racism" (Bonilla-Silva 2003), malevolent border patrolling much more blatantly and mercilessly polices race mixing. While people who border patrol benevolently may mask any racist ideologies they harbor, malevolent border patrollers appear unapologetic in their opposition to mixture, in theory and in practice.

I consider comments regarding "confusion" or "flaws" in multiracial individuals as a part of this category. For example, an African American, Native American, Creole, Puerto Rican (and some Caucasian heritage) woman named Juanita, was faced with a variety of border patrolling questions, including "What are you?" (which she interpreted as intrusive, "kinda negative," and therefore malevolent since "I can't even think of anything off the top of my head that's positive"). She also reported hearing comments referencing her as having "the Tiger Woods problem" (presuming that she suffers from identity confusion, that "tragic mulatto" syndrome where "I don't know what I am").

Juanita indicated that she often wonders in anticipation, “How bad is it going to be?” and “Am I going to have to really say something to this person?” In repeatedly dealing with others’ comments, Juanita has normalized them as part of her daily routine, “because I already know it’s coming…. There are always questions…. And I’d rather just get it out of the way.” Her experience suggests a certain anxiety that stems from anticipatory borderism, an experience akin to anticipatory discrimination.

A slipperiness between benevolent border patrolling and its evil twin, malevolent border patrolling, makes disentangling their overlapping parts difficult. This entanglement can involve ostensibly positive attention that some respondents interpreted with suspicion and caution. For example, in her interactions with border patrollers, Chloe, a White, Black, and Native American woman, encouraged them to guess her racial composition. People often included “Chinese” and “Hispanic,” but seldom “Black” as their guesses. This “sin of omission” negated and invalidated Chloe’s preferred racial identity as black; it also sent her a powerful message about the reluctance others’ may have felt about guessing that a light skinned woman might be black (should she be offended by such a presumption). Curiously, the one-drop of black blood suggests she is black, while contemporary colorblindness (and its requisite racial etiquette) prohibits border patrollers from pointedly asking, “Are you black?”

Another example of the slippage between benevolent and malevolent border patrolling came from Juanita, who mentioned that white people offer compliments on her complexion: “‘Your skin color, it’s sooooo unique.’” Though she graciously accepts these compliments, she regarded them as “Othering” moments. In feeling like a racial curiosity, Juanita regarded her celebrated multiracial status contemptuously. These

interactions reflect a kind of "smiling discrimination" (Bonilla-Silva 2003a) in that the whites who Juanita encounters during these interactions are fetishizing her mixture, and making her into what I call an "erotic, exotic, quixotic" woman.

Allison, a black/white biracial woman, also lamented being border patrolled and fetishized.

> I've dated--most of the guys, they're crazies who just want a light skinned whatever girl….One guy I was dating was like, you know, "Yeah, I like you too, you know, you're light skinned, curly hair. You look like you could be Puerto Rican." I can't look trendy. And after that, I was like…forget it.

Allison recognized the currency attached to multiracial femininity, and did not seem the least interested in cashing in her unearned privileges in the dating market, despite the arguably increasing appeal of Generation E.A. (LaFerla 2003). Ironically, people misread black/white biracial Allison as Puerto Rican, while Puerto Rican Lisa was often misread as black/white biracial.

Because of her light skin color, Lisa, a Puerto Rican-identified young woman who reported having Taino Indian, European Spanish, and African ancestry, reported feelings "angry and frustrated" by others' disbelief that she was not "mixed" or a "light skinned black" but in fact Puerto Rican.

> I get "What are you?" or "What's your ethnicity?" when they're being more polite, and when I tell people that I'm Puerto Rican, they think I'm lying to them…. Probably because I don't fit the stereotypical Hispanic person, which is usually light with long curly hair. Like someone will say, are you…"So [Lisa], what are you mixed with?" "I'm not mixed with anything. I'm just Puerto Rican." "Really. Are you sure?" "Yes, I am. That's it." (She said, laughing heartily.)

Lisa confronted people's disbelief and difficulty with changing race (Rodriguez 2000) or shifting racial paradigms (Rodriguez and Cordero-Guzman 1992) and questioned the one-drop rule by asking, "Why can't I be Puerto Rican?" She wondered if people presumed

her black "because I have a little bit?"; and noted that most of the questioning comes from African Americans and, to a lesser degree, some Hispanics.

Depending on her "mood for the day," she deals with people's different ways of seeing race since they presumably do not know that "[Puerto Ricans] are…a mixture of a lot. I think they just assume that since I have a tan, that I'm at least mixed…. Well, um, I'm mixed." For Lisa, Puerto Rican means "mixed" and includes "Africans, Spanish, Portuguese, [and] Italian." Katie, a Puerto Rican and Asian Indian woman, reiterated this point, positing, "It's familiar for everyone to look different, even in the same family….Skin color, hair texture, eye color, all kinds of stuff."

For malevolent border patrolling others, Puerto Rican marks an "Other" category, neither black nor white, as well as not mixed (Rodriguez and Cordero-Guzman 1992).

As Rodriguez (1995) explains,

> Puerto Ricans find themselves caught between two polarities and at a dialectical distance from both. Puerto Ricans are between white and black; Puerto Ricans are neither white nor black….The variety of racial types in the Puerto Rican community is the biological result of a still-not-clearly-analyzed history of racial mixing…. Nevertheless, the process of racial mixing has continued and the existence of significant racial heterogeneity continues. (Rodriguez 1995: 81-82).

In addition to having her Puerto Rican identity invalidated, she also reported being fetishized and stereotyped by some people.

> I've had experiences where guys have asked me what my ethnicity was, and I've told them and they're like, "Ooh, you know, I've heard you guys are freaks," or whatever. I was a little insulted. That Hispanics in general and I guess Puerto Ricans, all of us in general, we're supposed to be more sexual. Well, sometimes I think when I tell them that (I'm Puerto Rican), it's like extra points. Like when they meet a female, it's like, "Oh yeah, she's cute. But oh, *and* she's Puerto Rican. Plus 2 points."

Her comments revealed the racialized and gendered stereotypes and controlling images of brown and black hypersexuality, promiscuity, and immorality (Collins 1991; 2004; Mills

2007). Stephens and Phillips (2004) advance the discussion by asserting that these controlling images have become increasingly sexualized (i.e. the "freak").

Juanita even shared a painful but curious occurrence. "Oddly, I've had a few white people call me like 'towelhead' and 'sand N- word.' You know? That kind of stuff." In being misidentified and experiencing the incorrect epithet, Juanita acknowledged that words do wound (Collins 1998b; Delgado 1993), and doubly so, when they are both hateful and inaccurate.

> It's crazy because I mean I feel like people are so, I guess, close-minded. They just automatically assume there are only so many types of people in this world so you must be this and then on top of the fact that you would call someone an *ugly* name, you know? You assume wrong, and then you call me an ugly name… I think that there are some Arab people who are even worse off than me.

In search of empathy and consolation, Juanita called a friend the first time that happened to her. Instead of being consoled, Juanita was puzzled by her friend's reaction--laughter. The friend, who is "Creole but she gets mistaken as Mexican all the time," could relate to the offensive border patrolling of others that Juanita experienced and reacted that way "because that happens to her all the time which is why she's like, 'Yeah, just laugh and whatever.'"

In addition to negotiating racial interrogations during interactions with whites, she gets border patrolled by blacks. "I usually get actually way more uh, comments, way more negativity…from blacks. I feel like black people just want you to be, if you look like you know, 'Well, you're not white, so you gotta be one of us,' and that's the end of the story." This exposes the persistence of hypodescent in the South (Khanna 2008), as well as how "black border patrolling" (see Dalmage 2000) intentionally envelops many multiracial people who look part black. It also explains why many multiracial blacks opt

for black (Lee and Bean 2004). This border patrolling reflects the borderist's interest in establishing the multiracial person's racial social location and group position. This becomes more malevolent with identity invalidation. As I discuss below, this invalidation rejects or refutes the identity asserted by the multiracial person. Simply sorting out people racially is not inherently problematic. It is the intention of the border patroller that also matters. If sorting into a black category means that members of this group then get treated differently (i.e. poorly, which has often been the case), then that captures the pitfalls of border patrolling.

Juanita also talked about how initially meeting with one of the black men that she dated involved blatant border patrolling. Upon introductions to one another by a third person,

> [H]e immediately asked, "What are you?" And I said "Black." And he said, "No, no you're not." And so we got into the conversation, and he starts to move his chair closer to me because he says that he really like girls that are--Puerto Rican girls, that you know, there's just something about them, and so we just start talking from there but initially you know he was interested in me being brown [versus black].

Though initially put off by his identity invalidation of her, Juanita entertained his questions and the two gradually formed a friendship that eventually blossomed into a two-year relationship. Ironically, being malevolently border patrolled affirmed the multiracial identity Juanita wanted but hesitated to claim. Instead, she defaulted into blackness because of others' policing of her racial identity.

Juanita also felt invalidated by Hispanics/Latinos/as because of her Spanish language ability.

> It's funny, sometimes I get approached [by Hispanics] and they automatically assume that I'm like Mexican, Puerto Rican, and then sometimes they just assume that, you know, I'm just black, and like I've been asked, I guess they're just

> surprised that like I know just enough Spanish to get by and like I've had to help people sometimes and then they're like, "Ugh."

In expressing surprise or suspicion about Juanita's modest Spanish language ability, these individuals border patrolled Juanita by acting as though black and Hispanic are incompatible or irreconcilable. In response to the "irreconcilability" of her being black and Hispanic, Juanita indicated:

> I just let it go; I just feel like, because I look this way, or I don't look just like you, you know? That's kind of hard to me sometimes, because we all look *so* different and it surprises me because sometimes you're [the border patroller is] Puerto Rican too and I know that you know that we all are so very different but still you're surprised.

All of the black Hispanic respondents reported experiencing this "problem of the ampersand" (Spelman 2001). For example, Wendy, a light-skinned black Hispanic, explained that her limited Spanish speaking ability prohibited her from getting "that deep" with "the Spanish group" in high school because "every now and then, I wouldn't know what they were talking about" (when they spoke in Spanish). She contrasted her lack of fluency in Spanish with otherwise being an "articulate person." Despite discussing these and related issues, Wendy offered up a colorblind response by minimizing the significance of race and racism:

> You know, when you're asking me [about race], it's weird, I'm trying to think back and I don't really ever remember race being an issue, whether it was both of the races or either one of them. I mean, I guess I would more relate to being black because I don't speak Spanish fluently and a lot of the things that I was put into as far as a child were mostly minority-oriented or black-oriented rather than Latino [said with a deliberate Spanish accent]. So I guess I would relate more to black but I mean there wasn't really any like you know, "You're black and Puerto Rican," and I mean "You're biracial." I don't remember ever asking, I don't think I had an identity crisis or a race crisis about who I was. I remember I said to my mom one time, I um, I said, "Mom, I'm not black; I'm peach." But that was, you know, like…the extent of it. I didn't really think about it like that, I think.

Because of her light appearance and limited Spanish skills, Wendy felt disconnected to other Latinas. Sanchez confronted this problem as a darker-skinned black Latino, who many others misread as singularly black but identifies as "black and Hispanic-Puerto Rican."

> I remember one time I wore [a hat with a Puerto Rican flag on it] in high school and this Spanish guy, out of nowhere, I didn't know him, he was like, "You Puerto Rican?" I was like, "Yeah, I'm half Puerto Rican." He was like, "Oh!!!" [and then started] like talking to me in Spanish. He introduced me to his friends and all that. They acted like I didn't hear what they were saying, but I knew what they were saying….vaguely. They were speaking Spanish about someone's girlfriend who left him. They were talking Spanish to me…I was like, "I don't really know you." Just because we're all Spanish doesn't mean we'll get along. I don't believe in that. I mean I'll hang out with anyone who's cool with *me*.

Sanchez's use of the Puerto Rican flag on hats interpellated (Althusser 1971) other Puerto Rican students, an interpellation that initially worked, and then ultimately failed or faltered (because he lacked fluency in Spanish), as he tried to keep up a conversation with other Puerto Ricans. His lack of fluency prohibited an immediate connection with them, and contrasts the experience of other black Hispanic respondents whose Spanish language facility and ability (rather than the lack thereof) perplexed others. His visible blackness, coupled with his rudimentary Spanish skills, encourages others to see him as more black than Puerto Rican. His Spanish language (in)ability calls his Hispanic authenticity into question, though Sanchez did not interpret it this way. In fact, when asked if he faced any negation of his Puerto Rican and black identity, Sanchez noted, "Nobody's ever tested me like that." In fact, people sometimes affirmed his multiracial identity by saying, "You look just like your mother. I can see where your Spanish blood comes in."

While this illustrates how familiar others are able to draw connections between his appearance and his mother's, what strikes me as an interesting inconsistency here relates to his earlier mention of others thinking that his mother looks Korean "when she smiles." If he looks like his mother, and his mother sometimes looks Korean, then he too (on occasion) would look Korean, or more generally, Asian. Arguably, his racial/ethnic ambiguity or ubiquity allows him to avoid encountering these interrogations, and evade authenticity tests altogether (rather than face intensified border patrolling because of his ambiguity).

Contrary to the contestation and invalidation that Sanchez, Juanita, and Lisa experienced from other Hispanic people, Maritza (black and Panamanian) experienced validation from other Hispanics, while those unfamiliar with the racial variation among Hispanics/Latinos were more likely to invalidate her identity. Their ignorance about the existing variation required her to provide more clarification and explanation about her identity, so as to enable the reconciliation (for them) between being black and Latino.

> Well, like if I go to a…party…and I would talk to some of the girls. "Well, so where are you from?" And I always say I'm from Panama. And they were like, "So you speak Spanish?" and I'm like, "Yeah!" So they say, "Well, (stumbling) where, so you're not black then." And I'm like, "Yeah, I'm black. I'm a black Hispanic." "Oh, okay. Well, how can you be?" "Well, because Panama is, you know, a Spanish country." So in that context, then, I have to explain that, but if I was to talk to someone that was from either Puerto Rico, Colombia, whatever, and they asked, "What are you?" I'm like, "Panamanian." "Oh, you're Hispanic." And that's it. They don't ask, "*How* are you Hispanic when you're black? They automatically know.[41]

[41] Other Hispanics, particularly from the Caribbean and Latin America, have more likely been exposed to racial variation within and between categories so this predisposition to these differences creates a racially and ethnically mixed habitus. This also equips them to recognize these differences, rather than disqualify them. The idea of "automatically" knowing illustrates how different racial paradigms are operating that allow some people to see black and Hispanic as compatible and sensible, versus irreconcilable, a point made by Rodriguez and Cordero-Guzman (1992).

To be black *and* Hispanic (and more) presented a paradox to border patrollers, a perplexity intensified by the Spanish language ability of people presumed to be "just black." When black cancels out all other racial mixture through hypodescent, to be both black and Hispanic is beyond contradiction. It is registered as an anomaly and impossibility. Impossibilities do not exist. This is the illogic of race in the rule of hypodescent. Despite all of this public fascination with mixture, mixed people are still often denied such assertions because they do not fit with race logic. Countering racial hegemonies entails confronting people who openly express disbelief in multiplicity, particularly in regards to certain combinations.

Writer Roberto Santiago (1995: 93) tackles this dilemma in "Black *and* Latino," and urges people to recognize that some people can be "black and Puerto Rican at the same time." He argues that not claiming both would be a denial of self, and challenges the idea of proving and performing race. "This debate among us is almost a parody. The fact is that I am black, so why do I need to prove it?" (Santiago 1995: 93-4).

> Pretty much everyday at work, someone asks me, "So, where are you from?" No, no, no. Not "where are you from?" (She corrects herself.) "How did you learn how to speak Spanish so well?" And then I say I'm from Panama and then they say, "Oh, okay." Now regardless if I don't know if they know where Panama is, and if they don't, maybe they'd be ashamed to say, "Well, where's that at? Do they speak Spanish out there?"

As Benjamin Bailey posits, some Black and Latino individuals' racial identities are "constituted and negotiated through language." (Bailey 2005: 294). He shows how Black Latinos' social practices change the meanings attached to racial categories, by expanding the categories to include multiplicity, not singularity in black and white. Guillermo Gomez-Pena developed this further by saying:

> To cross the linguistic border implies that you decenter your voice. The border crosser develops two or more voices…. We develop different speaking selves that speak for different aspects of our identity…. I am very interest in subverting English structures, infecting English with Spanish, and in finding new possibilities of expression within the English language that English-speaking people don't have…. I am expressing those transitional zones within my identity that are part of my life as an intellectual and as a border citizen." (Gomez-Pena in conversation with Fusco 1995: 156-7).

A black and Hawaiian woman in her early 20s who asserts a protean identity, Leilani noted that she must contend with people's direct questioning of her because both her appearance and racial combination strike some people as unique. When people find out that she is black *and* Hawaiian, some will say,

> "I've never met a Hawaiian person before" or something like that, and it also will be stereotypical sometimes. "Oh, you're from Hawaii. Do you know how to hula?" "Do you speak Hawaiian?" and I'm like, "Why?" "Do you surf?" And all this. Another thing is that I don't know how to swim so they're like, "How are you Hawaiian and don't know how to swim?" I didn't move to Hawaii until I was already 8. By then, I mean I would love to go to the beach, but I was afraid of drowning.

Leilani consistently used humor to deal with others' direct questioning and their stereotypical thinking that linked location geographically to gendered behavior, making "Hawaii" evocative of "swimming" and "hula dancing"). Notably, people relied less on stereotypes of blackness when interacting with her, perhaps because of its [blackness] invisibility. The interactions that Leilani had with others help us see how much border patrollers engage in authenticity testing:

> "You don't look like a Hawaiian." "Do you know what a Hawaiian really looks like?" [Leilani will ask]…and I had someone actually say to me, "Well, if it's not black, it's white." And I'm like, "No, it's not." And that was a bad day. I just didn't understand how she could be so ignorant.

Leilani's comment, "And that was a bad day," paralleled that of a black Dominican who, when asked how s/he racially identifies, replied, "'That is a complicated question, and not fun when you are living through it.'" (Itzigsohn and Dore-Cabral 2000: 225).

Because Leilani views questions about race as personal and indicative of others' ignorance, she usually reciprocates the inquiry, to expose its intrusiveness and abruptness; as well as her distaste for borderism. She refuses to share details to people who ask what she calls "the roundabout questions" (Where are you from?) to figure her out racially, choosing instead to say, "I'm a human being." Otherwise, she reciprocates their questioning ("Well, isn't it obvious what I am?' 'No, because it's not obvious what I am to you so why is it obvious to me what you are?'), which parallels Campbell's and Allison's and provokes curious, dissatisfied looks. She feels as though she is as entitled to the same information that others expect from her.

Leilani also described herself as having a red, yellow, or "lightly tanned" skin tone that white people often perceive as white. "I guess because most mixed people that I know are darker than I am, so you can pretty much tell [that they are mixed] but I guess my skin tone is closer to being white." Because of this perception, white border patrollers (see Dalmage 2000) say a variety of things to Leilani, including, "'I thought you were white. We just thought that you liked to hang around a lot of black people, just trying to be black,' whatever that is." Usually, whites "are just really surprised" when they accumulate more accurate information about Leilani's racial heritage and background. Curious about how border-patrolling whites react to discovering that she is in fact not white, at least in terms of how she chooses to identify, I asked Leilani to share another incident detailing the whites' reactions during such interactions. She recalled one

example that involved a white girl she has known since high school who initially thought Leilani was also white, and had noticed that Leilani frequently socializes with "a lot of black people":

> She just asked me one day, "How come you hang around so many black people? Not that I'm saying there's anything wrong with black people[42] but I was just wondering, because I always see you with black people." I was like, "Because I'm black." Her eyes got so big. I was like, "I'm mixed." I said, "My mother's black and my dad's Hawaiian." And she's like, "That's so interesting."

A parallel experience to another "white black woman," Judy Scales-Trent, who explained to the third white woman to compliment her "nice permanent" that she got it from being "colored," or otherwise had "Africa in her hair" (Scales-Trent 1995). Border patrolled by whites because of the illegibility of their blackness, both women had to determine their points of disclosure, or when to "come out" to borderists. Though her blackness was not always visible to whites, she believed in the audibility of her blackness.

> Most people tell me that they can tell something when they hear me talk…. In one of the classes, we learned that black females have a deeper sounding voice than the softness of a white woman's voice. I don't know or more raspy or something like that, but they tell me once they hear me speak, "Oh, I knew you had to be something. I knew you weren't just white." I was like, "Okay."

Like several other respondents[43] who become familiar with racial border patrollers through their immediate and extended families of orientation (and sometimes procreation), Leilani intimately knows borderism and visual dislocation (Dalmage 2000; Katz Rothman 2001; Steinbugler 2005). She described the cognitive dissonance that she

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[42] In misreading Leilani as white, or not black, this white woman border patrolled her by invoking a racial divide. Deploying a discursive variation of the popular, "Not that there's anything wrong with that," (from *Seinfeld*), the white woman attempted to save face and minimize any backlash from such frontstage racism.
[43] Sanchez, a black and Puerto Rican young man, whose Puerto Rican mother "looks Korean to people," experienced borderism because people had trouble making sense of him being with his black father and "Asian-looking" Puerto Rican mother.

and her mother create for borderists who divided "black" from "white."[44] "Like if I'm just with my mother, we do get looks like, 'What is she doing with her?'" To resolve this dissonance, Leilani believes that borderists decipher the mother-daughter duo in this way:

> Well now that I'm older, they usually assume that we are friends first but when I was younger, they would assume she was someone--my caregiver or somebody--a babysitter or something like that, but the first thought in their mind usually was not, "Oh, that's her daughter," or "Oh, that's her mother." Sometimes people, they think they are whispering but they are really not. And I can hear them, you know, what they are saying. Like I can remember a particular incident from when I was younger. They were like, "Oh, that must be her babysitter because she got good hair so that couldn't be her daughter," and she was supposedly whispering this to her friend. And I didn't feel the need to tell my mom that I heard it because she really would've got upset.

Humor allows Leilani to deflect signs of border patrolling: knitted brows, quizzical looks, and the sideways stares of others (Rosenblatt et al., 1995). Because "sometimes they just look really confused," Leilani has learned, through experience and advice from her mother in particular, that border patrollers are "just not worth your time. They're not doing anything for you." She felt no differently about multiracial-identified people asking her questions; in fact, it made little difference who asked intimate questions of her race. She was equally annoyed by the imposition from anyone, and wondered, "Why does it matter? I guess that's how I feel."

Many other respondents in my sample held similar views on being questioned about their racial identities. For example, Sa, whose "father is black and Blackfoot Indian and my mother is British/Brazilian so I guess you could say European and South American," used strategies similar to Leilani in disclosing details about her racial

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[44] By splitting people into color-coded groups, borderists missed the relationship between mother and daughter, rather than recognizing this relationship and lumping them together as "family." This lumping and splitting (Zerubavel 1991, 1997) reflects the cognitive decisions that borderists make and how that impacts their perceptions of and interactions with multiracial individuals in interracial families of orientation and/or procreation.

background. Since she confronts the "What are you?" question "every *single* time I meet somebody," she often says, "I'm a person." On the surface, this looks like a colorblind response, but remains her way of evading the question (not denying race). Arguably she does this to minimize the emotional labor produced from constant racial interrogations. While the frequency with which she received racial interrogations bothered her, Sa never resisted or refused to respond, but *did* draw the line at being called "exotic." She quipped, "I mean, I have people tell me that all the time…. I hate when people say that to me, 'Yeah, you look exotic.' I'm like, 'What am I, a bird?!'"

Jamie, a black-identified woman with black/white heritage, also faced frequent ("every day of my life") and persistent inquiries ("You're black and what?"). At first, she indulged others ("I would say black"). "Now it's like, 'Why? Why do you need to know?' or I may say, 'Whatever you want me to be.' Because she appears racially ambiguous or "more than black" (Daniels 2002), borderists have a hard time racially locating her: "People see black but they see something else and I have not figured out what else they see because I've tried to identify as all of them….Someone said I look like a Mexican and I have no Mexican in my family."

Jamie activated her agency by using her ambiguity to her advantage, but felt confused and conflicted over the incongruence between her racial identity and others' perception of her (i.e., identifying as black but getting mistaken as Mexican, multiracial, or generally anything but black). Her invalidated black identity parallels that of other part black respondents, such as Toni, Kelly, and Jessica, who experienced similar social

interactions that invalidated their preferred singular black identities, and, though undesired, validated their multiracial parentage or heritage.[45]

Another white/Asian (Filipina) multiracial, Theresa, related her experiences with malevolent border patrollers who ask, "'What are you?' and, 'Where are you from?'":

> "Um, where I'm from?…. I'm from Long Beach." And, "What are you?" – I usually say female, if I get, "What are you?" Just to give them a hard time, because I think that question is just hideous. *What* are you?! (Emphasis hers) [When I'm in the mood] I usually say I'm part Filipina, and then people usually dig a little more and that's…when I'll say, "Well, my mother is American but she does have some Native American."

While mildly irritated and frustrated with the intrusiveness of others and the way they pose the question, Theresa still volunteered information about herself, in part perhaps to move away from the "what" (objectifying) to a "who" (humanizing). Articulating her mixed race heritage allowed her some agency, while giving her multiracial identity visibility and legitimacy. By sharing some of her heritage and biography, she addressed people's curiosity in a challenging but self-satisfying way. Asserting her agency in this way implicitly communicated to benevolent borderists that they lacked tactful (better) ways to ask questions.

Several other respondents expressed similar frustration about the manner in which they encountered borderism. For example, Jessica, a black-identified woman with Black/Asian parentage, enthusiastically entertained questions from benevolent borderists, *except* when they indirectly inquired about her identity.

> That [Indirect questions] kind of frustrates me, not necessarily--well, it doesn't necessarily frustrate me…. I don't know if they're trying to ask me what my background is, or where was I born, so sometimes I'll be like, "Well, I was born in Kentucky. And they'll be like, "Oh, okay, …so um, where's your mother

[45] In having their singular black identities invalidated, these respondents actually experienced, but did not desire, *validated* multiracial identities. This is counterintuitive, given the one-drop rule, and the belief that any indication of blackness makes one black.

> from? Where's your dad from? So sometimes *that* can be a little weird. I prefer if people kind of get straight to the point. Just ask me, "So what are you? What's your background?" or ask it in a clear manner so that I know what it is they're trying to ask. Sometimes I really don't know. Are they trying to ask me what my background is? Or are they trying to ask really where I'm from?

Malevolent border patrollers believe that questions about where people are from sufficiently avoids any impoliteness. However, the questions did not allow respondents to dodge details of their racial selves and families. Taking the rambling route to exploring race made malevolent border patrollers' efforts to obtain information about race more obvious.

Flora, a black/white biracial female, reacted similarly to racial interrogations, finding the circuitous nature of conversations and the curiosity of others off-putting. Flora frowned upon the obtuse and race evasive style of borderists. Despite seeing right through the thin veneer of etiquette, she graciously entertained their questions.

> The only time I find it offensive is when people try to dance around the question. Just--you can ask me just as easily as anything else. I was working once and this gentleman came in and I always get the words ethnicity and race, not race, or something else, ethnicity and [nationality]. That's exactly it! Ethnicity and nationality. Well, this time I didn't get it mixed up and I told him that I was American because he asked me my nationality. He goes, "No, no, no. I didn't mean that." I mean, "Where are you from? Where are you from?" I'm from New Jersey. Like, "What are you trying to ask me?" Finally, he said, "No, what are you mixed with? "Oh, you're asking my race. I am Caucasian and African American." That's the only time it's offensive.

Despite being born in Korea, Peg dogmatically asserted an Asian American identity, explaining her arrival (literal and figurative) at this identity.

> Then we moved here and like, yeah, I'm not like Korean. I'm not white. I'm definitely not Black, Latino, or whatever. But I grew up in two worlds of like, White and Korean, but I don't want to be white, but the culture is white, just white, it's just gross (because of the disconnection from Korean people, culture, and community)…. There was more of an emphasis to be more, without explicitly being white, but yeah, just to be white. I went to school where predominantly everyone was white and racism was a huge issue. I never surprisingly ever

> experienced racism in the South, only by a Chinese girl. She's the only one that made fun of me ("Why are your eyes so slanted?"), and the reason why she made fun of me was because she had rounder eyes. In the Midwest, it was just like, "Who's this fat Chinese poor girl?"

Learning "the first R"[46] (Van Ausdale and Feagin 2001), Peg admitted to feeling scarred by the constant questions ("'Are you Chinese or Japanese?'"). As neither, Peg had to identify herself as Korean (during childhood), since people seldom imagined the possibilities of Asian ethnicities beyond the two aforementioned ones. "'Well, what's Korea?' There was no concept." Her hopes that the (1988) Olympics would put Korea "on the map" were dashed when people began asking, "'Do you eat dog? How often do you guys eat dogs?" Peg also explained that in being misidentified as being Chinese or Japanese, she was the target of epithets and ethnic slurs, such as "Chink" and "Jap." She recalled, "When someone would call me a 'chink,' I'd joke around, like borrowing from Margaret Cho, I'd be like, '"It's 'Gook' dammit! Get it right!"'"

This "blunt, direct" racist talk (Myers 2005) of her childhood contrasts with the "kinder, gentler" race talk of today. Presumably because both are Korean, Peg is often referenced as Margaret Cho,[47] to the point where she worries, "Am I always going to be compared to Margaret Cho?" Feeling relegated by others to a "perpetual foreigner" status that other respondents described as Othering, in terms of race, ethnicity, and nationality, Peg shared additional incidents in which others deploy racial ideologies of Asians in their interactions with her. These experiences of confronting derogatory or disparaging remarks complicated her identity development and encounters with border patrollers.

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[46] Race and racism
[47] A Korean comedienne who starred in "All American Girl" in the mid-1990s.

Peg recalled several situations in which various Asian ethnics cemented her guilt about not knowing Korean, admonishing her for not speaking the language ("'Oh, you should know Korean.'"). "In one of these Chinese restaurants, someone asked me if I was Korean…and…knew the language and I said no. He knew Korean and (I don't know what part or dialect of) Chinese, and he was just like, 'You really should learn the language.' I was like, 'Okay.'" In another Chinese restaurant, Peg faltered when one of the owners spoke to her in Korean. Though she understood what he said, she "couldn't respond back to him in Korean." Others in Peg's life have reiterated this point, to the extent that their suggestions have created a bit of anxiety for her.

> Now, because I've taken myself so far away from Korean, it's almost like this avoidance because I'm just so tired of the questions. The more questions I get of that, it's just almost like, "Well, are you good enough to even have this marker of being Korean?"…I'm thinking that just because I know the language doesn't mean well, okay. Let's say I did start taking up Korean because I do want to take up Korean because I wasn't able to communicate with my mom and so let's say I take up the language. My fear is going to be, it's like this: Okay, they know I'm going to know the language and then it's almost going to be the assumption of, "What other aspects of Korean culture do you know about?" If they find out I learned Korean, it's like, 'Oh, I'm Korean,' and then they're like, "Can you speak Korean?" "Yes." Then it's like another checklist of questions, like, "Oh, would you like this type of food?" And then it's almost like, "Am I being fake? Is it too late to be Korean?" You know?

Rather than embrace racial/ethnic "thinning" (Yancey 2003), Peg and other white/Asian respondents negotiated their light (almost white) skin privilege by solidifying linkages to their Asian heritage (since their visible whiteness undermined their legitimate Asian connections. In being border patrolled, Peg began to feel like an imposter, an inauthentic Korean, feelings compounded by her belonging to an interracial family. At the same time she enjoyed being recognized as Korean, she also indicated hating being "outed" as not Korean enough. That occurred in the moment in which

people who correctly identified her as Korean speak to her in Korean, but she is unable to respond.

Where Peg experienced identity invalidation for her lack of Korean language ability, Lexie felt the same invalidation, but because of her racial ambiguity and mixture. In contrast to Peg who *is spoken to* in Korean quite often, Lexie "speaks in what Korean I know" with other Koreans (usually business owners) "but they won't address me in Korean. They'll only address me in English. It's because they know I'm not full Korean. I'm tainted. I'm unpure. They can look and tell." Lexie lamented being "that American kid" who is both and not quite Korean. Lexie explained the logic: "If both my parents were Korean, I'm still Korean. But only one is Korean. 'You don't get the prize.' [she faces rejection]."

Knowing that she looks "different" equips Lexie to handle the border patrolling glares and stares she receives from Koreans when she enters various "Korean stores." Neverthless, borderists' behavior remains a bit unsettling, yet understandable to Lexie:

> But the main part of it is that Korea is such a homogeneous place. Everyone there is…Korean. I mean there's not even a big Chinese Korean mixing, which you would think, because they're right next to each other…. There's not a big Japanese Korean mixing. It's just Korean. Everyone there is just Korean, so they kind of expect the same over here. Everybody should stay pure. Whatever that is. Keep the family line--Korean. Yeah, the Korean line is pretty much Korean.

Dakota, another White/Asian (Korean) woman, shared her encounters with borderists:

> When people are talking about somebody else that has different origins, and things like that, then I mention that I am Korean. I sometimes feel like even though I am Korean, even I don't really look Korean, people just identify me as White, so they can say whatever they want.[48] [When I'm with my mom] then

[48] This suggests that Dakota remains sensitive to having a front stage pass to backstage racism (Picca and Feagin 2006) of whites or others who read her as white and openly share racist views in presumed alliance with her. This presumption made her palatably uncomfortable, and points to the way she constantly faced de-racination or whitewashing while growing up (by appearing more assimilated and Americanized than her Korean mother, for whom she spoke English).

> that's when I get more of like, "Oh, you know you look Korean when you stand next to your mom." Because we have the same facial features.

This invalidates Dakota because she is generally not recognized as multiracial White *and* Asian (Korean) independent of her mother. To add insult to injury, Dakota was once asked by a college roommate if she was adopted since she mentioned that she is half Korean. This admission, that she is "half Korean" suggests that Dakota has a situationally multiracial identity or is occasionally becoming Asian. By publicly claiming to be part Korean, she is acknowledging to herself and others what she says is not always visible. Doing so disrupts stereotypical thinking about Koreans and their appearance or resemblance to others.

Timothy, an Asian/White man in his 20s, said that more whites than blacks often figure out that he is multiracial, but "others think that I am lying. Some Asian people, they don't believe me either….They just think that I am White and are surprised, like, 'You are Asian?! Your eyes…I couldn't recognize.'" As previously mentioned, many partially Asian multiracial respondents made similar references to this particular facial feature as evidence of their racial composition. Tracy, a black/Filipina woman, also referenced her eyes when discussing the difficulty that people have in racially sorting her out. "People don't pay too much attention to my eyes, which is the dead give away that I'm not all the way black." She mentioned a modeling job she showed up for, where everyone else was either white or black. When someone asked her to racially identify herself, she said,

> "Other" and they were like, "Other?" You know, they expected me to say black. I'm like, 'I'm not just one [race]! Do you see my eyes?!' Did you miss the (straight) hair?!' I mean…. they kind of were like, "Oh yeah, you do look Asian. Now that you say that." And I was like, "Am I the only one?" "Yeah, you're the first one." I'm like, "Oh." Yeah, but it's just really weird. Because I'm just like,

> I didn't know you guys were against mixed people modeling. I just came in the store and was just shopping and I got it (a modeling job). It was just weird.

Tracy continued to explain how people frequently failed to recognize her racial mixture, despite her having "Asian eyes." In both of their experiences, Timothy and Tracy found that more whites than blacks could figure them out racially. I contend that whites likely read the two as "not white" versus specifically "multiracial" (or White/Asian and Black/Asian, respectively).

Conversely, Tracy reported that while people read her racially as black, she felt resistance from and rejected by black people who malevolently border patrolled her. Even though she described having a racially diverse group of friends, she simultaneously admitted to this:

> There's this sense for me, since I'm not all the way black[49], I can't hang out with all the way black people. You're just outcast(ed) from that or, I mean, it's also my fault too because I don't really care to get to really know anyone up here, because I have this thing, like I don't wanna mess with anyone's business…. Just in general, I don't like to butt into people's lives like, "Hey!" but I already had a lot of friends that were in Atlanta before I moved up here so I kind of just stuck with my friends and I met new people through them but it's pretty much generally a mixed group of people.

People may read Tracy's racially disparaging comments about blackness and blacks as evidence of her racial mixture, that she is "not all the way black."[50] They also disqualify her blackness because of her partnership with her white fiancé. She discussed the blending of their lives as disparate.

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[49] Tracy mentioned that others observe that she has "a white mentality" because she is educated or "going to school" and in her words, she refuses to "talk ghetto, dress ghetto, and I actually have standards in my life. I actually want to rise above, you know? I don't want to sit around and just take what's given to me, and pretty much that's what it is." She further clarified, "The high school we went to was in a rich neighborhood and you had to test to get in so it was like the black people who went there weren't even black, because we were getting an education and we were going to school and…. So all the way black people who were there were really not black. Because they talked "white." So my theme is "I talk right, not white."

[50] Her gratuitous use of the word "colored" during our interview served as further evidence of her racial ideologies being a cautionary note to blacks who already perceive her as racially ambiguous.

> We have two different backgrounds, like his family's like--you've got this white, country conservative dip-spitting people and then you got my family, who are these colored people, and…both our families get along; they eat dinner together every time we come home. So it's not like *they* don't get along too. They, we're all integrated. They call each other on the phone and stuff.

Tracy made a few discomforting uses of the term (in reference to herself and another woman, both as "colored"). After gently mentioning to Tracy that she had used the term quite casually, and politely inquiring about her usage of the term "colored." Tracy offered the following explanation:

> I don't know how to say you know black, white because there's so many cultures out there. Because I don't believe in, like I've said interracial, and I've wanted to reneg on that because I only believe there's one race, which is the human race. I believe it's just different cultures. So um, I guess just saying colored just kinda knocks out like different shades. I don't mean it as in like, "You colored folk." No, no, no. I don't wanna get shot (she laughs). When I'm more in a, hostile situation I'll say, you know, people of different colors or shades (she laughs again).

Claiming that she employed the word as an umbrella term, and that she did not know how to say black and white (but then simply says it) suggests that both colorblindness and race talk are at work. This became more clear when Tracy admitted that, when with her white friends, they "all have racial slurs for each other, you know, and it's out of fun. We know we don't mean it. You know, it's like, "You white cracker." (She laughs). Perhaps because she is "not all the way black" or because she is part Korean, white friends bestow honorary whiteness on her. This honorary whiteness not only allows them to engage in backstage racism (Houts Picca and Feagin 2007), but makes her complicit in these acts. Her active participation in this jocularity, which happened immediately (the first day the friends met), is at once ironic and as disturbing as "white white" (Alvarez 1998; Warren and Twine 1997) people's participation in backstage racism.

> I'm always usually sometimes the only girl there, which means I'm the only colored person that's there. They'd always be like, "You stupid hoe bag" or "You stupid colored person." [She would retort] "Shut up, you honky."

In her own version of two-faced racism, Tracy revealed that such race talk (Myers 2005) and gender talk (Guy-Sheftall and Cole 2002) does not hurt anyone's feelings because "it's just a joke" (Bemiller and Zimmer Schneider 2008). Just as whites can "talk nasty" about blacks "without sounding racist" (Bonilla-Silva 2002), so too can others who adopt colorblindness, as Tracy demonstrated in revealing her honest feelings about some whites:

> The most polite way I could say this is my boyfriend's friends are the most redneck hick conservative dip-spitting cigarette-smoking people I've ever met in my life, so when they spit out whatever they say, it's just like, "Pssh, you're white trash so it doesn't matter."…. Just the way they grew up or how they look. Both, I have a couple of friends who shave their head down- I'm like, "You skinhead." That's what they look like.

Though she denied that she or her friends use humor (race talk) to say things that they really feel. She admitted that much of what she said was "mean stuff." She did not, however, describe it as racist or problematic in any way. When honorary whites and whites corroborate in their backstage racism, the racial landscape that ostensibly accommodates mixture seems that much more slippery, and thus dangerous. That others overhear(d) her comments, and "laughed because they noticed that the other person was laughing" or discarded the danger in such comments because "that girl, that colored girl said that" is both telling and troublesome.

Tracy further revealed to me the curious way in which friends affirmed their connection to one another:

> I guess like with my girlfriends, we don't do it, but you know, I know with my white friends I have. They'll call each other, "You stupid bitch," and "You whore," and I'm just like, "Wow!" You know? At first when you heard it, you're

> like, "Is she serious?" "Are you/is she having a fight?" Then when you get to know, they're joking around…. I guess like my friend tells me, he says, "If I'm not mean to you…if I'm nice to you, I don't like you." And it's kind of like, he's really mean to me, so…. I mean, these people embarrass me publicly so I guess this is how I feel like they love me. This is, I guess, how they love me. I don't know.

Tracy's racetalk (Myers 2005) and gendertalk (Guy-Sheftall and Cole 2002) cloaked potentially offensive discourses into more palatable jocular forms (Houts Picca and Feagin 2007; Childs 2005). By using humor, Tracy and her friends deflected attention away from the potential offensiveness of their humor (Myers 2005), as well as distracts from their racial differences. Their reciprocal racetalk solidifies her honorary white status and in-group status with whites, arguably at her expense (which she may or may not realize).

Instead they showed how to subvert *and* reproduce racialized and gendered discourses. Arguably, others overhearing some of these discourses (malevolent border patrolling) might wonder where to locate Tracy racially in relation to these racialized discourses. Her racial location impacts others' interpretation of her comments or jokes, such that they may relate to them, or react adversely to her making certain comments, particularly if they perceive her as "not all the way black" (and thus not entitled to make certain jokes). Tracy's participation in the expression and reproduction of racial discourses might enable racism in others who see this "colored" multiracial woman joking about race and feel that this gives them permission to make similar jokes. Their group position will shape the interpretations of these jokes, which may become more charged in their telling (in cases where whites make jokes about Asians, and so forth).

Tracy's participation in jokes and other race talk also impacts how others view her, and may largely account for her feeling border patrolled by blacks in particular.

Looking at both her behavior and others' better contextualizes the interactional dynamic that births and accommodates this kind of border patrolling.[51]

Toni, an African American-identified woman in her early 20s who is often misidentifed as African because of her first name, noted that the only serious relationship she has been in is her current one with an African American man. Toni discussed how both she and her black boyfriend share in the experience of being accused of "acting white." She explained, "He doesn't go around with his pants hanging all down" but instead is "so preppy…corporate…professional." Toni's comments illustrate the convergence of border patrolling behavior from both strangers and her boyfriend who "actually used to call me white" (see Nayak 2007 for a discussion on embodying race and culture).

Interestingly, both have racially mixed heritage and he "also watches 'white shows' like *The Hills*," though he attributes her interest in the same shows as related to her heritage. "He says, 'Oh, that's because you have white in your family.' Something crazy like that. But I don't think it's like a serious thing for him. He's just making a crazy comment." Though she pardoned his comments, Toni found it "kind of weird how he would make those comments when he had it [racial mixture] going on in his family also. But he doesn't claim his though. He's like, 'Oh yeah, so-and-so, they were white because my aunt has green eyes, curly hair.' So he doesn't acknowledge it a lot." Toni's narrative exposed how her boyfriend polices her racial identity possibly as a result of feeling policed by strangers, family members, or himself. These narratives expose how

[51] Ironically, Tracy later mentioned that people often joke that her white boyfriend has a "mentality like a black dude," and that "he's blacker than me." While the comments are intended to capture that they think "he's a pretty cool dude," because he gets along with a variety of people, her comments revealed a stereotypical way of thinking about race and constructing racial divisions.

the respondents' experiences with border patrolling fit into a larger history involving the surveillance and dissuasion of individuals crossing the color line (Brunsma 2006). The perpetual policing of racial borders, and the reification of racial ideologies, reproduces racial borders.

Like the policing of identity, the policing of partner choice can be benevolent and malevolent. I explore the dimensions of border patrolling that multiracial respondents experience as their identity and partner choices get policed by strangers or strangers.

When Strangers Border Patrol Both Identities and Partner Choices

While an increasing amount of literature has identified the promises and pitfalls of "crossing the color line" when romantically partnering (Childs 2005; Dalmage 2000; Reddy 1997), less literature exists that explicitly discusses how people with multiracial parentage and heritage negotiate this process (see Twine 1996; Roberts-Clarke, Roberts, and Morokoff 2004). Moreover, how these individuals experience their partner choice in a racially divisive society usually falls out of frame in these discussions as well. In this section, I discuss how the respondents in my sample experienced and interpreted the public reactions they received in their romantic relationships. Here I draw parallels conceptually between the idea of positive and negative public reactions (Rosenblatt, Karis, and Powell 1995) or support, supportive opposition, and opposition (sans supportive opposition given space limitations) (as discussed by Childs 2005). Positive policing, or support conceptually corresponds to benevolent border patrolling, while opposition does to malevolent border patrolling. Because I found evidence that supports these two concepts, but little for protective border patrolling (what I initially envisioned

as conceptually parallel to the idea of "supportive opposition," I discuss these two concepts as related to how individuals with mixed ancestry publicly experience partner choice.

At the intersection of identity and partner choice, border patrolling becomes more complex. Because racial border patrollers often misread multiracial individuals, they may in turn border patrol these individuals' partner choice. They do so on the basis of this misreading, seeing the multiracial person in ways that contrast with the multiracial person's preferred racial identity. This misreading also typically occurs because strangers have fewer details about and lack intimate familiarity with the multiracial individuals' racial parentage and/or heritage. As a result, they base their border patrolling on (mis)perceptions of multiracial identity and interracial relationships, regardless of how individuals label themselves or understand their own racial identities and interracial relationships.

In analyzing the narratives of multiracials, I found that strangers often police partner choice in relation to their perception (misidentification) of multiracial people. That is, they try to racially decode the multiracial individuals by considering their romantic partners (Twine 1996). This consideration is often faulty, given the ambiguous and ubiquitous looks that many multiracial people possess (which may buffer them from borderism if they approximate their partner). Furthermore, there is the potential for incongruity between identity, appearance, and others' perception of multiracial individuals in interracial couples. The incongruity exposes how visibly different members of a couple might identify similarly, and do not consider themselves in an "interracial" relationship. As Buchanan and Acevedo (2004) argue, having a physical

appearance (external) that complements one's racial identity (internal) and others' perception of that racial identity (external) creates congruence, and can also diffuse any social discomfort surrounding the disjunctures of racial phenotype, identity, and social location.

Strangers who depend primarily on phenotype to inform these interactions sometimes end up confronting incongruence. Because the preferred position in society is one of congruence, the absence of this congruence can generate interest about such individuals experiencing this incongruence. This interest is expressed verbally through border patrolling racial discourses, and nonverbally through "eye questions" (Wade-Gayles 1997) or a racialized gaze that puts identity and partner choices under inspection. Thus, borderism from the outside relies heavily on the visibility of racial markers, a flawed indicator of whom to border patrol in terms of identity and relationships. Borderists impose their perception on multiracials and the trouble with doing so stems from strangers perceiving multiracial individuals in a way that contrasts with how they see themselves.

Benevolent Border Patrolling: "Such a Cute Mixed Couple"

Several respondents initially expressed some indifference or nonchalance when asked about the kinds of public reactions they received with respect to their romantic relationships. When situated in the context of colorblindness, an inability to see such reactions is reflective of a larger societal tendency to deny race and minimize the impact of racism on people's lives (Bonilla-Silva 2003a,b). Furthermore, since some discursive strategies of colorblindness include this more innocuous smiling style of discrimination, some respondents probably read sincere benevolence as a mask for more malevolent

reactions. Because of the slipperiness of colorblind discursive strategies, others' positive reactions to multiracial people's partner choice could be couched in ways that conceal deeper-seated animosity and opposition to interracial intimacy.

Moreover, there is an inherent difficulty in deciphering and decoding people's public reactions, given this tendency towards social desirability and a racially progressive presentation of self (Goffman 1967). One must wonder whether they are experiencing racism or are simply operating as a racial spectacle for others. Thus, falling under the racial gaze does not equal opposition. Instead, stares, "sideways looks" (tilted heads), words, or other gestures from strangers in public hold a number of meanings (Goffman 1963, 1969; Rosenblatt et al. 1995). As Rosenblatt et al (1995: 134-5) explain,

> Stares are open to interpretation. One person may interpret a stare as communicating disdain, hostility, or shock that anyone would violate the taboo against interracial partnership, whereas another person might interpret the same stare as communicating curiosity or supportive fascination (Porterfield 1978: 130)…. Some people said that they had started out annoyed with the stares but then decided the stares could be shrugged off….Some people had experiences that suggested to them that underlying curious stares there is sometimes a fascination that can lead to good things for an interracial couple.

Some of my respondents interpreted these stares similarly. For example, Tito, a black-identified young man with black/white biracial parentage, shifted from initial ambivalence about malevolent border patrolling in the form of *glares* to more benevolent border patrolling *stares*. He described the difference by noting that people glare as if to say, "'What's he got? What's she got? What's going on there?' I think. It's hard to make out." In his estimation, they stare because of their "curiosity." This intrigue parallels that directed to many multiracial individuals independent of their partner, though this is not always the case. Similar to the benevolent border patrolling of identity, these public reactions often force targets of this attention to interpret the intent and action of

borderists. As Tito acknowledged, there is a difficulty in deciphering what provokes attention. Disentangling the impact of others' racial interpretations of identity and partner choice becomes a tricky task.

For some respondents, benevolent border patrollers' stares were indicative of the couple's "attractiveness magnet." For example, Peg, an Asian American-identified woman, spoke about her racial consciousness of positive public reactions, as related to a roommate, a "white woman of color" (Mexican) who was dating a black man, and mentioned the constant stares the couple received. Peg recalled:

> The first time [I saw the man] I stared, not because they were interracial but because I'm like, "You are so hot." "How did you get him?!" And I remember we were talking about that, and she's like, "Oh, yeah. We get stares all the time. She's like, because I know that they're looking at this ["interracial" couple], because she's so fair-skinned that people think it's a black and white couple you know? And internally, I'm thinking, "No, honey. That's not the reason why people are looking at you!" It's because of attractiveness. He was gorgeous. Eye candy. Buy 'em in bulk eye candy.

As Loveman (2008) cautions, sometimes race and beauty or attractiveness are both at play, or race is sidelined by beauty. In this case, the surveillance the couple receives has little to do with race, a position I disagree with, particularly given the respondent's attention to race in the re-telling of the incident.

This and other conversations cultivated her awareness of the ways people positively regard visibly recognizable interracial couples. This awareness made Peg more sensitive to others' reactions to her own interracial relationships later on. She explained,

> Now, because of that, I mean, when we are in public, I've never like blatantly seen anyone do double-takes or stare at us longer or whatever. If I were to ever, I think my first assumption would be like, 'Do they think we are an ugly couple, or mismatched couple?' That's what I would assume first, more so than a race thing."

In Peg's interpretation, she pointed to attractiveness or physical beauty as a magnet attracting the attention of others. While I agree with her to a limited degree, I would argue that *both*, rather than one or the other, influenced others' reactions. That is, plenty of literature documents how beauty operates as a currency, and discusses the advantages extended to people perceived as beautiful or physically attractive (Hunter 2005). To divorce the racialized attention that attractive couples receive runs a similar risk to denying that race is at play at all. Seeing the powerful intersections provides a more useful lens with which to view how racialized surveillance is, even if veiled under ostensible or sincere compliments about a couple's attractiveness.

Similarly, Sarah, an Anglo-Indian identified young woman, commented about others' reactions to her relationship with a white Colombian man:

> The only comment we ever got was, we were at a concert once and somebody said we were a good-looking couple, but I don't think we ever received any racism. I'm not sure if we did or not. I think more than anything what stuck out to people was that his hair was longer than mine so that might have been the factor more than his looks. Yeah, like I don't know if anyone ever looked at us…I didn't notice.

Sarah's awareness of racism is limited, and she remained uncertain about its impact on her experiences. For a white-looking multiracial woman, this is understandable, if we see her experience as normative in the sense that she benefits from white privilege and prefers a race-evasive positioning on these issues (Rothenberg 2002). As Frankenberg (1993) suggests, this race-evasive strategy is one characteristic of whites who are unwilling to recognize their own position of privilege and power in a white supremacy. Race-evasiveness is also an inability to acknowledge racial inequality and discrimination as it affects (non-white) others. When coupled with Rosenblatt et al. (1995), this

explanation reminds us that recognizing racism in one's romantic relationships is quite a difficult task. This difficulty is compounded by colorblind discourses that communicate one sentiment ("cute couple") while cloaking another ("taboo couple"). Alternately, a white-looking individual in a relationship with a white person may be "passing" as an interracial couple, such that any attention they receive is racialized and interpreted as whiteness, and not necessarily an expression of opposition to interracial intimacy.

While she had little awareness of the ways that race played a part in her experiences, Jessica, a black-identified young woman who had only dated black men, indicated that she did not notice other people's reactions to her relationship. When asked about compliments the couple received, Jessica remained illusive and polite, hesitating to confirm that the two made a cute couple. She could not acknowledge (did not see?) how race impacts her relationship and experience in public (and her identity by extension), as well as others' perception and interpretation of these things. Not unlike others, failed to see when and how her experiences were racialized (Bonilla-Silva 2003a; Childs 2005). Instead of linking her numerous experiences being perceived as a variety of races, coupled with her "definitely black" boyfriend as a potential cite that others can continue to border patrol, she negated its importance and role in her everyday experiences.

> Well, no [we don't get reactions]. He's not like Don Juan. You know? He's not super-looking. I'm not much of a looks kind of person. I'm a personality person. I'm attracted to his personality. I mean, he is cute. But he's kind of short, so he's right at my height. So I don't know if people are looking at us…like, "Wow. You know, her boyfriend's really short." Or if they're looking at us because I'm mixed. I mean, that never crossed my mind. I never thought it was racially based. I always thought people were looking because they were wondering why I'm with him.

Her comments betrayed her in that, in my estimation, Jessica would not have mentioned her mixture as a possible source of attention-getting for others, had she literally no

awareness of how her mixture matters to others, if not to her. This discursive deflection seems a resourceful strategy for many people with multiracial parentage simply because they do often feel so under the lens of inspection racially, and want to feel ordinary (Rosenblatt et al. 1995). Since I am arguing that border patrolling is compounded not only by identity, but by partner choice, displacing race seems a logical means of avoiding the racial panopticon (Foucault 1977), the more work of explaining oneself, and negotiating race with border patrollers inside and outside of one's family. Thus, it is easier to have suspicions about one's attractiveness as a couple (and healthier for one's self-esteem), rather than endlessly ponder how one's identity may be provoking such attention. This is particularly so when one is partnered with a visibly different person (who may or may not identify similarly).

The emotional labor, or "race work" (Steinbugler 2007) involved in managing one's emotions, and trying to manage others' reactions, is often underestimated. Fortunately, scholars are beginning to focus their efforts on how members of interracial couples engage in race work, and how the unique social locations of each member requires different levels of investment, for different reasons, in race work. Being multiracial in interracial relationships requires even more race work, to the degree that the multiracial members of such relationships must negotiate their identity, their partner choice, and the interplay between the two. This race work becomes especially complex in moments of incongruence, when multiracial people assert a racial identity which conflicts with others' perception of them, and/or with their phenotypic features (see Buchanan and Acevedo 2004).

On a related note, the investment in maintaining a colorblind kind of racial equality is achieved through an indifference to race. As evidenced in Jessica's narrative, there increasingly exists a need to create a racial reality in which race plays an insignificant role in shaping one's life chances and everyday experiences. To not notice others' reactions, whether good or bad, can be seen as not noticing race or embracing a race-evasive style (Bonilla-Silva 2002, 2003a; Frankenberg 1993).

Conversely, a desire for ordinariness requires a colorblind eye, and a refusal to racialize one's romantic relationship experiences. As Rosenblatt et al. (1995) argue, many black-white couples sought ordinariness, and preferred being "ordinary" to being an "interracial" couple. They wanted to claim the former over the latter, but kept confronting barriers to doing so. These barriers differentially exist for interracial couples depending on the legibility or visibility or multiraciality and interraciality. Achieving ordinariness in a racially divisive society entails eluding others' attempts to make the couple a racial spectacle. Given the fascination that many have with both visibly mixed race people and interracial couples, and the persistent nature of racial surveillance, this achievement again illustrates the race work required in such relationships.

Are You Two Siblings? If Not, "You'd Make Cute Babies"

Other forms of benevolent border patrolling came in the form of misreading romantic relationships as relationships between family-of-origin members. When romantic partners physically approximated one another, they were most commonly misread as siblings, not lovers. Rachel, a White/Native American woman, had an awareness of others perceiving her in her relationships with white men as monoracial, as

well as, uncomfortably for her, perceiving Rachel and her brother as a couple, a perception to which she reacts, "'Ew.'"

> We were at two concerts and someone said, "You guys look striking together. You guys look alike." More than anything, people would ask me why I'm with [her multiracial white/Asian boyfriend] because he's ugly but (she laughs). But I don't think it had anything to do with his race. He is the *nicest* person that I've seriously ever met. (Sarah with her partner, both White/Asian multiracials)

Interestingly, Sarah can matter-of-factly comment on the (lack of) attractiveness of her partner, yet pays little attention to race.

> People think that we're brother and sister. Girls will hit on him with me standing right there until he comes over and kisses me."[52] (Kim, an Asian American identified [Asian/White] respondent about reactions to her and her "half white, half Mexican" boyfriend)

Kim indicated that since the couple is misread as siblings because she looks Hispanic; both of them are "beige"; and both "have very soft bone structure; our skin tones are similar," he often clarifies, "This is my girlfriend." Being misread as siblings involves one ostensible benefit for the couple: the lack of adverse or oppositional reactions. "People that see us don't realize that one's Asian and one's Hispanic and then, so there's not much of one [a reaction]." Both in public and private, among strangers and significant others, Kim feels this way: "We're pretty much accepted. I mean, um, there's a lot of diversity on both sides of our family so people that know us crack the joke that there's gonna be nothing left. That we're just one big melting pot but other than that, no one reacts." I wonder if she would feel similarly, still perceiving an absence of public reactions, were her appearance to more obviously contrast that of her long-term partner, and her location in a residual or honorary white shifted to a collective black position.

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[52] Fans of *How Stella Got Her Groove Back*, a movie adaptation of Terry McMillan's book (same title), might think she is alluding to the scene between Stella and her considerably younger love-interest, Winston. In art and life, border patrollers see siblings, not lovers, perhaps giving credence to the saying, "Love is blind."

When not mistaken as siblings, many multiracial respondents were told (sometimes before others realized that they already had children) that they "would make cute babies" who will have "great hair" or a "pretty complexion." When "complimented" in this way, Tracy a black/Asian Filipina woman observed, "I'm positive about it because I'm like, 'Yeah, I want my baby to have pretty hair. I want my baby to look good.' I want them to get married too. I mean if anyone was like, 'Y'all gonna have some ugly babies,' I'd be like, 'Well, sucks for us. What can we do about it?!'" That Tracy imagines the children she does not yet have being affected by their physical attractiveness speaks to the extent to which she understands how the beauty queue (Hunter 2005) operates in the marriage market (Edwards, Carter-Tellison, and Herring 2004).

Like other female respondents, Maritza mentioned that she declined men's request, such as, "'Would you have my baby?'" As the black Hispanic mother to a black, Japanese, and Panamanian baby, Maritza gets told, "'Oh, he's such a cute baby. He *must* be mixed' (Emphasis hers). Yeah, they always ask what he's mixed with." While superficially complimentary, this border patrolling relies on and reinforces a racial hierarchy that valorizes whiteness and lightness; perpetuates colorism and divisiveness among various communities; and cements the connections between beauty and currency (Hunter 2005; Rondilla and Spickard 2007; Spickard 1989). The circulation of these compliments illustrates how myths and racial ideologies of hyper-beautiful racial mixture carry over from one generation to another (Spickard 1989).

Because her visibly mixed family "gives her mixture away," Alicia has difficulty asserting an uncontested black identity, and eliding the racialized gaze regarding her family's racial composition. In their presence, Alicia's appearance becomes a point of

interest for others who might otherwise overlook her racial ambiguity but strategically use her family as an "excuse" to politely and pointedly investigate and explore Alicia's ambiguity. Encouraged to follow the rules of racial etiquette, others know how to navigate racial borders rhetorically and skillfully. Expressing interest in children remains socially acceptable in a way that contrasts with direct interest in adults. In other words, strangers can manage to attain the desired information by framing their questions as though they pertain to Alicia's children (socially acceptable), instead of her (less socially acceptable for its intrusiveness).

> A lot of them persist, and then I'll tell them, but if they don't really dig, I don't say anything. And like my children, they know that something's different, especially when they see pictures of the family[53], like my great grandfather. And of course, people, they see their dad as black, but other children, other people don't see him as black….In Florida, it was Puerto Rican; in Georgia, it was black and white.

Because she and her husband appear ambiguous, they are read in differential ways. Thus, they are border patrolled on the basis of other's perception of them as an "interracial" versus "monoracial" couple. Like other respondents, she is situationally border patrolled based on these imposed identities that contrast with how she sees herself and her relationship.

Notably, no respondents mentioned receiving compliments specifically from other interracial couples or multiracial people (but perhaps they were not perceived as such, or similarly misidentified as many of the respondents were). While consistent with the general trend towards colorblind rhetoric among the respondents, this omission does not tell us much about how individuals with multiracial parentage and heritage interact with and are benevolently border patrolled by others with similar racial parentage or heritage.

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[53] Twine (2006) examined the ways that families visually represent themselves in family photo albums, and discursively construct their families as interracial ones through their storytelling.

Perhaps many of these individuals (multiracial strangers) know the anxiety of deciphering public attention and respectfully divert attention away from other multiracial people and interracial couples. They would do this as an empathic gesture, presumably from having experienced some sort of racialized surveillance as well.

I expected that members of this group, or other individuals from interracial families or couples would engage in this kind of border patrolling, or the kind I call "protective border patrolling." Instead, I found little evidence to support this style of borderism, at least among strangers, with regards to mixed race individuals and partner choice. Protective border patrolling reflects a "been there, done that" perspective, in which people with firsthand or intimate knowledge of interracial relationships (familial or romantic) seek to protect others from strangers' borderism. They may feel entitled or socially obligated to warn others about the hurdles or inconveniences of being in an interracial couple or family. They may not recognize the multiracial respondent as an existing member of an interracial family, volunteering advice and cautionary tales as a dissuasion. With the generally neutral intention to encourage such individuals to fully contemplate the social costs or consequences of being in an interracial relationship, protective border patrollers operate in more caring ways, as they want to shield interracial couples from malevolent border patrolling, a topic I turn to next.

Malevolent Border Patrolling: "'What Is This White Girl Doing With This Black Guy? That's *So* Dangerous. She's Going To Hurt Herself.'"

When respondents spoke of their relationship histories and experiences, they recounted ways that they sometimes desired people who failed to reciprocate romantic interest. In this way, they felt a sense of rejection, though not always specifically racial rejection. Some deflected attention away from race, pointing to their modest looks, or

other characteristics that might minimize their attractiveness to others. Admittedly, acknowledging the role that race plays in organizing social life and impacting identity and relationship formations proves a difficult task. Some multiracial respondents felt policed by others, in that their perceived phenotypical differences impeded or prohibited the pursuit. This policing limited the kinds of people that felt the freedom to express desires for or romantic attraction to multiracial people. As Okazawa-Rey, Robinson, and Ward (1987) assert, men do the choosing. The racial discourses produced by respondents demonstrate how *potential* partners police multiracial individuals.

For some of the White/Asian female respondents, their own "Asian aversion" (see Chapter Five) tempered their encounters with borderism. Despite their own borderism, these respondents offered explanations for their experiences, noting not their own but others' reluctance to approach them or initiate an attraction or interest.

> I know I've never had another Korean guy ever seem even remotely interested. And I don't know if that has to do with anything…. The Koreans at school are really clingy. They only hang out with other Koreans. They all speak Korean together and they all go hang out. Yeah. They're very clique-y here! (Lexie, White/Asian Korean woman)

> Oh, yeah, I've been ignored, but you know what's funny is I never really thought it being about my race. I just always thought about it as they weren't attracted to me. I was, you know, chubby when I was growing up. And I had all these crushes on guys and I had a feeling that it was probably because I was chubby but I never really thought about it having to do with my race because I guess I just, I guess I'd never really just thought *that* much about my race, until I got older, and well except when the (black) kids would call me "Chink" and kids teased me but aside from that, I never really thought about my brownness. (Theresa, White/Asian Filipina woman)

In contrast to Lexie and Theresa (among others), the narratives of multiracial blacks proved that the persistence of hypodescent, a racial hierarchy that divided White from

Black, meant that the members of the two groups, despite existing mixture of various kinds, should not intermingle.

> Interracial dating…that's something that I'm pretty open to but I've been in situations where a female of another race might not be comfortable with that--or I would get that feeling…. Well, you have to ask the question, "Do they not necessarily like you (me) in that way? Is it that they don't, because you're specifically black, or is it just interracial dating as a whole?" These are the things that to some degree, sometimes we may be fortunate enough to have that conversation, but often times people will not divulge all of their reasons because they may not be comfortable in doing so. (James, a black-identified man with Native American ancestry)
>
> Ah, I can remember a white guy, blonde, who said, if it wasn't for my race, that he'd date me. (Abigail, a black-identified woman with Native American ancestry)
>
> White dudes have never, ever stepped to me…. My brother's white, and he was telling me, "White dudes know they don't have a chance with brown girls." I'd be like, "Really?" That's what he says (that white men are intimidated by that) but I think he's kind of, how accurate is that, to hear it from him? He's from an interracial family. But you know, I would be interested to hear from the typical white guy, from a run-of-the-mill white family, why he wouldn't be interested in me. I think it's because, what I found, um, guys, white guys my age, aren't interested in me. White guys that are like 35-40, they've married that blonde hair, blue-eyed skinny woman, that they were chasing when they were my age, they've been with her for 7 years, and now they look at me, they look at me with kind of a curiosity (Allison, biracial-identified Black/White woman).
>
> Well, I don't have a problem dating someone of another race but I am not aggressive towards men so I wait to be approached and the only white man who's approached me asked me if I wanted to go do a line of cocaine…in the bathroom. Yeah, it was weird. I could be a "Narc" or undercover cop and ask me that. Well, but he prefaced it with, "When was the last time you dated a white guy?" And we had this conversation or whatever. And I was like, "Never." And I asked, "When was the last time you dated a black girl?" and he was like, "And she was really black. She was really dark." As if to say, the darker her skin, the more black she was. Then he went into the whole…it was so weird…. But just to say, "I just broke up with somebody black" is one thing but to say that she was *really* black is another. So it just depends. But I don't normally get approached by white men. (Julie, black-identified woman with Native American ancestry).
>
> Everyone's attracted to me, outside of white people…. I've never really been in a situation where—but see, then again, it comes down to exposure, too. I haven't really been exposed to many white people. I'm just now, you know, kind of exposing myself to races outside of black and Indian. So I would say, usually, the

> looks I usually notice are Mexicans and black people. That's it really…. I always notice that Mexicans are always hooting and hollering at me, and that's it. And black people (Jessica, black-identified Black/Asian Indian woman)

> It's interesting to me though that usually *white* guys, even if I might be thinking, "Okay, you know, I could go out with you," but they'll never go any further than, "What's your name?" or "Can I walk you to your car?" or something like that. It's like it can only go so far, and I don't know why that happens…. I really don't know. I've thought about it and I've asked friends but I don't know. I could say, you know, because I'm a person of color, but then why did he approach me in the first place…. It's like, "I think you're cute. I'd like to take you out." And then it's like, "Cut!" (signals an abrupt ending). Juanita (Black/Puerto Rican/Creole)

For the above respondents, all of whom are black-identified, being border patrolled frequently involved whites. Whether or not they were open to the idea of dating whites became irrelevant, to the degree that the potential white partners eliminated themselves from the "pool of eligibles." These experiences reinforced a Black/White divide, as well as the one-drop rule. One respondent even fretted over the color coded distinctions others' made to disqualify her or deem her "ineligible."

> I've had dudes tell me that if I was lighter, if I was lighter, like, they'll be like, "Oh, you're cute, for a dark skin girl." And to be honest with you, it really bothers me when people call me dark-skinned. I don't know what issues I have with that but anytime anybody calls me "dark-skinned," I have a really big problem with that. And I guess it stems back to me having an association with dark-skinned people not being all that pretty. Compared to like, I don't think it has a thing to do with somebody being better than one person, but frequently, in my lifetime, in my lifespan, most of the dark skinned people I've come across have not been outrageously, like, beautiful…. So with me, when people call me dark-skinned, I'm like, "What do you mean I'm dark-skinned?! I'm not dark skinned. I'm brown-skinned."…. But yeah, I've had dudes tell me, "Yeah, you're cute to be a brown-skinned girl but if you were lighter. …. Yeah, like, 'Okay, whatever.' I mean, it bothered me but it didn't bother me because I was just like, "Dude, you're whack anyways." (Sa, black/Blackfoot, British/Brazilian)

In receiving these and other assessments ("Oh yeah, you'd definitely be wifey material."), Sa quickly discarded these men ("Dude, you're whack anyways.") as potential partners who disqualified her first because of her skin color. Men who found

her undesirably dark malevolently border patrolled were probably attempting to access the currency of light skin that comes from partnering with women of lighter skin tone. Many female respondents, particularly part black ones, spoke of not meeting this "not light enough" criteria for, ironically, darker skinned men. This corresponded to Juanita's experience of being "approached by a pretty good variety of men," but encountering barriers with black men (being unapproachable) "because my butt's not big enough." Lacking a physical characteristic perpetually linked to black femininity as the authenticating feature of black women's bodies (Collins 2004), Juanita felt the lack of this "asset" jeopardized her status in this group. Her experience also contrasted with other respondents who were perceived as "too light to be liked."

Alicia, a black-identified black/white woman lived through this experiential curiosity of being "a little too dark" for a dark skinned man. In addition to "negotiating the color line" and gendered, racialized asymmetries in choosing identities and partners (Rockquemore 2002), Alicia also sorted through the mixed messages of significant others encouraging her to find a "real" (as opposed to inauthentic: multiracial) black man, and black male strangers who disqualified her blackness.

On the contrary, a different kind of malevolent border patrolling by potential partners took place in which some multiracial respondents were fetishized and over-celebrated for their mixture, sometimes the very respondents who others disqualified because of their skin color. Sa, for instance, served as a symbolic approximation of whiteness for many black men. Their comments illustrate the overvaluation of mixture:

> "I don't have to be your boyfriend or nothing like that, but can you please just have my kid?" and "If I ever sleep with you, I'm gonna get you pregnant and you're going to have my children." I've had guys tell me that, like….Yeah. It's crazy. Yeah, it's scary. It's really scary. And it's just like, "Yeah, all I want is

> like some kids. And I've had someone try to negotiate and barter with me, like, "Yeah, can you just have my child and like, I'll take care of it. You won't have to do anything, like I'll give you whatever you want.... You'll be straight. I just want a little girl with some pretty hair." I'm like, "Are you serious, dude?" Like you can get me pregnant and I can just pop it right on out, like, "No, I'm not going to have to carry this baby for 9 months, and go through stuff for 9 months." Like, "No, by all means, I'm not gonna have to do that [birth your child] so we can go ahead and work that out. Let's get the contract and the data."

The situational privilege of skin color currency (Bonilla-Silva 2002, 2003a,b) enabled Sa to become a commodity, with her body a site of negotiating the racial politics of reproducing the color line (Edwards, Carter-Tellison, and Herring 2004; Hunter 2005; Russell, Wilson, and Hall 1992; Thompson and Keith 2004). As a signifier of this mixture, Sa becomes a sexualized, racialized disposal object this man can use for his own good (Beauboeuf 2008). What is "just right" for one person or potential partner is "not quite right" for another, but nonetheless gets informed by a racial hierarchy that values whiteness and lightness over darkness (Bonilla-Silva 2002; Hunter 2004, 2005).

Other respondents were border patrolled by strangers because of their *actual* partners. For example, Tito, a black-identified Black/White multiracial man, noted, "The only time I've really gotten stares is if I was like dating a white girl." Similarly, Tracy, a Black/Asian multiracial woman, observed that her current white boyfriend who had previously dated a black woman got stigmatized for his pattern of interracial dating. People teased him about having "jungle fever," and questioned, "Why don't you ever date people of your own culture?" This term illustrates how the persistence of hypodescent (Khanna 2008) invited people to lump Tracy into a singular black (versus Asian) group.

In saying that he did not "see color" and that race "doesn't matter to me," Tracy's boyfriend invalidated Tracy's multiracial identity and denied the "continuing significance

of race" (Thomas 2008). Both espouse colorblindness while (unsuccessfully) demonstrating how inconsequential race is to their everyday lives. It is the slipperiness of colorblindness that allows Tracy to point out that, at their church, they are "the only interracial couple…out of 50 couples," yet wonder, "Why is everybody looking at us?" In contrast to her usual race-evasive posture, she had an awareness of "the guts" that interracial relationships required. She also seemed especially appreciative of the compliments the couple received ("So cute together"), and found them "pretty confirming." I joked with Tracy that even though they (as a couple) had to wait awhile, they are now being affirmed for having the "guts to go out and love!" To that, Tracy replied, "Yeah, I guess because they know we're not going to break up. It's [We're] pretty much here to stay. Yeah, might as well give in and say, 'I like it.'"

Finally, Tracy communicated some understandable suspicion in others who seemed falsely or overly nice or made grand gestures of inclusion (as if they were trying to publicly mask their privately-held opposition to interracial intimacy). Her reluctance or distrust of others partially stems from encountering malevolent border patrolling and opposition to her current interracial relationship. For example,

> A while back, this old lady in church, she kind of was like, "I really like you two. I wouldn't mind having you come over for dinner. We have a couple's dinner." We were just like, "Really?! I'm not going to get shot, am I? This is not a set-up, is it?" You know, she kept pushing me and I was like, "Okay."

In describing how dubious she was of the invitation being extended to her by the older white woman, Tracy admitted, "Had I gotten it from the colored family, it'd be like okay. But not the old white family." Interestingly, Tracy deployed a charged term that she ironically might otherwise fear this white woman would use (based on her description). Amidst the whitespaces (Horton 2006) of her everyday life, Tracy curiously adopted

some of their vernacular ("colored"), which suggests she has internalized racism to some degree.

Tracy also explained how borderism affected her identity and partner choice: "I guess, even now, I'm expected to date someone that's black. I think just because most black guys, they'll have a girl that's my complexion dating them. You know, I'm supposed to be dating a dark black guy. I'm not supposed to go back a few shades" (someone lighter than her). Her comments illustrate the way particular race and gender configuration set different expectations of identity and partner choice. That women are seen as "culture keepers" and that they are also policed more often than men, it is not surprising that she observes these patterns.

Because people frequently see her as black, they expect her to partner with someone similarly black. The imposition of "race-matching" (Dalmage 2000) or forming racially homogenous relationships (that look monoracial) remains the requisite order of the day. For multiracials, race-matching reminded them that the composite parts of their complex identities were not always visible and important to border patrollers working towards reproducing the color line by policing identities and romantic partner choice. Amidst this race-matching, some respondents fell under the radar of racial surveillance.

For example, Hannah, a white-looking biracial (Black/White) woman, noted that when dating a white men, she felt their relationship was "more acceptable," with the white men bearing the brunt of the gaze. In "black spaces," she was "made to feel out of place" because black men detected her racial mixture instead of misidentifying her as singularly white. As her appearance (skin color, hair style, clothing) and others' reflected

appraisals shifts, so does the intensity of the border patrolling. When in public with a black man, she will be stared at, "if I look white."

Similarly pressured to race-match, Sa also "felt *very* uncomfortable at times and it was only because other people made me uncomfortable." When in public [on a date] with her white boyfriend, she recalled the scrutiny of black men who stared at her as if to say, "'*Why* is she with him? She's too pretty to be with a white boy.'" These men primarily understood her as a commodity, viewing her racial ambiguity and beauty as an asset to blacks. Aligning with whites intensified the black male gaze that disapproved of Sa "wasting her pretty [and time] on whiteness." The policing panopticon of black men failed to see racial similarities, and instead registered racial differences. That is, because Sa did not look white, she was border patrolled for partnering with a white man.

This contrasted with Campbell's experience in that she had the benefit of looking "white with a tan." In appearing even more racially ambiguous, Campbell, a black/white biracial woman with a multiracial child of her own, publicly negotiated layers of borderism in relation to her interracial families of orientation and procreation. Though she doubted anyone ever read her relationships as "interracial" or thought, "'What is he doing with that white girl?'", she still encountered border patrolling. People puzzled over the relationships between family members of different complexions (and sexual identities as well), wondering out loud at times, "Oh, who's dating who? Who's the mom of whom?"

In sorting out "Who's with who" in Campbell's families, malevolent border patrollers attempted this "race matching" (Dalmage 2000). Because they policed racial borders, they falsely believed that the black adopted son of a white couple (Campbell's

coach and partner) was Campbell's boyfriend's son, because both boyfriend and son are black. Campbell recalled that one waiter once complimented, "'Oh, your son is so cute.'" Her coach, the adoptive mother, clarified, "'No, that's *my* child.' So everyone goes, 'Hmm.'" People consistently visually dislocate (Steinbugler 2005) white adoptive mother and black adopted child.

When with her immediate and extended family, Campbell must not only negotiate racial border patrollers, but any homophobia expressed in relation to her white mother's partnership with another woman. At these intersections of borderism, heterosexism, and homophobia, not saying anything may prove to be the most effective strategy for Campbell's families to respond. This is so because, as Steinbugler (2005) argues, "[F]or both heterosexual and queer interracial couples, public recognition risks harassment or violence (Steinbugler 2005: 425). She argues that visibility operates as a form of heterosexual privilege, and partially draws on the work of Carbado (2000), which "demonstrates that visibility may be one of the most fundamental heterosexual privileges. Yet for Carbado the hypothetical heterosexual couple, while not necessarily White, is implicitly monoracial. Research suggests that Carbado's list of privileges may not hold true for heterosexual interracial couples (Rosenblatt et al., 1995; Dalmage 2000; Childs 2001; Hildebrandt 2002)" (Steinbugler 2005: 427-8).

Steinbugler's work draws attention to these visibly invisible privileges, as well as the ways in which interracial couples are "visually dislocated" from one another (when others assume the couple is unrelated). Campbell's narrative captures the concept of visual dislocation but with a slight variation. While others may read her family of orientation and procreation as related, they generally border patrol along racial lines and

possibly do not even register same-sex couples as such. The racial and sexual diversity in her family compounds the visual dislocation visited upon her and her family members.

As I mentioned earlier, many respondents noted a fatigue and frustration regarding the racialized attention they felt in being under constant surveillance. Leiliani, a black Hawaiian, expressed these sentiments, pointing to the ways that people racially inspected her; the "constancy of the looks and stares" (Steinbugler 2005: 432); and her consistent visibility to others as "different" exhausted her. Caroline Streeter (2003:301) dubbed this phenomenon, "the hazards of visibility." An example of this inspection can come in the form of stares, which can be supportive, but is usually scrutinizing and suspicious. In describing her current long-term relationship with her black boyfriend, Leilani contrasted the nonchalant response of school peers with the more obvious and oppositional reactions from strangers. For example, when Leilani and her boyfriend are in public, holding hands:

> People stare because they think…they're just looking at this quote, unquote white girl with this black guy. And they're just like, "That's just wrong!"…Once I heard a [black] female…talking to her ([black] friend. She saw us together…and she was like, "Oh, hell no! There goes another one down the drain!"

The irony here is that Leilani, who primarily identifies as black (but also Black and Hawaiian or multiracial), encounters malevolent border patrolling from whites who misidentify her as white. They believe that she is and should not be border crossing because doing so jeopardizes white purity, and (mis)interpret her as "stealing another black guy" from others (presumably black women, based on the logic of borderism and homophilous relationships). Scales-Trent (1995) makes this point, disheartened that her visible whiteness puts her dark-skinned male partners in danger, in instances where the

couple is incorrectly perceived as an "interracial" couple instead of a black one, much like Leilani and her boyfriend.

Resolving the incongruence in the situation means that she must reveal to border patrollers that she is not white and that she is not exactly in an "interracial" relationship. In effect, she could ask, "Who do you think you're border patrolling?" since she is being patrolled as the white person she does not identify with or as; in addition to experiencing border patrolling from this angle, she also experiences invalidation resulting from the incongruence between her identity and appearance.

Our societal tendency towards an over-reliance on physical markers (skin color and hair texture) constructs Leilani as white, and people border patrol her accordingly. Were she to be perceived as she identifies, the border patrolling that she (and her boyfriend) face for being together would significantly dissipate, since the anxieties around double minorities and/or blacks partnering with one another remain negligible in comparison to that around interracial intimacy (see Brunsma 2006; Root 1992). Facing or anticipating this public opposition means that Leilani is aware of how different groups of people patrol her, individually or relationally, depending on the geographical location of social settings she inhabits.

> I get about the same reaction in a predominantly white or black setting, because if we were to go into a black area (or establishment), people would be trippin' thinking that a white girl was trying to steal another one of their men, and if we were to go to a white area (or establishment), they would just think, "What is this white girl doing with this black guy? That's *so* dangerous. She's going to hurt herself."

She talked about her anticipation in this way:

> At the beginning of our relationship, I was--whenever we would go out, I would just get myself ready for the stares, so that I wouldn't get angry and want to hit somebody. But now I'm just like, I really don't care what anybody else thinks.

> You don't do anything for me, and me worrying about what you think isn't going to help me reach my goals in life so I just really ignore it now….Before we go out to the mall, because you know you see a lot of people at the mall--before I was just like, "Go ahead and get ready, Leilani, because you already know it's at least going to be one person, if not many that's going to be staring at you all, giving you all looks, so just ignore it. Don't even get angry. Just calm down now."

Leilani pointed out above the price for being misread as an interracial couple in the public sphere. Her very description of the emotional work she engages in not only anticipating, but dealing with people's reactions, also pointed to the emotional work Hochschild (1983/2003) that border patrollers must engage in as well. Given how imperative many people feel presenting themselves as racially neutral, if not anti-racist, ideologically or in practice, people policing Leilani and others in real or ostensible interracial relationships must maintain the colorblind myth of support for such relationships. That is, her very experience of being stared at, whispered about, and otherwise scrutinized undermines some people's front-stage performance of race; race neutrality; and support of interracial relationships.

The reality that Leilani and others face point to the levels of discomfort that others feel about interracial intimacy, and betrays the belief that Americans are increasingly accepting of interracial relationships[54]. Instead, her experience exposed others' opposition, as expressed through the variety of behavior that she interprets as policing and that makes her feel like she is "supposed to be in a museum somewhere. Like it's just so spectacular to be looking at me and my boyfriend together holding hands."

Similar to Leilani, Alicia reported on the public reactions to her identity and "interracial" marriage.

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[54] Scholars such as Schuman, Steeh, Bobo, and Krysan (1997) exposed this disjuncture between racial attitudes and behaviors.

> In Florida, it was uncomfortable because a lot of Puerto Ricans think that Puerto Ricans should date only with their race. So of course people would see us out together, and kind of stare at him, not realizing he wasn't Puerto Rican. We would get stares. And then I would get stares from different females. And then I would get stares from black men, like, "Why is she with that white man?" and I've actually had a couple ask me that.

Alicia described her husband as light/white looking, "and his hair isn't curly. It's straight. If it grows out to length, it gets curly. But it's flat on his head." As a result of these physical characteristics, Puerto Ricans claimed him as Puerto Rican while black people claimed her as black. The consequent dilemma, "What are you two doing with each other?" shows not only how borderism operates, but also how the geography of race impacts how people of the same racial combination (black/white) get read differently depending on their location in relation to racially varying demographics. What looks like a monoracial couple in one place becomes interracial in another; or what gets tolerated or accepted in one place gets opposed and rejected elsewhere.

Depending on local, regional, and national histories then, the shift in race created a rift for people perceiving couples such as Alicia and her husband as interracial, given the level of opposition to interracial intimacy in any given area:

> It was *all* black and maybe the classes there were different and maybe that's why I don't experience it where I am but when we first moved here, we lived in that house for a year, and people, we would ride through the neighborhood, we would get stares…. And somebody pulled their gun out and was like, "White people don't belong over here." Oh, it was awful. But which was funny because my white friend, Brandi, stayed with us, and nobody said anything to her. But even when he (Alicia's husband) was by himself, people would make comments or they would stand in the road and not move out the way when they see him coming, like, "I run this street and you don't."

Rose, a white-identified woman with some Native American ancestry reflected on being border patrolled for dating a Hispanic man.

> He spoke Spanish a lot of the time and couldn't- his English was good but some of his sentences were backwards sometimes so it was a little bit awkward when we'd see other people that were Spanish because he'd start speaking to them in Spanish. And I was like, "What are they talking about?" So it was a little bit scary because I didn't know *any* Spanish….Even if they would speak English, he would use Spanish and that got on my nerves because I can't- and he tried to teach me, but I could understand just a little Spanish….And so it was awkward and then at work he'd be talking to the cooks in Spanish. And he'd be looking at me, (and I'm like) ,"Umm, what are you talking about? Stop doing this." And we went to the lake once, to hang out and lay on the beach, and just you know, have lunch or whatever. And there were a lot of Hispanic people there, and I felt really awkward because again with the Spanish speaking and people would look at us like, "Well, what is *she* doing here? *She* doesn't fit." (emphasis hers)

Contrary to discussions about the feelings of resentment that black women feel when they see black men with white women, as documented by Collins 1990, Spickard 1989, among others), some of the black-identified women in my sample reported feeling racial resentment from black men. Kelly reflected on reactions that she got in response to her dating a Laotian guy while both were in high school:

> I felt positive (about the reaction I got from my friends, people who knew us, people in my school but just sometimes when we'd go to the movie theater, I felt a little uncomfortable with like being seen with him because like, not with black females around but with black males. Of course! But I wouldn't get bad, negative stares from black females, like "Why is she with him?" But the black males would be, would give us bad looks, negative looks, to the point where I'd be like, "Let's just drop hands." Or "Let's just walk."…. I think he felt the same negative energy from people around but I eventually got over that and didn't care.

One remedy to the border patrolling behavior that Kelly and her then (Asian) boyfriend faced involved presenting themselves as friends, instead of romantic partners. Their mutual understanding of their change in behavior signaled their investment in one another. By minimizing the adverse attention in public, they could focus on their relationship (rather than reactions to it). By her own admission, the negative reactions the couple's presence in public provoked inspired them to "act kind of distant" but ironically, "if anything, it probably made us closer." This irony sours and undermines the

very intention of border patrollers who police racial categories to discourage and regulate such interracial intimacy.

As someone who dated men of diverse backgrounds, including Danish and Somalian; Cuban, black and white; German (white) and black; black and Asian (Filipino); Asian (Laotian), and Asian (Korean) and Italian ("who always dated black girls but his mother was against him dating black females"), Kelly was quite familiar with border patrolling. For example, she describes dating a mixed Korean and Italian guy in this way:

> We got along fine but he was 3 years older than me so he kinda knew my next step before I did, which wasn't a really good thing…And so, yeah, he, he looked like he had some Asian descent but he mainly looked more, more like white. But he lived with his mother and she was Korean. And she didn't approve of him dating black females. I never met her.

Here Kelly points to the kind of anti-black discrimination that persists in this country. As she rightly observes, if she encounters supportive opposition or outright opposition from his family, in the form of his mother never meeting her, she views this as a real impediment to maintaining a long-term relationship. Not only did Kelly register not meeting her boyfriend's mother as racial rejection, she also saw his dating history as suspect. She voices her concern about the relationships and suspicions to me in this way:

> I noticed that maybe sometimes he could've started off being rebellious with it, just because of the fact that's all he dated was black females. If he dated black females every now and then, you know, some Hispanic person, Latina, you know (she enunciates), then maybe you could say, "Oh, well, that was just his preference." You know? But because he only dated black females made me think, "Well, maybe he is just being rebellious against his mother."

The dubious relationship left her to resolve, "How far can you go when the parents won't even accept you?" Thus, Kelly was encountering malevolent border patrolling behavior from her boyfriend's family, in their reluctance or refusal to meet her. This inaction

clearly communicates the kinds of ideas and attitudes that they hold about blacks and interracial relationships, as far as their son is concerned. In addition, we could interpret Kelly's boyfriend's behavior, albeit disingenuous, as a form of protective border patrolling, in that he may have intentionally kept Kelly from his family, if he suspected that their meeting would be tenuous or worse. Finally, Kelly in some ways was border patrolling him because of his exclusive interest in black women. While admittedly problematic when any individual definitively narrows down their dating pool to one group, Kelly concluded that his behavior is suspect. Her perception may have been clouded by other issues in their relationship, but she was not willing to offer alternate explanations for him dating only black women. For example, one positive dating experience may have enabled him to enjoy dating other black women, although his family maintained their opposition. Thus, it is important to highlight the hidden potential or positive aspects of what looks problematic at first blush.

Conclusions

Interestingly, even though I interviewed a number of people of various racial combinations, most of my respondents reported being malevolently border patrolled by whites or blacks. This supports the idea of the white/black binary, or the white/black racial hierarchy, but could also suggest that, in the South, people mostly see social life through a white/black lens. In this section, I show how deeply people are invested in either maintaining this black/white racial binary, or the myth of fixed racial categories. I illustrate the differential reactions and what guides or motivates such behavior.

As Rosenblatt et al (1995) assert about black-white couples,

> It is sometimes difficult to separate racism directed at the African American partner from the racism directed at the couple. Frankenberg (1993, pp. 112-113)

> talked about antiblack racism "rebounding" on a white partner, meaning that even though the racism might be directed at the African American partner it retains enough force to strike and hurt the white partner.

Dalmage reiterated and developed this point in her work on black/white couples as well. I extended this by looking at how multiracial people negotiate this rebounding and various forms of borderism.

Physical appearance in terms of phenotype also serves as a bridge or barrier, depending on the racial reading or misreading of the multiracial person, and the individual's interpretations of that information. Misreading the multiracial often results in perceiving a phenotypically white multiracial person as white alone. This only or largely becomes problematic if/when that multiracial person asserts the other dimensions of her/his racial identity, consciousness or awareness and alliances change, or a shift in racial subjectivity occurs. In any or all of these situations or circumstances then, say, a white woman who partners with a phenotypically white man (who identifies himself as multiracial white and Latino) may later find herself, depending on her personal racism, confronting her own feelings about the multiracial men's mixed identity, whether or not he asserts a singular white identity, but particularly if he *doesn't* solely assert a white identity. In other words, the multiracial man's whiteness in physical appearance may allow him to gain access or entry into this white woman's world, possibly only until she gains additional information about his complete racial identity and heritage. Often, upon discovery of this complete picture, the white women would have to decide if dating someone more than white will do. If not, the Latino-ness becomes a liability and may allow the white woman to ignore or discredit the whiteness of the multiracial white/Latino man, thereby disqualifying him from the pool of potential eligible romantic

partners. This is not to say that the above speculation occurs for multiracial individuals who look white but, based on the narratives shared by my respondents, some negotiation takes place in which the multiracial person, if they look white, must confess or "come out" as also a person of color, or otherwise make an admission of being what Salvador Vidal-Ortiz (2004) considers a "white person of color."

For multiracial individuals, negotiating identity and partner choice with strangers remains a social space where validation and/or invalidation can take place. Without intimate details, strangers must resolve "seemingly contradictory categories" (Vidal-Ortiz 2004) and otherwise make sense of racial multiplicity, ambiguity, and fluidity as represented by multiracial people and their partners. While these interactions are sometimes positive, at other times negative, they often shape the racial sense of self that multiracial individuals develop. I turn next to examples of how significant others compound the borderism that multiracial members of families face. With more intimate insight and specificity about their racial identity and heritage, significant others engage in borderism in more influential and insidious ways, since their perceptions and positions are of more significant than that of strangers.

In this section, I attempted to illustrate how multiracial people encountered and often challenged border patrolling by strangers. In misperceiving "multiracial" people as members of "interracial" relationships, strangers policed both identity and partner choice. This experience is compounded by the ironic reality of many of my respondents encountering borderism from significant others, a topic I turn to next.

CHAPTER FOUR: BORDER PATROLLING FROM OUTSIDERS WITHIN/INSIDER OTHERS/INSIDERS WITHOUT

> With racial ideologies and practices so reliant on family for meaning, family writ large becomes race. Within racial discourse, just as families can be seen naturally occurring, biologically linked entities who share common interests, whites, Blacks, Native Americans, and other "races" of any given historical period can also be seen this way. The actual racial categories of any given period matter less than the persistent belief in race itself as an enduring principle of social organization that connotes family ties.[55]

As I discussed in the previous chapter, strangers police multiracial people and their partner choices. But what about significant others (Rosenberg 1979), especially members of interracial families, who might have had to confront borderism themselves? Do they see multiracial people in ways that contrast with the ways that multiracial people see themselves? What motivates this behavior, such that significant others police racial borders rather than promote racial blending? What possible explanations exist that contextualize this behavior, and what does this type of borderism sounds like in an era of colorblindness? How do multiracial people respond to this borderism, if and when they register that they are being border patrolled?

In my research, I found the following terms useful for describing different kinds of border patrolling than has previously been discussed: "outsiders-within" (Collins 1991), "insider-others" (Twine 2003, 2006) or "insiders without" (Reddy 1997). These three terms generally reference the marginality of individuals incorporated into a group who are often denied full membership. The latter two terms in particular have been used to describe the position of white women in interracial families (with black husbands and black/biracial children). I use the term as a way of showing that people intimately or

[55] Patricia Hill Collins (1998: 65-66)

relatively familiar with interracial families reportedly border patrol much like strangers did.

During the interview conversations with respondents, I discovered that significant others [as “outsiders-within” (Collins 1991), “insider-others” (Twine 2003, 2006) or “insiders without” (Reddy 1997) and beyond] also police the racial identities and partner choices of the multiracial respondents. Thus, respondents encountered borderism from strangers, as well as significant others. This produced a profound paradox in that people who had often experienced such policing perpetuated the process themselves. Their own firsthand encounters with borderism as immediate and extended members of interracial families did little to dissuade some significant others from patrolling respondents. Perhaps the policing that significant others experience explains why they participated in this process but for differing reasons.

This policing took on various forms, since respondents had cultivated and activated identities both consistent with and contrasting that of the ones nurtured and encouraged by significant others. Parents or partners of respondents in particular seemed the most vocal and putatively influential significant others. At times, they openly invalidated the respondents’ identities, and rejected or disapproved of their partner choices, while being more covert at other times. Sometimes, they supported these identities, endorsing the border blending in the respondents’ lives.

Exercising autonomy in the dating, mating, and marriage market also meant that many respondents were policed about their short- and long-term partner choices. While many were supported in their partner choices, several others had to confront the racial ideologies of significant others who couched their opposition in “concerns.” By cloaking

their concerns in digestible discourses of cultural maintenance (i.e. expressing a desire to keep the family line or heritage intact), significant others often went unchallenged in their racial attitudes and beliefs about; behavior towards; and racial ideologies and mythologies they held about various racial groups. They also appeared to have the respective respondents' best interests in mind, when in fact they prioritized their own.

Using their "insider other" status as a means of deflecting racial prejudices, some members of interracial families discarded charges of racism as inconsequential or unfounded. As some respondents reported, these significant others deployed their position within, or presumed alliances to, interracial families as evidence of their anti-racism. Based on the accounts of some respondents, significant others often relied on colorblind narratives to mask more malevolent forms of border patrolling (Bonilla-Silva 2003a).

In this chapter, I work to show how respondents experience this peculiar kind of border patrolling. I argue that members or allies of interracial families, as significant others to the respondents, are just as likely as others to harbor problematic racial ideologies or engage in questionable practices regarding race (Ali 2003; Bonilla-Silva 2003a; May 1999; Root 2001). How could members of their own interracial relationships possibly endorse border patrolling behavior? How could the usual targets of borderism become border patrollers themselves?

From the privileged and protected position of the insider other in interracial families, these individuals express questionable views[56] that would otherwise be publicly

[56] When Bonilla-Silva (2002: 15) says, "The purpose…is not to demonize whites or label them 'racist,' I think of this in relation to borderism from the insider-other. Rather than "hunting for racists," I develop this conceptually to show how harbingers of race mixing assumed to be supportive of interracial relationships sometimes discourage "crossing the color line."

and perhaps privately challenged.[57] In escaping or eliding scrutiny, border-patrolling insider-others reinforce the very racial borders that they blend through their membership in interracial families of procreation and orientation.

Using their position as evidence of inclusion, outsiders within are buffered by the illusion that individuals in interracial relationships or families cannot be racist, whether or not they make their partner the enviable "exception" to the rule. This puts a different kind of "illusion of inclusion" (Gallagher 2004a; Collins 1998) into play. My contention is that the circulation of racial ideologies, myths, and stereotypes impacts everyone, not simply strangers in the respondents' lives. Root (2001) makes this point when she raises the question, "To what degree have the adult children of these [racially homogenous] families internalized some of the deep-seated fears that fuel racial prejudice? That a person marries someone of another race does not necessarily mean that he or she has fewer racial prejudices than someone who does not" (Root 2001:101). Suki Ali (2003) reiterates this point, drawing from personal experience to illustrate Root's point about people privately harboring deeply buried racial prejudices; as well as how members of interracial families accommodate mixture to limited degrees.

Choosing to interracially marry neither eradicates nor addresses such prejudice, especially in this Post-Civil Rights Era of colorblindness. In fact, interracial relationships or marriages of particular combinations, specifically white and honorary white (Latino/a, Asian, and Native American) easily accommodate the internalization of such prejudices.

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[57] Often they deflect accusations of racism or dismiss such charges, issued in response to their problematic perspectives and positions on racial issues, by announcing their membership in interracial families as evidence to the contrary. For interracially-involved whites in particular, participation in an interracial relationship can but does not always compromise group position and privilege. Furthermore, this involvement can strategically be employed to symbolize one's alleged anti-racism. Racism or racist ideologies that contradict seemingly anti-racist practices, as symbolized in part through interracial involvement or relationships are not incompatible in the discursive space of contradictory colorblindness that flexibly accommodates these inconsistencies to solidify white supremacy.

This occurs in instances where honorary white members of interracial relationships become so much “like white” that they are deracinated, voluntarily or involuntarily assimilate, and otherwise dissolve or deny any difference from the “invisible” reference point of whiteness. In these situations, border patrolling of multiracial individuals often involves efforts to dissolve or deny their racial difference as well; and also to dissuade them from embracing difference in romantic relationships through the partners they choose.

The discourses produced by significant others who border patrol differ from that of strangers, in that significant others often have more information about the specificities of the respondents’ racial backgrounds. With this knowledge and greater familiarity, significant others have more detail with which to police and reinforce racial borders. In my analysis, I found that respondents shared narratives describing four types of border patrolling of identities and partner choices: benevolent; beneficiary; protective; and malevolent. While not mutually exclusive categories, these types of border patrolling capture different discursive practices, motivations and behaviors.

Benevolent border patrolling involves significant others politely and perhaps unintentionally policing the identities and partner choices of respondents. Beneficiary border patrolling involves interpreting mixture through the lens of higher social status, with beneficiary border patrollers working to see respondents in a “better” light. By encouraging multiracial people to align with whatever racial group gives them the most privileges and benefits, beneficiary border patrollers often invalidate respondents’ racial identities, and encourage them to partner with people who will improve or enhance access to social and material privileges.

By encouraging respondents to choose singular racial identities, and/or form homophilous and racially homogamous relationships, protective border patrollers worked to buffer respondents from the racial surveillance often targeted towards multiracial people. Protective border patrolling also involves trying to prepare respondents for potential or actual encounters with racial discrimination; and builds on the assumption that discrimination and disadvantage will be inevitable for respondents of racial mixture. A particular variation of protective border patrolling involves parental border patrolling (but could also extend to extended relatives as well in some cases). Parental border patrolling often operates under the guise of cultural maintenance, with parents communicating the importance of being "culture keepers." Occasionally, messages about cultural maintenance are in tension with families' level of assimilation. That is, many interracial families have sometimes undergone some cultural dilution, which some parents then appear to recover by encouraging their racially mixed children to identify with the minority culture(s) and race(s). Finally, malevolent border patrolling involves more blatant and explicit invalidation of identities and partner choices. Significant others who border patrol in this way used more explicit, harsh, or abrasive language, such as racial epithets and other racially charged words to disqualify the respondents; interpreted the respondents as asserting inappropriate or inauthentic identities and making racially disloyal partner choices; imposed their assessments of the "right" choices on respondents; and seemed more racially divisive and invested in the racial divide.

When Significant Others Border Patrol Identities

The borderism that stems from significant others often involves resolving potentially competing perspectives of the family members' perception of the multiracial

person's identities. A part of this process involves identity negotiation, such that individuals with multiracial ancestry and fluid identities must resolve any incongruence or dissonance within their families. The very identities that these individuals choose to assert both reflect and sometimes deviate from the racial socialization they receive from parents, and the social identities imposed by others.

Individuals who challenge this socialization and expectation often arrive at different identities than the ones they are taught to embrace (i.e., choosing a racial identity that contrasts with the one imposed by one's immediate and/or extended family). For example, this can involve reclaiming identities previously denied some family members in a recovery of mixture, such that "multiracial" will survive until the next generation (Bratter 2007), even after its death in the previous one. That is, it is important to recognize how family members and friends are themselves socialized to assert a singular and stable racial identity, even when they themselves are racially mixed, or have shifting subjectivities. Because of these social pressures to choose, family members in interracial families are not unlike more racially homogeneous families, in that they see themselves in certain ways, racially. In addition, they also interact with each other and others outside of the family in part on the basis of these racial subject positions.

Benevolent Border Patrolling: Who Said Anything About Race?

Often the experience of growing up in an "interracial" family means that its members learn how to navigate race and the racial surveillance that stems from others' reactions to racial mixture. As I discovered during my interviews with individuals of various racial combinations, not all multiracial children grow up in interracial families, or in ones that are consistently so. Family dissolutions and reconfigurations (related to

marriage, divorce, separation, birth, and death) alter the composition of these units. Just as families blend in terms of membership, they blend racially as well as times. Like the shifting of racial identities, families sometimes shift in their understandings of race, individually and collectively.

While I had previously recognized the fluidity of racial identities, I neglected to do the same for families. As a result, I acknowledge here how a family might think of itself as interracial at one time and then not at another. This shifting, "situationally interracial" family also impacts how its multiracial members are border patrolled (do they blend in more or less?). Even within families that do not appear interracial, it is important to acknowledge how members might claim similar racial identities or divergent ones.

For many of my respondents, learning about race did not necessarily involve learning to be mixed. In wanting to maintain the illusion of racial purity and singularity, some respondents were reportedly told, as children, to identify as everyone else did in the family. The racial lacuna that existed in many of the respondents' families and households inspired respondents to ask questions and discuss the "mysteries of histories" in their racial backgrounds. Sometimes this silence stemmed from extended family members' opposition to interracial unions within families. At other times, the silence numbed painful pasts; embarrassing family details; or other specificities that families wanted to conceal.

Many part black respondents noted how infrequently family members discussed race with or around them. For example, Sa, a young woman with Black, Blackfoot Indian, and British/Brazilian parentage, noted, "They don't talk about race." In learning

about the racial rifts within her family resulting in part from some opposition to her parents' interracial marriage, Sa discovered that being multiracial meant living on racial fault lines. She described how colorism created conflict with and accusations from relatives resentful of her position higher up in the racial hierarchy (Bonilla-Silva 2003b) and the beauty queue (Hunter 2005). In being viewed as "better than," she felt policed, but no regret, for being multiracial.

Other respondents reported a generalized silence in their family surrounding racial issues, a lacuna I argue operates as a form of benevolent border patrolling.

> My grandmother just never talked about it. We don't ask questions. She gets upset, to the point of tears. So we just don't talk about it. (Keisha, a black-identified woman with Native American ancestry)

> Oh, with my father…he's quiet, isolated, to himself. He never really brought that up. So when I did find out, it was through my grandmother. My grandmother started to explain things about her husband. He passed away. She started showing me pictures and things like that. When I looked, it was kind of curious the way he looked to me. He looks to me like an Indian, curly hair, high check bones, and he was very white-skinned. So he's, and she's dark-skinned. So my father took, I took the complexion of my father, which is brown. That is how I started to understand things more because my father has features that I wondered about. They are not typical African American features, so when my grandmother would talk about it, she would explain things. It made a lot of sense. (Vanessa, a black-identified young woman with black, Cherokee, and white parentage)

While no one volunteered generous amounts of information, they did indulge Vanessa's curiosity to her minimal satisfaction. With most of the family photos in black and white, Vanessa posited, "You have to ask more than you want to know." Her persistence helped her figure herself out more through the information. I argue that the silence of racial socialization such as hers facilitated her singular black identity, but discouraged her from claiming a multiracial Native American, Black, and White identity. Generalized silence became a form of border patrolling in its failure to acknowledge the complexities and

richness of people's heritages. This familial reticence masked or distorted racial specificities and centered singularity, constructing families and respondents as "monoracial."

That families conveyed these messages of monoraciality to respondents meant that the latter were implicitly and/or explicitly discouraged from claiming their preferred racial identities, a reality that contrasts with contemporary arguments couched in neoliberal ideas about identity as free choice. For example, Wallenstein (2002:250) argues,

> This is America. You can be anyone you want to be. At least, that is far more true after *Loving* than it was before. The notion of changeability has come to apply more to race than it long did, so racial identity is more like religion, occupation, and place of residence—more subject to individual choice. Yet it is generally far, of course, from simply a matter of individual choice. And in any case, how to identify oneself when a simple category is demanded and none seems to apply? Finding a solution to this question, many people have come to call themselves "biracial" or "multiracial."

Despite his contention, respondents with part black parentage or ancestry felt less freedom to choose (Lee and Bean 2004; Rockquemore and Brunsma 2002). The persistence of hypodescent (Khanna 2008), coupled with many of these parents' participation in the Civil Rights Movement, provided some context for the benevolent border patrolling that many respondents faced. Hearing accounts of how parents encountered opposition of their own (in terms of identity, partner choice, or both) served as a source of pride in blackness, but also a subtle disinvestment in mixture. Some respondents challenged this disinvestment, and relied on their (limited) knowledge of familial racial mixture to delimit, rather than limit, the ways that they asserted and performed their racial identities. This delimiting of racial identity happened within and across racial categories.

Some respondents noted that significant others benevolent policed their racially ambiguous appearances:

> A lot of times during the winter, one friend in particular, she's always like, "Girl, I can't wait until summertime so you can get your tan back, because you look pale." And I'm like, "Okay, thank you. You look pale, too." This is a black friend. She's light skinned so I told her that she was pale, too (Leilani, Black Hawaiian woman).

This exchange illustrates how some friends of multiracial individuals benevolently border patrol them. As a black Hawaiian with red hair, light skin, and freckles who has been misread as "Puerto Rican, Mexican, Colombian, and Polynesian," Leilani is often told that she looks white and is seldom read as black.

> Very few people have recognized me as being black. Actually just yesterday this [black] girl told me, "I just thought you were a very light-skinned black female." But there's very few instances of that…. Sometimes I feel like people that I do consider to be my friends who are black try to discredit my blackness because I'm not fully black…. It's just that "I was raised by a black mother. You were raised by a black mother. So really, what's the difference?"

Because Leilani presumably appeared "too much like white" for her black friends to accept her as black, she highlighted commonalities between herself and her friends, rather than reinforce the racial divide. She tried to forge connections, which she felt would have been easier to cultivate had her father been black, as she would have been viewed as "more authentically black."

Like Leilani, David faced benevolent border patrolling from friends from graduate school in Miami.

> When they would see me take off my shirt, you know, early in the Spring-- "Oye, [David], el sol es gratis." Which means, "David, sunlight's free." And so my whiteness as a phenotype has always been you know, sort of on me in my home. Now, in school, especially later in life, there was always this ambiguous, "What is, what are you?" Asking my college roommate, "What is he? Is he Lebanese? Or what is he?" That kind of stuff. So obviously, there was always some external, not sure where to put me, um, and so I grew up with that biracial

> experience but I've changed the way I've owned that as I just became more aware of the power and privilege issues. (David, white Latino man)

Other respondents echoed these sentiments, noting how their racial ambiguity and legible multiraciality invited friends to benevolently border patrol her blackness. She explained:

> [My friends] discredit my blackness. "Well, you're not really black, so what are you talkin' about?" Like anytime like I speak out on any issue that relates to black people… Like they might bring up a little candy, something that you used to eat when you were younger, and they were like, "You weren't eating that over there in England so you can't identify." Like it'll be something like that, but it'll be something really racial like, "Oh, well, you're not all the way black, so you don't understand….. You're multiracial." And I'm like, "Oh, really. They [strangers] definitely don't see me as "multiracial." They definitely identify me as a black female. So if anything, I'm going to get it just as bad as any other black female would.

Having her blackness contested actually validated her border identity. In observing the different tastes in music and clothing, as well as the "wide array of different cultures within your background," Sa's friends came to validate her multiracial identity by authenticity-testing her blackness. This point has seldom been celebrated in the literature. Significant others border patrol benevolently often by teasing or joking with the respective respondent about their authenticity of a singular race; this borderism can be both validating and invalidating of identity at once, depending on the context and the preferred racial identities of the respondents.

That Sa seemed frustrated by her friends' discrediting her blackness, she also worked to assert a multiracial identity throughout the interview. She never articulated similar sentiments about the other parts of her heritage, which suggests a particular orientation and sensitivity to blackness. Her protean identity (that shifts between multiracial; black; and black/Blackfoot Indian/British/Brazilian) allowed significant others to border patrol, which invalidated her blackness, while validating her multiracial

identity. This validation emerges as one ostensible benefit of being benevolently border patrolled, albeit at the risk of simultaneously facing invalidation.

Beneficiary Border Patrolling: Multiracial Means "White Like Me"?

Because multiracial children often learn about how they *should* identify racially and ethnically through significant others such as their parents and/or primary caregivers, the mixed messages embedded in racial socialization validate or invalidate these identities.[58] This validation and invalidation gets expressed through racial redistricting (Gallagher 2004a) and what I call "beneficiary border patrolling." Beneficiary border patrolling intends to "expand racial boundaries" to envelop multiracial children into the racial group of higher social status, most ideally white- the most privileged racial group (Bonilla-Silva 2003a) and envied social location.

An example of what this type of borderism looks like comes from feminist writer Cherrie L. Moraga (1989), who writes about this precarious negotiation of being both brown and white and implicitly learning about the currency of whiteness through her brown-skinned mother:

> No one ever quite told me this (that light was right), but I knew that being light was something valued in my family (who were all Chicano, with the exception of my father). In fact, everything about my upbringing (at least what occurred on a conscious level) attempted to bleach me of what color I did have. Although I was fluent in it, I was never taught much Spanish at home. I picked up what I did learn from school and from over-heard snatches of conversations among my relatives and mother (Moraga 2002: 25).

Contrary to the literature on shifting whiteness (Woodfork 2005), and other variations of whiteness including "off white" (Fine, Weis, Powell, and Wong 1997); "not quite white" (Lazarre 1997; Reddy 1997; Rothman 2006); and "honorary black" (Twine

[58] Little literature exists that specifically discusses how "interracial" families' racial socialization of multiracial children. Rockquemore and Lazloffy (2005) serve as one notable exception.

2007), or "black by proxy," other evidence exists, in the form of racial redistricting, that challenges the presence of this shifting. Racial redistricting illustrates a resistance to racial shifting, exposing parental preferences to maintain and extend their own (white) racial privilege to their multiracial children (Gallagher 2004a). Brunsma (2005) elaborated on this point, but both he and Gallagher neglected to acknowledge the agency that multiracial children themselves possess, expressed when challenging, rejecting, and resisting the privilege bestowed on them through racial redistricting. This work restores the polyvocality of multiracial people, by showing the variation in their preferred racial identities (Rockquemore 2005), often in contradistinction to the racial redistricting many parents practice.

In facing beneficiary border patrolling, many of the part white/honorary white respondents reported growing up with "white like me" (Gallagher 2000; Wise 2003; Dalmage 2004b) parents. For example, Louise, a white/Asian multiracial woman, noted her whitewashed identity that eventually shifted into a multiracial one:

> As far as I recall, I identified as white, I wasn't aware that I was half Korean and even if I was told that I was half Korean, I didn't really understand the concept behind that--that that meant that, "Oh, there's an Asian country named Korea, and these are the culture values." I didn't know, I knew nothing…I didn't have a schema for that. So I didn't know what that was. My real father, my biological father, is a hard-core racist, which people find really ironic considering he married outside of his race…. And I grew up, mostly white, with a mostly white racial identity. I went to school, and a lot of people used to make fun of me about my eyes, and you know the way I looked, and I never understood, I literally was colorblind. I looked at myself, I was like, "I don't see how I'm different." I looked at a white girl, "I don't see how I'm different." My hair is dark or whatever. You know? I didn't see the slanted eyes. "What do you mean, 'slanted eyes'? I don't know what you're referring to. You know what I mean?" I was like, "My eyes are just like *yours*!" You know? I had no comprehension of what they were talking about.

Without her Korean mother equipping her with information about culture, race, and heritage, Louise had no ethnic or racial road map with which to navigate her multiracial identity, or understand her multiracial features (see Nakazawa 2003 for more). Her "double eyelids" and other features betrayed her Korean-ness, marking her as more white than Asian (see Kaw 2003 for discussion of double eyelid surgery). Several White/Asian respondents articulated their own experiences with beneficiary border patrolling:

> My dad, I remember one time, my dad was like, "Well, if it (a form or application) makes you pick one, just put white because I'm white[59]. My mother was like, "Whatever, it doesn't matter." And then later it was, "Well, you'll get more tax breaks if you don't put white." So you'll always put the other. You'll always put Asian if you can. So that's the point of it now…. But I still put both. I still put both anyway. (Lexie, White/Asian Korean woman)

This information contradicted the message her mother delivered, that Lexie should opt for Asian where possible. Without blatantly doing so, each parent promoted his/her own race as preferable, encouraging Lexie to use her multi-racial/ethnic heritage to her benefit in additive, not multiplicative parts. In her interpretation, her parents never explicitly policed her behavior, or said "anything like, 'Well, around me you do this, and around her, you do this.'"

While she could not recall her parents racializing her or comments that they made around her, she nevertheless offered examples where they decidedly racialized her by pointing out (however humorously) behaviors that they felt were characteristic of her composite parts.

> There's this Korean dish called kimchi. It's hot and spicy, the cabbage dish. And so my dad would be like, "That's your kimchi Asian hot temper going through you. You got that from your mom." There's stuff like that. And she (respondent's mother) does that, too. She'll be like, "You have hairy legs because of your dad." But that's about the extent of it.

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[59] Lexie later added, "When he said that, it was more of a convenience thing. He said it like, 'Oh, just put that down.'"

In what Myers (2005) might describe as a "caricature" of brownness, Lexie's father highlighted her "kimchi Asian hot temper," and discursively divided Lexie into halves: one part white, the other Asian. This divisiveness could be read as a form of border patrolling in that her father's racetalk discursively differentiated her brownness from his whiteness, disallowing her from being the "same/difference" (both/and, or neither).

With an assimilated or "honorary white" mother, Lexie missed out on opportunities to learn about or be exposed to different aspects of Korean culture. Most of the White/Asian respondents lamented their lack of language ability and cultural connection. Lexie expressed both "a strong desire" to learn, and a disappointment in not knowing Korean. Contrary to Kibria's (2002) work that suggested parents promoted and cultivated a racialized ethnicity in their second-generation Korean and Chinese children, Lexie possessed more of a distilled ethnicity, partly because she felt denied opportunities to successfully acquire Korean language skills.

> Like we get on my mom all the time. Like, "Why didn't you teach us?!" And from what I understand, it was because my dad didn't know Korean. He knew the basics, so my mom got to try to teach us. When we were of the age, the same age we were learning English, we would go to our dad, trying to ask for something in Korean, and he didn't understand, and my dad was like, "I'm not going to *not* understand what my children are telling me, so stop teaching them."

Again, Lexie's comments illustrate her parents' desire to engage in racial redistricting, ensuring that she would enjoy honorary white or white status. Furthermore, Lexie's expressed disappointment in not knowing Korean counters this parental imposition of whiteness. To ensure that whiteness wins (that she would enjoy white or honorary white status and attendant privileges), Lexie's parents engaged in racial redistricting, a kind of

beneficiary border patrolling. This practice reinforced her whiteness and minimized her mixture and brownness (or Asian-ness).

Peg, an Asian American-identified transracially adopted white/Asian (Korean) multiracial woman, similarly described a familial silence and secrecy, a racial reticence that further disrupted her knowledge of her Asian heritage. The lack of balanced information, impeded by her adoption, inhibited Peg's immersion in racially mixed spaces; limited her access to Koreans; and exposed her predominantly to whites. Peg observed, "I lost the language. My mom didn't want me to speak the language anymore. There was more of an emphasis there to be more, without explicitly [saying so], like being white." With her interracial family internalizing external pressures to assimilate, Peg communicated to me a preferred racial identity that encompasses both parts of her heritage. In feeling border patrolled by her family, among others, and wanting to explicitly disrupt the expanding boundaries of whiteness, Peg rejected white privilege by affirming, "I do *not* want to be like white." Her personal experience confronting racial discrimination and stereotypes situated within racetalk regarding Asians confirmed her compromised "honorary white" status. When a stranger told Peg that she reminded him of an Asian American comedienne/actress (Margaret Cho), she quipped, "Am I always going to be compared to Margaret Cho?"

Though she did not interpret her experiences from Peg's perspective of being whitewashed, Miki mentioned growing up in an interracial family where her white (Irish Scottish) mother and multiracial White/Asian (Japanese) father did not discuss race matters much. Miki explained that she thought her father, who "identifies more with the white and that's why it's never come up as far as what I should identify as," embraced his

whiteness more because "it's easier to be one thing." Indeed, "It's easier to be one thing" when that oneness is whiteness. Notably, her narrative made whiteness fade into normative invisibility by suggesting that her parents would prefer that she identify herself as white, even as she indicated that she "wouldn't change" being mixed since "it's not a bad thing."

This racial socialization contrasts with that outlined by Kibria (2002) in which Asian parents cultivate racial and ethnic pride, communicate cultural values, and so on. Given the racial/ethnic thinning Yancey spoke of in relation to Asians and Latinos who interracially marry, the lack of racial socialization makes sense. Unlike white mothers of black/white biracial children, white parents of white/Asian and white/Latino/a children often racially socialize through erasure. This in turn often translates into a kind of border patrolling in that the omission of racial discourses and lessons prevents the passing on of information, while denying, concealing, and negating the multiplicity that exists in individuals and in the family.

For example, Curlis noted that her family seldom spoke about its' diversity; regretted that her father talked little about being Puerto Rican[60]; and expressed disappointment of their criticism of her desire to assert a multiracial identity. She admitted,

> I didn't ever realize that he could speak Spanish until one day, I don't even know how old I was, we were in a Mexican restaurant and he goes to order and he's like, "Oh, blah, blah, blah." You know? He starts going on (placing his order in Spanish), and I'm like, "Dad, what was that?!" and he's like, "Oh." And he never taught us Spanish and um, I guess he has the olive skin tone, but it's very light and he has the dark everything else.

[60] The only Puerto Rican in the small town that he grew up in, her father assimilated into American whiteness.

Aside from the signifiers of race and ethnicity that Curlis used to detect some ancestry other than European whiteness in her father, she had little way of knowing that her father was "more than white." In the same way that others often "read between the lines" to decode racial and ethnic ambiguity in others, Curlis conducted her own ethnic/ racial "reading between the lines" to figure her father out. Her discovery of her father's Spanish language ability initially puzzled her, as did her parents' efforts to discourage her from identifying as both white and Puerto Rican (or Latina). By claiming to be both, Curlis refused to be border patrolled by her family:

> My parents and I disagree a lot about my race because, um, especially as I got older, like at the end of my high school career I was like, "Well, you know, I'm mixed." I told my parents, so "I'm mixed. I finally figured it out. I'm not just white. I'm not Hispanic. I'm mixed." And they were like, "But 'mixed' is mixed white and black." And I was like, "No, no. It can be anything and uh, my parents were like, "No, you are white," and my dad, who is completely Puerto Rican, I was like, "But you are not even white." And he was like, "I am white. I'm a white Hispanic."

She also rejected the unearned privileges that inspire racial redistricting in the first place. In claiming to be what Salvador Vidal-Ortiz (2004) considers a "white person of color," Curlis contested the whiteness bestowed on her. Her narrative showed how she tried to resolve the tension stemming from her family's reluctance to openly embrace their racial and ethnic heritage. Instead of keeping her Puerto Rican-ness optional or symbolic, she incorporated it into her identity and presentation of self. Rather than straighten her hair or conceal her racial and ethnic mix, she preferred activating her mixture in social situations, to form friendships and alliances with others. This public acknowledgement reportedly frustrated her father, and her family more generally, as they believed she should assert a singularly white identity. In challenging her parents, Curlis countered their borderism and affirmed her multiracial identity.

Her discussion exemplified the very power struggles that take place in families, as parental racial designations contrast with the identity the multiracial (adult) child asserts. Resolving these disjunctures sometimes resulted in the multiracial child encountering identity invalidation, as the family members prohibited or disregarded the multiracial individual's desire to assert this multiplicity. She added, "So to him being Hispanic has nothing to do with your race. It's just there are white Hispanics and black Hispanics and me being Latino (to him) has nothing to do with your race."

Many part Latino multiracial respondents expressed these encounters with beneficiary border patrolling. For example, Pilar, a light-skinned Black/White woman, noted that she discovered more information about her white-identified "mixed" (Spanish/German) mother. Hearing her mother talk to her relatives in Spanish and prepare Spanish food at meals prompted Pilar to ask her mother questions about race and family biography, and what seemed like a symbolic Spanish ethnicity. Like many respondents revealed in their interviews, Pilar was finally told about her Spanish relatives [including her "full Spanish" maternal grandmother whose house she visited where relatives made Spanish language and food choices. Her new understanding of her mother and grandmother impacted the way she developed her own racial sense of self, since she primarily understood her identity until then as Black/White biracial.

Other respondents communicated similar but varied experiences with beneficiary border patrolling. For instance, Jamila, an Italian Hispanic woman, asserted a racially, ethnically, and culturally mixed identity that a previous boyfriend collapsed into whiteness. He said, "'I think of you as a white girl who speaks Spanish.'" Jamila lamented, "He sees me as one thing that does another. I am two things. I want to be two

things." Andrew, a Black/White biracial man, expressed similar sentiments, noting that his primarily white group of friends, "tell me I'm white." Though this assessment is not altogether inaccurate or false (since he was adopted into an interracial family that consists of biracial siblings, white siblings, and white adoptive parents), it is incomplete. "I can't just pick one, when I am two. I have to pick two [races]."

In the same way, we can understand Curlis saying that she is mixed because she, too, wants to be "two things" together, at once, rather than a "white person who speaks Spanish." These respondents wanted validation of what David called "a blended perspective," or a blended identity that does not compartmentalize or dissect them into halves. They desire and deserve to be whole, but instead found invalidation of their multiracial identities in the whitespaces (Horton 2006) they inhabit in their everyday lives. In being misidentified as primarily white, instead of more than white, these respondents endured the expanding boundaries of whiteness that enveloped them as honorary whites (Gallagher 2004a).

The space that accommodated honorary whiteness proved a dangerous one, in that respondents who blended into whiteness, by approximating it through clothing (Gallagher 2003b), language, friendship, or other choices, were granted a pass. Being able to interact easily and casually with whites also served as criteria for honorary whiteness. For example, Tracy, a Filipina black woman, gets "classified as a white person" for spending considerable time with whites. Otherwise seen as "white by proxy," Tracy only compromises this "whiteness by association" or honorary whiteness when she behaves in what some of her friends see as stereotypically black.

In describing this behavior, Tracy herself caricatured blackness by invoking her own stereotypes about aggressive, angry, almost assaultive black people. When playing soccer with friends, she observed, "Everyone knows that I'm black" because "I'll bring out my attitude"; "get mean instantly"; and "just turn on this radar, and I'm automatically pissed off when I play." To deflect from the problematic perpetuation of angry black athleticism, Tracy volunteered an explanation that protects both her and her white friends from appearing racist:

> I'm always the smallest person, so I have to act like I'm mad, so that way people don't push me over…. For me, it's more like compensating for my size because I don't wanna get beat up. You know? But most of the time, I get, "Man, your black side came out." Because you know, when people tackle me, or something, I'll get up and I'll push them, or I'll threaten to punch them or something. Naturally, that gets you in trouble, but I won't back down. I have this hard core, "I'm going to whoop your ass" attitude. So most people are like, "Oh, you were ready to scrap. Your black attitude came out." I just gotta make sure I don't get beat up.

Tracy's narrative exposed how her white friends racialized competitive athleticism (arguably heightened by the intentional performance of "blackness") and invoked racial stereotypes of blacks as aggressive, assertive, and defensive in viewing her "black side" coming out. Sadly, Tracy reified these stereotypes and their stereotypical way of thinking when she volunteered this: "But then when I cry and I'm sensitive, I'm white, because I'm so sensitive." Amidst the stereotypical thinking and border patrolling of Tracy's multiracial identity, her friends ignored her Filipina heritage, at the expense of recognizing her blackness. When they did recognize her as Asian, they did so in similarly stereotypical and problematic ways because Tracy eats "rice everyday."

> So everyone's like, "You chink. You have to eat your rice everyday."…. They'll complain when they wanna cook dinner for me, but when I tell them what I want, they're like, "Why do you always want to have rice?" So "You chink." So that gets thrown in when I eat, because I eat Chinese food, or Asian food, everyday

> just about. So I guess, in my eating habits, my Asian side comes out…. And…I think it always boils down to the music I like to. A lot of people tell me if it wasn't for my music choices… Because I listen to classic rock, because as quick as I'm able to listen to classic rock, I'll turn on a good rap song and go booty dancing with my friends. So, I'll shake my ass. It doesn't bother me.

Tracy so effortlessly and smoothly shifted from her friends' stereotyping to her own that she appeared to have little cognizance of her own complicity in the act:

> My hair is naturally curly so if I don't put any products in it, just to tame down the frizz, "Oh, she's black," because it's so nappy looking when I put it in a bun or something. So, I'm black. And it all depends on how I dress when I'm in public. If I show more cleavage, I'm black. If I don't show, if I show just the right amount, I'm conservative. And I'm white. In my political views, everyone says that I'm white. So I'm just like, "Okay, whatever. I'm sorry I voted for Bush. But you can get over it." And even my boyfriend is anti-Bush, and I'm like, "I'm sorry. Y'all can get over it. You're still breathing….You can vote. You can do whatever you please. Just don't hurt me."

Tracy's humor consistently diffused racially tense yet astute observations that betrayed her colorblind discursive style. That she referenced fearing bodily harm in more than one instance suggests her heightened awareness of the risks involved in interracial intimacy (Steinbugler 2005), particularly intensified by her hypervisible mixture and brownness. Her experiences exposed the extent to which others viewed her against the stereotypes or granted her honorary white status because of her relationship with a white man, in conjunction with her behavior, what many interpreted as "acting white."

Rachel, a white and Native American identified woman, also discussed how she felt about friends who border patrol her and "see her as white":

> Yeah, it pisses me off royally….It's not that I'm not proud to be white because I'm really proud of my mom's heritage but don't discredit my other half too just because I look white to you.…People will accuse me of acting Indian. I don't know why. Because we have "time issues." Or if I talk about eating venison, people are like, "Eewww." I'm like, "Why? Deer meat's good." "That's so Indian of you," they say. Shut up! Or because I eat fry bread…And my music choices. Oh, I get harassed, because I listen to drum music. And Native folk

> singers who sing about Native issues and they'll like, "Oh my…you listen to the weirdest music." "Like what? I like it."

With a good sense of humor, Rachel transformed border patrolling into opportunities to expose her friends to parts of her heritage (music, food, etc.) and help them gain a greater understanding of her mixture and the importance of Native American culture to her. For Rachel, the contrast to white culture appears in the consistency of Native American culture, where important cultural practices, rituals, and observations are infused into one's upbringing, rather than "once a year," a clear reference to the symbolic ethnicity that many white ethnic groups adopt in this society (Waters 1990; Doane 1997). Thus, Rachel perceives Native American culture as more meaningful and less superficial than other cultures, particular white culture. This perception perpetuates the myth of "vanilla" whiteness (Rubin 1984; hooks 1992; Sandoval 2002), and makes the fetishism and orientialism of "Other" cultures and/or races more likely (Said 1978).

Despite discussions of people desiring honorary white status, Rachel rejected its imposition on her life and instead did a "double border crossing" to become "black by proxy" or "honorary black." Through her friendships with black women (her two best friends), Rachel developed "a lot more comfort her [around blacks] but clarified, "It's not like I didn't hang out with them [whites]. I just felt more comfortable than with someone uber white." This admission points to the extent to which some multiracial individuals forge friendships across race in ways that go against the grain of homophily or homogeny. Rachel gained honorary membership into blackness, while maintaining her white/Native American multiracial identity.

Miki made similar racial maneuvers, working to maintain her "quarter Japanese" identity that her white boyfriend refused to see her as racially mixed. "He's one of those

people that whenever I say anything about it, he says, 'You're not Japanese. You're white.' So that's frustrating. And I'm always talking about it lately, usually about my grandma…. He always says it back. He just laughs it off." Unable to have a sincere conversation with him about this topic, Miki expressed disappointment at his discomfort with and reluctance to embrace her identity and opposition to her marking her racial difference (non-whiteness). Other respondents presented variations of this imputation, pointing to the ways that friends and family members advised them not to "play in the sun" (Golden 2005) as a discouragement from getting darker (and by extension, less valuable).

That Miki's boyfriend sees her as white supports the literature on honorary whiteness, and partially illustrates how White/Asian multiracials become honorary whites (a position she may "jeopardize" in his eyes by persistently saying she is multiracial, rather than mostly white). Even though Miki *is* white, she destabilizes that whiteness by vocalizing her known Asian ancestry. Unlike people with known African ancestry, Miki can make her Asian ancestry known to most people without becoming singularly Asian. This proved problematic to the degree that her boyfriend then denied her racial mixture and respective Asian heritage. Through jocularity, he reassigned racial categories, in what seem like attempts to benefit from the currency of whiteness and lightness. These interactions expose how whiteness is socially constructed as Miki negotiates being both white and not white (see Zack 1995, 1994), while her boyfriend works to preserve her whiteness[61][62].

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[61] If the relationship were to continue and grow in significance, we might consider this behavior *protective* border patrolling, in that his ostensible rejection of her identity may stem from his anxiety that others may border patrol or reject her white American and "one quarter Japanese" identity. A generous interpretation indeed, but one that at least acknowledges the complex motivations that border patrollers possess,

Though discussions of beneficiary border patrolling build on this idea of racial redistricting, examples also include ways that respondents have been encouraged by significant others to distance themselves from blackness. As a young woman with two black Hispanic parents, Maritza socially identifies similarly to them. However, she also vacillates between a formal identity[63] that is both "Black Hispanic" and "African American." Viewing the two terms as relatively interchangeable, Maritza defers more to the former than the latter. "If I was to be asked what I am, I would automatically say 'African Hispanic.' Like if we were talking, that's the first thing I would say." Although she arrived at this choice in part by feeling that her parents gave her the option to identify as she liked, Maritza noted, "They've always said, 'You're not a Black American. You're a black Hispanic because your parents are from Central American and you're bilingual.' So that's where-- now they said if I wanted to racially identify as African American, I can totally do that but that's what they would identify as, so I just took that."

Maritza drew distinctions between the two names for herself, African American and black Hispanic: "I guess you could say it's (African American) not necessarily accurate. 'Hispanic' would be more accurate but it just depends on why am I actually choosing, for what, you know? Is it a job, they look at whether you're Hispanic or black? They say they don't discriminate against race or anything, but they definitely look at it."

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particularly ones closer/est to multiracial individuals. If Miki's boyfriend has some awareness of others border patrolling Miki when they discover that she is part Japanese, he may *benevolently* border patrol her in order to prepare her for what he sees as an eventual or inevitable experience.

[62] Despite her boyfriend's imputation of whiteness on her, Miki engaged in her own version of beneficiary border patrolling, since she does not think of her relationships as "interracial." While my point here is not that she *should* think of them as such, the fact that she claims she has not even thought about the racial dynamic of her relationship suggests a few things: perhaps her multiracial identity is indeed incipient, in that she is slowly coming into that identity, and realizing how doing so compromises some of the privileges of her (formerly) white identity. Alternately, Miki may be more aware of the advantages of being white than she is willing to indicate in the interview. Her awareness might motivate her to minimize the importance of race in any of her relationships, romantic or not (as indicated by her minimization of others' attention).

[63] The racial identification one makes when completing institutional forms, such as the Census.

Despite being encouraged by her parents to disidentify as African American and to embrace a black Hispanic identity, a common strategy that darker skinned new or recent immigrants adopt to distance and/or differentiate themselves from native-born blacks (Yancey 2003; Waters 1994; Foner 2000; Hintzen and Rahier 2003), Maritza chose a different approach. She asserted a protean identity. This shifting became clearer when she said the following during the interview:

> I mean I've always kind of just chose whatever just came up to my mind. I never really said, "This is what I'm going to stick with." So if you were to pick 5 different (job) applications that I've filled out, maybe 3 out of 5 of them would be different. And it's not depending on the job. Or you know, wherever I'm at, or like if I'm at the social security office, you know?

Her comments speak to the degree that social setting can influence one's racial sense of self, such that individual's racial identity can be fluid and unstable. This explains why she might not look like the same person on paper, but in fact this multidimensionality marks the fluidity of racial identity and identification. Unlike previous generations, this one arguably offers Maritza the very choice she is and feels entitled to exercise. About this fluidity and choice, she said, "It doesn't bother me at all. I just feel like, like I have that option." While she appreciates having this choice, she was unable to articulate what influences this choice, or explain why she chooses differently from one setting, or job application to another. "I mean, even in high school, I took a reading test, and they ask that question at the end. And I don't even know; I couldn't tell you what I chose. It was probably African American. Why? I don't know. But maybe because I was in high school. I don't know if it makes a difference, but to me, none of that matters….I never looked at it that deep." Her comments suggest that, as she has matured, had a multiracial

(Black, Hispanic, and Asian) child of her own, and experienced more freedom to choose, she does so. However, for her, the choice is arbitrary, inconsequential.

Again, this contrasts with previous generations that felt different pressures to publicly maintain racial categories that largely excluded "multiracial" (see Wallenstein 2002). Maritza's occasional colorblind minimization of race contrasts with her race cognizance, as evidenced in her discussion of her siblings' identity and her child. Having had a son with a black and Asian man, whose "mother is Japanese and his dad is black," Maritza wondered: "Now ask me what my son will be? Or is? He's everything. We call him, he has two nicknames: Papito and Chino. I mostly call him 'Papito' and most of my family calls him 'Chino.'" While these monikers mark her son ethnically and culturally, she maintained a relatively race-neutral perspective. Doing so allowed her to blur boundaries typically erected between racial groups.

Julie, a black-identified respondent, also enjoyed expanding the boundaries of blackness:

> I don't just listen to rap music, soul music, rhythm and blues. I listen to classical…new age…"anger music" (punk, metal), I call it, when I want to blow off some steam, and that's not traditionally associated with blacks. I eat sushi, every now and then. And soul food restaurants? It's not my fault I don't like to go to soul food restaurants. I think they just don't cook it as well as they cook it at home. I like Thai. I've never had Indian foods. I'm afraid of it because I know it's spicy. I went to the Imperial Fez- I think it's Moroccan and it was so good to me, really good. So now I want to explore that type of regional food.

While her parents and partner regarded her culinary choices curious at best, seeing them as a metaphor for identity, loyalty, and identity, Julie continued in her explorations, literally and figuratively. Doing so helped her make sense of the mixed messages she received:

> I grew up hearing stories about my uncle moving to Boston and passing for white but I guess I never internalized until my mom said, "Well, you know, you're part Irish." So it's just kind of like—it's not something I've explored. What does it mean to be Irish? I'm black."

The question that Julie asked resonated with and corresponded to the narratives of other respondents. How *does* one incorporate newly acquired information (from family members or elsewhere) into one's identity throughout the life course? Julie interpreted learning about her Irish heritage as a "permission slip" to be a different kind of black. She explained, "It's more so okay to have 'white qualities'[64] (i.e., speaking proper or "correct" English) within yourself because you have the right to have it because you're part Irish." Because Julie is "the one to go outside of this box" in her family, she contrasted herself to controlling stereotypical images of blackness and expanded its (blackness) boundaries rather than exploiting her aforementioned entitlement to "act white" or Irish.

Instead of feeling imprisoned by the parameters of racial categories that often confine and constrict social behavior, Julie challenged familial and societal expectations of her as a black woman. Enjoying "all this stuff that isn't black" compromised Julie's blackness for significant others, while enriching her life with new and unfamiliar experiences. Curiously, Julie's mother shared information about the family's Irish heritage, which Julie interpreted as her mother's desire to help her daughter benefit from this acknowledgement of mixture.

> I think she means it's important for me to know but to benefit from, for along some lines, some sort of white privilege. I want to go natural (hair) but my mom is reluctant, apprehensive about me cutting off my hair. Those are things that are hard for her to accept because for one, she came up in a time where the lighter

[64] Julie disputed this term, highlighting it as problematic and flawed. In elaborating on these "white qualities, she clarified, "I guess it depends on who's looking at me and what they've been exposed to. I don't feel it's acting white."

> you were, the better. So it's just her mindset, and I don't even think she's able to even see outside of that picture. Going natural would be nice for others to do, but not for me to do (according to her mother).

This stands in contradiction to what seems like her family's overall investment in blackness and their sense of black pride. While she accommodates the mixed messages from her family and knows that her family does not view her behavior as rejecting blackness, she challenges others who issue this critique of her. Like Julie, Sa felt a similar freedom to be racially rebellious and pioneering as a means of disrupting racial expectations for "multiracial" individuals.

The above experiences illustrate the phenomenon of "racial redistricting," by highlighting parental motivations to access white privilege by racially classifying their offspring as white (Gallagher 2003), which happens more often with White/Asian and White/Latino/s parents and less so with Black/Latino/a and White/Black ones (due to the persistence of hypodescent). As a result, parents invested in whiteness as property border patrolled their multiracial White/Asian or White/Latino children to claim whiteness (Harris 1993; Lipsitz 1998/2003). Conversely, many Asian parents deployed discourses to discourage their children from forming interracial relationships of their own.

Even among Black/Latino/a parents, beneficiary border patrolled worked to remind respondents of the important distinction between themselves (as more than blacks) and those who were "just black." By promoting cultural maintenance, these parents actively celebrated their cultural heritage and signaled to their children the positive aspects of their cultural heritage. These messages often contradicted one another, and emerged in the form of border patrolling.

Protective Border Patrolling: "You're Black Because Society Says So"

As I mentioned earlier, significant others often engage in border patrolling of racial identities as a means of protecting the respective respondents from public surveillance and scrutiny. In many ways, this type of border patrolling closely overlaps with the three other types of borderism, in that the protective policing of identity can be guided by motives beyond buffering respondents from racism, discrimination, and potentially damaging discourses. I think that it is precisely because protective border patrolling gets entangled with these other forms of border patrolling that makes registering parental "protectiveness" a tedious task. Thus, I will provide fewer examples of this type of borderism.

Wendy, a young black Latina, offered a different variation of beneficiary border patrolling. She spoke in somewhat colorblind ways, deferring to an almost indifferent posture when discussing racial matters (which also minimized of racism). Her comments indicated that race was not a central discussion in her family, a choice her family may have made to help her have "the best of both worlds"; to circumvent the difficulty of discussing her looking like a white black/Latina; and to facilitate her benefiting from her white-looking phenotype. In not discussing race, parents fail to racially socialize their children in ways that will prepare them for potential encounters with racial discrimination[65]; family biographies concealed under the veil of silence also deny multiracial children access to information that could shift their racial self-understanding.

[65] Many scholars have drawn attention to racial socialization in black families (see Billingsley 1968, 1992; Boykin and Toms 1985; Hills 2001; Hughes and Johnson 2001; McAdoo 1988; McHale, Crouter, Kim, Burton, Davis, Dotterer, and Swanson September/October 2006; O'Caughy, O'Brien, O'Campo, Randolph, and Nickerson 2002; Peters 1985; Thompson 1994; Thornton, M.C. 1997; Thornton, Chatters, Taylor, and Allen 1990)

Along similar lines, Allison, a black/white biracial woman adopted into an interracial family, was one of the few black/white biracial respondents to report faced what seemed like mild beneficiary border patrolling from her white adoptive parents, but what I ultimately interpreted as protective (but could be a synthesis of both).

> Well, I don't really so much talk to them about the racial problems. Mostly I didn't talk to my family about it [issues I was struggling with]. I mean I told them I was unhappy, like I couldn't relate to the people there. But like I really couldn't go into in-depth conversations with them because they weren't there experiencing it and you know, I could tell them about stuff and how miserable it is, but you know, if you're talking about those girls and how you don't relate to them, it's like, "Suck it up." You know, but I'd talk to my friend (who is Native American and Latina), and she was right there living it with me, and we'd be like, "Argh. This sucks." We could definitely relate.

While her parents could "understand across the board the difficulty of being a college freshman," they had a harder time relating to her college experiences as a young brown woman or the identity invalidation she felt in high school where "you were either black or you were white." By befriending a diverse group of (brown) people who were also misread as "white with a nice tan," and having some biracial friends who could empathize and relate helped, as well as being in an area of the country that is "mixed up" facilitated Allison's management of her mixed race identity. Her experience of being border patrolled as a "white looking" brown-skinned woman intersected with her parents' inability to share her racial reality. That is, they appeared to police her racially by adopting a race-evasive style (Frankenberg 1993), and not discussing her multiracial identity.

> My parents, it is hard to talk to them about the experiences that I go through because I'm brown. And my parents are awesome parents and I wouldn't want them to go through them not being able to give me…to prepare me for being brown in this world because they don't know what it's like. *That* was mainly a problem in middle school, not so much in college.

Allison recognized her parents' overall inability to impart knowledge about black people and culture as understandable given their whiteness and white habitus; her awareness prompted her to turn to her friends for insight into what saw as behaviors and cultural practices characteristic of black people.

> Allison: But you know, all the cool people knew all about hair rollers and you know stuff like that. Getting a perm and going to the 'China store'[66] to get hair gel or something, you know. I didn't do any of that, like my parents are white, they didn't teach me. They didn't know black culture. They know M.L.K., Jr. and stuff. But the actual Southern culture that you have day to day if you're black, they can't teach me that.
>
> MM: So how did you learn about it?
>
> Allison: Well, I still don't know that much about it; I don't pretend that I do. I know that it exists but I don't know that much about it. It's things that you would learn from your black mom. Or your black dad. I don't know. It's hard to describe it but it's day and night, the difference between white and black. In middle school, there was so little mixing, it was hard…And I know, I know that I'm half black, but I'm not ever going to know everything. I mean since I'm half and half, if I could know half of everything about being black, that would be great. But I'm never going to know that much because I will only know what my friends teach me….I would pick up stuff from my black friends, pick up a few things from my Vietnamese friends here and there.

The absence of familial connections to blackness led Allison to feel as though she cannot immerse herself in black culture. Nevertheless, she cultivated a sense of blackness by absorbing what she could from her black girlfriends. Her discussion suggests that her parents' perception of her may have been a "white like me" one, where they knew she was biracial but perceived and raised her as white. However, I think her parents might have wanted and worked to protect her from racial interrogations, especially in the context of questions about her adoption. While plenty of scholars have shown how white

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[66] A good example of race talk, the "China store" is a popular pan-ethnic reference for Asian business owners. While problematic in its underlying assumption that Chinese equals Asian, or Asian businesses must be Chinese-owned and operated, the expression has been normalized and continues to circulate without much contestation.

mothers raise "black" children (Lazarre 1997; Reddy 1997), white adoptive mothers raising Black/White biracial children (such as Allison and her brothers) may face different challenges related to race, family, and issues of belonging. That all three siblings negotiated whitespaces (Horton 2006) with their protean, not white, identities suggests that parents' efforts to protectively border patrol by avoiding discussions of race failed. As Anthony acknowledged,

> People will perceive me, I guess people will know that I'm at least mixed. Just because I'm pretty well educated so I don't really talk like I'm ignorant, or using that much slang.[67] But I do to a certain extent. So I get judged, from black people. Like a black person would know that I'm not completely black I guess but a white person wouldn't really know.

While parents like Allison's, Anthony's, and Andrew's may be able to indulge all of their children materially and socially, they are unable to fully bestow the privileges of whiteness. The narratives of these respondents suggest that in recognizing this inability to transfer all of the benefits of whiteness to them, the parents protected their multiracial children by minimizing the importance of race. Perhaps this minimization could be interpreted as a disservice to some, I suggest that significant others who engaged in border patrolled were simply not well-versed in how respondents experienced and gave meaning to their racial identities. In future research, for example, I hope to develop this discussion and exploration, examining the ways that multiracial individuals throughout the life course influence the ways that their family members (immediate and extended) understand racial mixture. This process of "reciprocal racial socialization" has not been steadily addressed in the literature and points to one new direction in which to take studies on multiracial matters.

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[67] The only exception he noted included using slang or swearing around friends, and "knowing better" than to do so around his parents, who brought him up not to, and whom he described as "two of the most upstanding citizens on the face of the earth."

In many ways, protective border patrolling overlaps with malevolent border patrolling, in that identity invalidation underlies the former, while more centrally constituting the other. I turn next to examples where this invalidation is more abrasive or direct, malicious, and insidious.

Malevolent Border Patrolling: "You're not Asian…You're White!"

Several respondents noted having their identity contested in ways that marked others' invalidation of their asserted, preferred racial identities; or facing antagonism because of others' resentment of their unearned (multi)racial privilege, both commonly expressed through malevolent border patrolling. For example, Campbell, a Black/White woman, confronted others' malevolent borderism through accusations (mostly from blacks who perceive her as white) of "acting white":

> When I was in high school, they wanted me to be white because they would say that I think I'm better…. It's kind of crazy but they didn't want me to be part of the black race because I acted a certain way or I dressed a certain way or I did certain things. You see what I'm saying? It's like, "Oh, you don't belong with us." "Because you're acting this way" or "You look this way." I just thought that was kind of strange. And it hurt sometimes but I was like, "Whatever."

Campbell suggested that her behavior and almost white phenotype provoked mainly black people to view her as a privileged and racially treasonous person. Seeing her in this privileged position led to claims of her being "less black" and more "like white."[68] Some of Campbell's own racial ideologies (i.e. that she had "good hair") complicated, rather than legitimated, the borderism that she encountered. These views of hers also reified a gendered racial hierarchy that rewards her physical approximation of whiteness (Rockquemore 2002, Hunter 2005, and Herring, Keith, and Horton 2004), and often

[68] While the label is not necessarily inaccurate (since she asserts a black/white biracial identity), it is framed in terms of disqualification. That is, Campbell *is* white (and black), but the redundancy did not discourage school peers and friends from calling her white, not to affirm but rather to question the point.

pitted her against darker skinned women. Her "failure" to pass tests designed to authenticate blackness actually affirmed her multiplicity- a point that contrasts with that of Rockquemore (2002). The rejection by blacks of her also partially explains why many black multiracials do not claim their multiracial identity (Lee and Bean 2004).

Many of the lighter skinned women in my sample echoed Campbell's experiences of negotiating the "beauty queue" (Hunter 2005) that gave them unearned privileges, but also generated animosity between and competition with other women (Rockquemore 2002). They mentioned engaging in "race work" (Steinbugler 2007) or the emotional labor required to placate antagonistic others and dispel disparaging myths and charges of conceit and racial superiority.

As the "cute light skinned girl," Flora was resented for being seen as "one that gets all the guys." While her closest friends know not to feel threatened by the currency of Flora's light skin, other females view Flora as competition. Not only do "they look at me funny, and then [they] look to my black female friends like, "Is she okay?" [an ally], they look at Flora as if "she's taking our men." Once her black friends, who were also initially suspicious of her racial loyalty, vouch for her alliance to other black women, Flora is read as less as competition, and more as non-threatening. When policed by black women, Flora responded in ways that corresponded to other respondents, by largely taking a non-confrontational approach, "because for the most part, I'm not going to win. They're gonna be…rude and obnoxious, and give me those looks no matter what I say. So I just leave it and let it go."

Juanita, a black-identified woman of African American, Native American, Creole, and Puerto Rican (and possibly Irish) heritage, also spoke of negotiating black border patrolling and

the color line as a light skinned woman. Recognizing others' observations (i.e., "She's light," or "She's got good/light/nice hair") as ostensible compliments that generated conflict between women who are "way more negative" than men with her, Juanita was "extra friendly" and went out of her "way to make sure you feel comfortable." She did so to counter the pre-existing perceptions of her as arrogant, and challenge colorism as a means of forging friendships.

In feeling "too light to be liked," these and other part black respondents spoke of the adverse impact of colorism on their friendships with other women. The perpetual presumed competition between them meant fewer friendships with women versus men. Many of these respondents then became so anxious of this potential antagonism to the point of avoidance, as they expected such adversarial interactions with black women. Juanita observed:

> I still get comments every so often like it's jokes to them, you know, like, "Ah, you're [nervously laughs], you think you're cute because you're light."; "Ha, ha, ha, ha, oh she's so high yellow," you know. It's usually just like, maybe we'll be talking, about--I don't know, maybe when we met or something like that and it's just like, "Oh yeah, I remember when I first met you…. I thought you were conceited."

Even though she was made to feel *really* uncomfortable, Juanita ignored her feelings and invested in making others comfortable. She did this to challenge others' unflattering perceptions of her and the attendant adverse interactions that stemmed from others' resentment of her unearned privilege, light skin, or likewise. Her discussion shows that malevolent border patrolling works to be divisive; disqualify her; and put her in her place, in case she feels superior because of her physical appearance. The different responses that women and men have to her, given the "band-aid" color skin tone she describes herself as having, support existing literature on gendered racialized border patrolling (see Rockquemore 1998 and Hunter 2005, Rondilla and Spickard 2007; among others). Rockquemore (2002) discussed this in terms of the unique

experiences that mixed race women face, while Hunter (2005) focused on the beauty queue that positions lighter skin women ahead of darker skin women, in terms of employment, housing, and mate selection.

Rather than view Juanita as an ally, many women viewed her in unflattering, stereotypical ways. Like the elephant in the room, the competition and colorism haunts Juanita by impeding her friendships. "It's always there it seems like, even with people I think of as pretty good friends, it always comes up eventually. It's always there." Because she is always already a desirable and enviable body, Juanita felt placed under constant surveillance. She sensed antagonism from black women and interest from "a pretty good variety of men," except black men, who failed to approach her "because my butt's not big enough." To counter some of the border patrolling she regularly encountered, Juanita mentioned enjoying enveloping herself in places where "I don't get any questions and I feel comfortable there, [where] people look like me, I feel understood." Because "I'll never really blend in," Juanita appreciated those places where she did not feel fetishized or valorized for being mixed. The malevolent borderism that Juanita encounters gets compounded by significant others' inability to empathize with the unique experience of being a racialized spectacle (DeBord 1995).

While his involvement in their relationship indirectly implicates him, he does not directly experience what she described as the discomfort of surveillance and a significant part of her everyday life. As a result, he trivializes or minimizes her experiences ("'It's no big deal.'… He can just, you know, brush it off."), making Juanita feel that "he doesn't really understand" her everyday racial confrontations "or he can't really pick up on the things that I do, because he's not in my spot." For example,

> I've had recently someone who was trying to get a closer look at me [to make sure that I wasn't white]…. She was already discussing it before she approached me. And so she was like extremely close to me and then, 'the lightbulb'! You know what she was trying to do?! She was looking at me from across the room because she was far away, so she needed to get a closer look. She needed to check me out.

Possibly motivated by jealousy, or gendered competitive colorism, the woman conducting the informal racial investigation wanted to confirm Juanita's blackness before expressing her opposition, invalidation, or other adverse reactions to her and her ostensible "interracial" relationship.[69] Who knows what the repercussions of looking white from a distance, *and* up close and personal might have been for Juanita, had the inspecting borderist determined that Juanita *was* white. Perhaps turning to Scales-Trent's (1995) discussion of women, men and death, and the dangers that white looking women pose for visibly black men illuminate Juanita's predicament.

Juanita remembered even being border patrolled by friends, who tended to ignore her (partial) blackness, reject her racial identity, and ironically but problematically validate her racial mixture:

> Well, I have one friend [she's Mexican and black] that every time I have a problem with a guy I'm seeing, she's like, "He's black." But she feels like, "You have these problems because they're black. You need to try and find someone more like you." Well, she just feels like it should be somebody that's at least multiracial, whatever that may be…. She feels like [a multiracial person] would have that understanding.

Other respondents felt differently policed by significant others. For example, Miki, for example, described being whitened by friends, despite her attempts to assert a multiracial identity.

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[69] Her racially ambiguous appearance not only confused the border patroller, but also required scrutinizing attention that enabled the border patroller to "confirm" Juanita's blackness, or non-whiteness. She needed to do so in order to ensure that the two were not something racially taboo- interracial relationships; and she directed her border patrolling behavior towards Juanita, the racially questionable member of the couple.

> The only negative experience that I've had is just friends really, just picking at me for it. Not trying to be mean, I don't think, but really it did hurt my feelings….Like my friend has called me "Chink," and you know, I'm like--and really, I've been like, "That's not funny." And she'll say, "I'm just kidding around." And that was when we were younger. I don't think that she means to be mean. I don't know why. I just think, like when I tell people that I'm Asian, they say, "You're not Asian. Why do you consider yourself Asian? You're just white." And I'm like, you know, that's kind of frustrating because I don't feel like I'm just white. You know what I mean? "Why can't you accept me one quarter Japanese, because that's what I am." But it's usually my white friends who are like that too. [laughs].

Some of her friends also occasionally and inappropriately fetishized her for being part Japanese, or interacted with her based on stereotypical images of Asians:

> Some of my friends are like, "Can I meet your grandma?"…or "Can you make us some sushi?" Things like…There's only been positive. Sometimes there's been negative, mostly at home, like the comments. I don't know if they're trying to be mean or funny, but like, you know, "Do you speak Japanese?" "Will you make me some sushi?" That kind of thing. "Do you like rice?" But it's like, it's not funny, you know.

The incoherence that evolved as Miki discussed malevolent borderism captured her ambivalence about having her friends express a sincere interest in exploring her Japanese culture in one moment and teasing her in another. "It's poking fun. It's both; you get kind of a mixture." I am not sure if Miki realized that she weaved this metaphor into her response, but I found the double entendre notable. More importantly, Miki pointed out that being border patrolled by friends can be both positive and negative, depending on the speaker and their intention. Miki posited, "Yeah, and you [generalized] know the difference."

Theresa shared an experience where she had tried to participate in a maternal family reunion and attempted to blend in, but stood out and felt a sense of alienation. Because "everybody there is white…me and my little brother (not the older one), we

always felt like outsiders." When asked if she felt that way or was *made* to feel that way, Theresa explained:

> I guess a little bit of both…I mean, I think that my mom's side of the family…we just had looks, whenever we showed up at the family reunion…. And then again that could have been just my imagination…that I felt uncomfortable about it…. I love my mom's family, but you know the majority of them are not college educated, and…I don't want to say redneck, but they are, and proud of it…. They even admit that they're rednecks and they have the Southern flag in the back of their pickup trucks with their guns kind of thing.

In some ways, Sarah also experienced being border patrolled, but by proxy. Her sister's "contaminating" black boyfriend forced Sarah to confront border patrolling from her "all the way white" boyfriend's friend, who held this view of racial "purity and danger" (Douglas 2002). Another man she dated "would say really mean things about my sister. He'd say, 'Oh, your sister would be so fine if she didn't be with black guys.' Just really, really racist things like that. He thought she is making a mistake, is disgusting. It makes her not as pretty or not as good." In another one of her relationships, Sarah had this conversation with her boyfriend's mother, who wondered, "'So what kind of black is your sister's boyfriend? How dark is his skin? Is it…(naming all of these colors)?' I knew what she was getting at, like is he light-skinned?" Since the woman's niece (her sister's daughter) was pregnant at the time, Sarah challenged this backstage racism by pointedly asking about the niece's husband:

> I just did it right back to her: "How white is he? What kind of *white* is he? What does he look like?" People just don't realize they're doing it…. Like why would it make a difference, if he was as black as black or as…it's like….it's just racist to me. Like how--if only she knew that the guy my sister is having a baby with is a professional football player; you know he's got great genes; he's educated. But nooo, that doesn't matter. It's, "How *black* is he?"

In defending her sister and her sister's boyfriend (which the following example illustrates), Sarah inadvertently relied on some stereotypes of blacks (as successful in the

arena of professional athletics or as "natural" talents) to make her point. Fortunately, her "brain versus brawn" argument ended as more of a "brain *and* brawn" one which exemplified her anti-racist position. She provided yet another instance of this positioning when dealing with people's racism.

> A guy says he can't stand black people and I just said, "Please, can we spend some time together," because I wanted to try to change his mind. He goes, "Well, I want to try to change *your* mind." And I go, "That's fine." I'm trying not to *not* like him because I didn't want to be what he was. So it was trying to find a way…. "Some day, you're going to go to the ER and a black person's going to save your life." "Well, then, he won't be a nigger," he said. It's irritating and I think it gets to a point where some people you can't change the way maybe--their parents raised them or what they're being ignorant about. I just kind of blow it off unless it's something real offensive. I don't laugh at racist jokes and stuff like that. I don't like it…. We were at dinner last night with the guy I'm sort of dating, and his friend said, "Yeah, your sister's gonna have a niglet."

The inflammatory epithet incensed and "really, really hurt" Sarah to the point of being shocked into silence. "I just didn't know what to do so I just sat there. And I'm always the life of the party and I just didn't say anything. It was so offensive to me." If there is *any* benefit to being border patrolled through backstage racism (Houts Picca and Feagin 2007), it involves anti-racist honorary whites like Sarah vocalizing their opposition to racism. That Sarah challenges white racism despite feeling silenced and alienated illustrates the agency that honorary whites have. In approximating whiteness, Sarah looks like white, but becomes less so when she explicitly confronts and rejects racist discourses produced by whites.

Leilani recognized that she encountered borderism because she uses "slang, got a little twang to my voice," that often creates cognitive dissonance between the way she looks, the way she "sounds," and how others figure out her racial location.

> One of my friends actually told me, she said, "I had my back turned to you and I just heard this voice, and I'm like, '*Where* is this voice coming from?" and she's

> looking all around the room and then sees that it was coming from me….She actually thought I was Mexican. But we're really good friends now. She was like, "I didn't know where that voice was coming from because you sounded like a black girl." That's exactly what she said….We laugh about it all the time.

Growing up military and moving around the world frequently meant that Leilani had a shifting sense of self in different social settings, while also having the feeling of being racially read differently by various groups of people. As a black-identified person, she felt "more connected with them [blacks]" who in turn helped racially locate her close to blackness. This, in addition to "talking black" or "sounding black," also enabled others to racially decode her blackness, instead of having to explicitly gather clues about Leilani's racial composition ("because they don't know really what I am and they're afraid to ask.")

Similarly, some light skinned black/white multiracials also discover what becoming "honorary white" means. For example, Keisha (a black-identified woman with black, white, and Native American ancestry) negotiated malevolent border patrolling from her boyfriend, who chastised her ("'You know, you need to stop talking like a white girl.'") for "dressing a certain way"; and from her friends who commented on her skin and called her "white girl."

> I guess I think it's not offensive anymore. Initially it was, but I guess it was something that I've gotten used to. It was just, "Why would you say it (white girl)? What do you mean? Just because my skin is lighter than yours doesn't mean that I'm white." And then, also, my boyfriend knows about my father's side, so do my close friends, but he'll always say, "Well, you're not black." I laugh it off but it kind of makes me feel like he thinks that I'm not black enough. (I wonder), "What is he really thinking?" And I'm really emotional and he'll say that I'm not strong. I need to be stronger. And so, it's kind of like most people associate black women with being strong.

Having insight into her family biography facilitated Keisha's boyfriend in his disqualification of her as "not really" black. If she was in search of a validated

multiracial identity, this would have worked in her favor. Instead, his authenticity tests of her exposed another irony: his preference for lighter skin women, a preference Keisha mused about.

> (With my boyfriend) I kind of do wonder, because you know what? People would say he's attracted to women with lighter skin, certain type of hair, Puerto Rican, not necessarily black. I've never heard him say anything about an attractive black woman. Everyone (he finds attractive) is Puerto Rican, or light skinned. You can tell they're mixed with something. So it's like, me saying that I am black means that he doesn't really think that I am black just because of the type of female that he does like. It suggests that he doesn't see me as black.

Keisha's discussion above shows how others view her through the framework of controlling images (Collins 1991). The stereotypical depiction of black women as strong, described in Michelle Wallace's (1990) work as the "myth of the black superwoman," counters the behavioral characteristics of Keisha. This, along with her ambiguous appearance, provides a partial account of others' tendency to disqualify her blackness. Despite her desire to claim a black identity, she faced identity invalidation from border patrollers. Based on the logic of borderism, she failed to fit into existing controlling images of black femininity, and by extension, was "not really black." This invalidation differs from that discussed by Rockquemore and Brunsma (2002) who discussed the concept in relation to black-white individuals wanting to assert a biracial identity.

Keisha negotiates the ampersand of blackness and whiteness, while her boyfriend luxuriated over having an almost white black woman (one who would not bring his own blackness into question but rather would serve as social currency instead). While strangers see her through the lens of hypodescent and think, "She's still black," Keisha's boyfriend sees her differently, and invalidates her preferred racial identity.

The disqualification that Keisha experienced from her boyfriend and other close friends contrasted with that of strangers, who see her through the lens of the "one-drop" rule and think, "She's still black." Perhaps this difference results from significant others having more knowledge and familiarity with Keisha's racial heritage and mixture (having seen her family members, photo albums, and so on) than strangers do. For this and other reasons, she chooses "black" over "biracial," believing the former is an easier choice. Given her complexion, as well as her father's (who she described as white-looking), she senses that opting for black is easier than claiming her mixed heritage. "Just because, where I'm from, to say "mixed," people wouldn't really embrace that….and some of the older white people would still see me as black."

Grace was also burdened by hypodescent, and its peculiar Southern persistence. As a Black and Native American woman who was adopted into a black family, Grace encountered similar resistance to always claiming both. A friend who teased her for "looking Ethiopian" but then told her "he had some Ethiopian…and Cherokee" ancestry border patrolled her multiracial identity when she also claimed being Cherokee.

> [When I said,] "I have it" [Cherokee], he was like, "No, you don't." And I was like, "I do." I have paperwork but I never bring it out because my mom keeps all of that stuff, so I don't even know where it is. But normally I'll just be like, the skin complexion, you know certain days I'll be more red than others, so it goes from there…Like a lot of people who look more Indian, um, most of them don't believe it, because they'll be like, "Oh, your hair isn't this way." Or "You're just not the typical Native American impression." Usually you have to refute it back and go back and forth. And just be like, I'm not just claiming because they'll be like, "All black people say they have that."

Rather than ignore these invalidating remarks, Grace contemplated and analyzed the border patrolling, in attempts to make sense of it. I imagine this process as particularly emotionally labor intensive for her, given that her adoption makes "proving" race more

difficult for her. She explained, "My interpretation of why they say that is because they've probably just had people say they were mixed with everything. We're all not 'whatever.' So…I don't really know how to take that because how do you defend it when so many people are claiming it but they aren't or you know, don't know?" Grace described these accusations as insinuations of her attempts to distance herself from blackness. If Grace has a racially "thin" black identity (Yancey 2003), it is both in response to immersion in racially mixed social groups and a desire to embrace her multiracial identity.

Grace remained ambivalent about this accusation, both agreeing and disagreeing that some people may be "trying to prove that they are a little more different or maybe just a class above, 'I'm more than just African, African American, or black or whatever.'" Her ambivalence stemmed from her own unique positioning in the debate and how her invisible mixture rendered her black in the eyes of many border patrollers.

> I don't think I'm distancing myself at all. But I mean, I guess I get confused a little it, why they want to kind of force me almost to recognize, "You're just black; now stop claiming the other stuff."…. Like I don't know who my biological family is at all, so it's not like I can be like, "Well, what else am I mixed with?" And am I to assume, I just always assume that maybe they just put the basic stuff that they claim, more than anything?

Not only does Grace embrace her known racial mixture, but also implies that, given her individual and familial circumstances, there "might may be more mixture" that she would also embrace upon its discovery of this information. Not knowing about other biological siblings meant not knowing about any phenotypic differences among them[70]. In addition

[70] Grace speculated, "I mean, I could have a sister who's a lot lighter than me and whose hair is a lot straighter so it's just, it's just like I don't know….Like when my hair is out, like when it's longer, then it's like, when I wet it, it curls, but not tight curls, and it's really soft, and people love to play in my hair. Like "you're hair is so soft." But I just characterize it, like those are the differences between Native American, that's in me, but I still have black features because I have African American in me as well."

to being denied these additional familial ties, this not knowing denied her the visual evidence that she craved when being border patrolled and prompted to "show and prove" that she is Native American *and* black.

> I mean…I just get a little frustrated sometimes when people are just so demanding that you're just this. I'm not trying to downplay one or the other. I'm just saying this is what I am. This is what I represent.

Her experiences with borderism from significant others also discouraged her from participation in social clubs organized around Native Americans, which contrasts with Rachel's experience of *forming* such a club. The malevolent border patrolling that Grace faced from her family[71] made her feel this way: "Well here's the black girl just coming in and now claiming, and so, in a sense, in my mind, I know I belong, but…I just wouldn't join."

The already emotion-laden experience of adoption coupled with the contestation of her multiracial identity from significant and strangers leaves Grace border patrolling herself. She questioned her "right" to belong, using physical markers to disqualify herself. (She did so despite imagining how happy she would be in joining a Native American group, thinking "that'd be pretty cool," to have a place where she could talk about "this and that" with others. She inferred that such social groups could act as something of a support network, as she begins her adoption search: "And I've already thought about going to look for my biological mother so she could tell me about my great grandmother. I'm sure she knows more…And I'm sure my grandmother has a lot still in her, since my great grandmother is pure.")

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[71] Grace shared an example of this borderism: "My uncle calls me 'Niggichee.' So it's just like, "Oh, you're just a [the "n" word] claiming Cherokee.' It's just so bad."

Thus, being adopted complicates these racial negotiations with others, in this case with both significant and strangers. Grace explained that learning about her adoption would help buffer her from some of the border patrolling she encounters, because having more information would equip her with details to serve as the "evidence" or "proof" that she is entitled to her black and Native American multiracial identity. I have difficulty estimating the trauma exacted on Grace from her uncle's comment but I can only imagine its adverse impact, given the arsenal of questions Grace already has about who she is. Hearing such callous words from a close relative packs a punch that an individual already feeling a complex mix of emotions from anticipation, abandonment, anger, and otherwise might have difficulty fully recovering from.

Not surprisingly, Grace seemed to have internalized this borderism, and perpetuated some problematic racial ideologies of her own. For example, she admitted: "I like to hang out with black kids who I guess act more white than black, who don't really speak the slang." On the one hand, this could be interpreted as internalized racism, or a thinning black identity. However, I argue that Grace appears to be attempting to escape borderism from blacks, rather than blacks themselves. This is an important distinction in its acknowledgement that many multiracial people who face constant contestation from family members are aversive to border patrolling more so than people of particular racial groups. This "hate the sin, love the sinner" perspective contrasts the way border patrolling is often presented as a "hate the sinner, not the sin" matter.

In addition to feeling that significant others were policing their identities, many respondents reported feeling the same about their partner choice. Next, I discuss the policing of both identity and partner choice.

When Significant Others Border Patrol Both Identities and Partner Choices

Many of the mixed race people I spoke with often mentioned that their parents in particular participated in border patrolling practices by having "ideal" partners in mind for them to marry. Frequently, these ideal partners possessed understandable yet imagined qualities such as a "good education" (formal, college education), and generally met the "high standards" set forth by parents of various racial backgrounds. While most of the respondents seldom elaborated on the details, they continually suggested that a "certain someone" existed in their parents' imagination, and that individual would have to meet established criteria, not all of which was outlined or enumerated for them to dutifully follow.

Instead, some respondents implied that the cumulative effect of discourses surrounding potential and ideal partners remained racialized, yet couched in color-blind conversations about culture or other factors. For example, many mixed Asian respondents mentioned the ways that their Asian parent (overwhelmingly the mother in my sample) encouraged them to explore and embrace their Asian heritage, and by extension these parents served as role models for their mixed race children. In a way, the quality of the parent-child relationships impacted these aspirations toward Asian-ness, but inspired many to exalt their Asian identity and heritage, and framed both their views of potential partners of various racial backgrounds and whom they viewed as ideal potential partners that they could possibly, perhaps inevitably would, marry (or partner with in long term committed arrangements).

By symbolically serving as a representative of a specific ethnic group, the Asian parent communicated subtly and directly the value of their respective ethnic group.

Parents who expressed pride in their ethnicity and immersion in the respective ethnic community exposed their embrace of ethnicity, and suggested their opposition to "symbolic" or "hidden ethnicity" (Doane 1997; Waters 1990). Parental involvement in ethnic communities sent messages to many mixed race children about the value of acknowledging one's ethnicity.

This often validated the mixed race person's ethnicity (particularly the minority ethnicity) and motivated them to claim and maintain connections to their ethnic diversity by partnering with someone who reminded them of their mother or father, as "good," decent, moral people, a position that they often contrasted to whiteness in its flawed, contaminated, corrupted, or indecent states (Espiritu 2001). This position supports literature that shows how members of marginalized groups issue counternarratives to controlling images and racialized sexualized myths of racial minorities as a critique of hegemony (Espiritu 2004a,b).

Generally, one parent promoted their own culture and heritage over that of the other parent. Parents of color perhaps unintentionally promoted their own cultural background and heritage as more valuable than that of the white (and American) parent, and may have done so in part to counter the very myths I make reference to above, in an attempt to assert their agency and restore some balance into their familial relationship, so as to make more symmetrical power relations within their own interracial relationship and as a parent in a multiracial family who serves as a symbol of racial, cultural difference (which connotes devaluation in many contexts). As a result, these parents (Asian, Native American, Latina/o, and Black) may be sending messages to their mixed race children, which encourages them to see people of color as desirable potential

partners, not for their "exotic," "erotic," "enigmatic" qualities, but because they feel like home, or serve as reminders of what the mixed race people experienced growing up in an interracial family. The parent of color then can serve as an affirmation or validation of a mixed race person's desire for a partner also of color (similar to that parent), which makes the pool of potential partners as wide as possible through the inclusion of members of all races. In an ideal situation, this is the case.

In promoting their imagined ideal to their mixed race children throughout their upbringing, parents conveyed both their hoped for or anticipated ideal but also the opposite: who they failed to imagine as a potential partner of their child, or explicitly did not want their child romantically involved with or in pursuit of, with regards to their intimate relationships.[72] Parents often conveyed these messages by remaining suggestive of finding a morally decent partner, and usually someone similar to the parent, in terms of status but also background (cultural, and by extension racial, ethnic, and national as well). This allowed parents to promote their own individuality and heritage without expressing publicly volatile views by exposing their personal racism and opposition to

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[72] Sometimes the parental partner choice preferences for their multiracial children extended to the partners' family members as well, such that various members of the respondents' partner's family border patrolled them. For example, Kim, a White/Asian multiracial woman, described the overly polite and unnecessarily formal demeanor of some of her boyfriend's family. Despite the length of their relationship, they regard her with reservation, subtly prohibiting her from full membership as an insider in the family. She explained this borderism in the following way:

> The most interesting thing, okay, every Christmas Eve, we start out at his mother's house, and it's a very traditional/typical Hispanic feel to the family. For dinner, we have tamales. It's nice. They're really friendly. They're nice people. And then the next morning, we go to my family which is just my parents so it's intimate and then in the afternoon, we go to his father's parents', which is a little more stiff. Um, I've been going there for 3 years and they still say, "Oh, it's nice to meet you." So it's definitely, you can see the extremities between his mother's side of the family and his father's side of the family.

While she remains optimistic about her eventual embrace into her boyfriend's families, Kim acknowledged, "His grandparents themselves, they knew who I am and they're nice. It's his aunts and uncles don't quite realize who I am just yet." That is, they border patrolled her. Having friends who do not (border patrol) and "realize that we work well together" counters any resistance or border patrolling that Kim experiences from her boyfriend's family.

their mixed race children dating outside of their races or cultural backgrounds. By choosing the former strategy, parents who relied on narratives promoting their own background and qualities could circumvent accusations of racism and prejudice by deferring to their "obvious" ethnic or racial pride. They could offer themselves up as a more than sufficient example of evidence that dating and inevitably marrying someone of their racial/ethnic group could only be experienced as positive.

What child would be foolish enough to verbally and visually disagree with such a parental position, without fear of punitive recourse? Wouldn't anxiety about resulting repercussions dissuade anyone from articulating opposition to such opinions, when held by one's parents? By persuading the mixed race children into quiet complicity of their ethnic/racial pride, they also may have generated silent opposition in their mixed race children who developed the ability to acknowledge and recognize racism, even in their interracially married parents. Coming to see their parent's/parents' preferences for their own race or ethnicity (or the one they partnered with through marriage) as illustrative of individual racism, some of the mixed race respondents admitted to having an awareness of their parents' racism, and discussed the dilemmas in delicately negotiating that racism as they (the mixed race children) began making their own choices regarding romantic relationships and partner choices.

Thus, some mixed race respondents desired the familiarity (of mixture) of their interracial family, perhaps wanting to replicate their parents' relationship and quality of marital life. They appeared to want to reproduce that "same difference" in their own relationships, by choosing someone similar to one of their parents, with respect to race and/or ethnicity. This suggested that these mixed race people viewed their interracial

family and their parents' marital life as admirable and worthy of replicating, in light of its success, longevity, quality, and so on.

Others made choices outside of the racial/ethnic groups to which they belonged, opting for a partner, as they grew to understand, who potentially produced situational familial tension, as this forced their parents to confront their own racism. For example, when meeting a potential partner of a different (and in their eyes, undesirable) racial and ethnic background than already existed in the family, the mixed race person witnessed the adversarial or antagonistic "welcome" their romantic partner received upon meeting the parents.

While these confrontations frequently fueled family frictions ("Why did you have to bring *him* home?!" an exasperated expression cloaking the racially coded opposition to a black partner through articulated disappointment- "And I thought you'd find yourself a *nice* Asian boy [sigh or resignation]."), they also allowed some mixed race respondents to readily recognize the racism that runs rampant in their family, and that otherwise gets masked (or denied) because of their parents' interracial union or couched in color blind discourses. Their insider perspectives exposed them to this irony, as Heather Dalmage suggests can occur (2000), where people who interracially marry may see their racially different partner as the "exception" rather than the rule, and maintain racist views about everyone in that partner's racial group, while excluding the partner from such debasing, degrading views and stereotypes.

Many multiracial people learn firsthand that border patrolling can stem from an unlikely source: individuals who are members of interracial couples or families. Despite creating the appearance of overcoming race-based obstacles (societal opposition to

interracial intimacy), these individuals may harbor intensely racist views and prejudices. Even worse, they may overlook or deny these perspectives by pointing to their involvement in their interracial families as evidence to the contrary (disproving their racism). In othering "Others," they pardon the "Others" in their own lives, failing to see any connections. These "Others" (many of my respondents) then negotiate border patrolling from this curious source, rather than from strangers or others believed to not know better.

It is arguably the case that many parents do not recognize their discursive practices as racist, and they may see what they say not as discouraging, but as opinions or expressions of their hopeful desires for their mixed race children to serve as "culture keepers" (Espiritu 2001) who can preserve the family's connection to a particular ethnic group through marriage to a member of this ethnic group. This desired maintenance of ethnicity is neither unusual nor unreasonable, but the result of its impact, its implicitly exclusionary tone, may operate to communicate a hierarchy of potential partners available to the mixed race child (as they enter the dating, mating, and marriage market). Feeling their choices limited or circumscribed by these parental discourses can dissuade the mixed race person from pursuing people they truly possess an interest in or feel an attraction to; instead, they may feel pressure to locate and partner with their parents' ideal, not their own. This is problematic for obvious reasons, if the mixed race person denies herself a choice, or convinces herself that her choice simply "happens" to match that of what her parents have in mind or would approve of. The gender asymmetrical expectation that imposes "culture keeping" imperatives on daughters more than sons also factors into this equations, and confounds the dilemmas of wanting to be dutiful

daughters and obliging sons, but not at the expense of eliminating one's options for love. Finding a balance between appropriate deference to one's parents and respect for one's own desires remains a precarious task for the mixed race respondents caught in the crossfire of controlling images and idealized potential partners.

Beneficiary Border Patrolling: "I'd Love It If You Dated…."

Respondents shared narratives that revealed how significant others not only expressed their preferences for the respondents' identity and partner choices, but deployed colorblind discourses as a means of communicating these preferences. For example, Maritza, a black Hispanic woman, noted that while she has little preference for her identity and partner choices, her mother "doesn't really care but she would just prefer if I don't date a light skin or 'pretty boy.'" Despite this not caring, she estimated that African Americans are "no good" and cautioned Maritza about, and instructed her not to identify with, them.

Other respondents received few messages from their parents about their identity and partner choices. Lexie indicated that her family never specified her dating pool of eligibles, or who might be (un)acceptable to date. This contrasted with respondents whose parents encouraged them to choose certain (socially desirable) partners as a means of accessing racial privileges. Parents sometimes cloak their white aspirations and racism in colorblind rhetoric or even lacuna that allow them to appear racially neutral and unconcerned about intentionally and actively investing in whiteness.

Other respondents spoke of experiences that illustrate both attention and inattention to the formers' identity and partner choices. Jessica, a black-identified (Black/Asian Indian) woman, noted, "My parents have never really touched the racial

issue, now that I think about it. I don't think they really care like who I date, as long as that person treats me right. Although my mom has said to me several times, 'You know, I would *love* it if you dated an Indian guy, you know, a nice rich Indian doctor.'" This is interesting commentary, given how Americanized Jessica finds her mother. While she is not demanding that Jessica be a dutiful daughter by marrying an Indian man, Jessica's mother is to some degree maintaining the cultural expectation to partner with someone similar. This is not unique to Indians, but Jessica does not acknowledge any cultural influence at all.

Furthermore, Jessica's acknowledgment of her mother's suggestion illustrates the efforts of her mother to make visible and recognizable the Indian parentage that many mistake as Mexican, white, or otherwise in Jessica. By partnering with "an Indian doctor," her mother may be hopeful that this doctor makes her daughter's Indian-ness legible. Perhaps the mother wants Jessica to more actively embrace being Indian and wants her to experience this in part through her romantic relationships. Finally, her mother might feel a slight sense of rejection since Jessica has only seriously dated black men. While she may not view this intention inclusion of blacks as an unintentional exclusion of others, in this case in particular Indians, she may not see how her mother is also impacted by the partner choices Jessica makes (or does not make).

That Jessica has "gotten that quite a few times," that her mother "wants to set me up with interns that I would 'make a great couple with'" has not convinced Jessica to accept any offers yet. The fact that Jessica has also been in a long term relationship with someone while her mother volunteers to match-make can be interpreted in many ways, specifically that she may indeed prefer for Jessica to partner with an Indian, instead of

any other racial ethnic group. However, Jessica clarifies, "It's more so, 'Um, yeah. I approve of your current boyfriend. That doesn't necessarily mean you all are going to get married, so keep your options *open*.'" She's already talking about, "You know, you guys should find an apartment together next year." And I'm like, "No, mommy." Thus, her mother's ambivalence and mixed messages reflect what Childs (2005) calls "supportive opposition."

I would also argue that Jessica's mother is benevolently border patrolling her daughter by reminding her to consider the eligibility of Indian men in her potential pool of romantic candidates. By extension, this reminder works to interpellate Jessica as Indian, or at least partially so (or in addition versus opposition to Black). By specifically marking the potential partners she (the mother) imagines as ideal, she could also be inviting Jessica to explore more of that (Indian) part of who she is. Her mother may see dating as an opportunity for this exploration, or a vehicle that facilitates this overall process and experience.

Protective Border Patrolling: "It'd Be Easier to Tell Them I Was Bisexual Than It'd Be to Bring Home a White Guy."

Another variant of border patrolling relates yet another paradoxical position in which people in interracial families find themselves. The paradox emerges when parents, as members of interracial relationships, actively discourage their mixed race children from forming their own interracial relationships. Out of concern, not necessarily because of their own racist views, many parents border patrol their adult mixed race children's partner choices because of their own (parental) anxieties about the types of opposition and antagonism they anticipate their children encountering in their romantic relationships.

This “because I said so” parental maneuver suggests that border patrolling begets border patrolling, with parents creating a cyclical relationship with policing through their attempts to protect their children from the hostility and curiosity of others and desire to help them navigate the rugged terrain of race in this country. As Brunsma (2006), Rockquemore and Lazloffy (2005), Nakazawa (2003), Dalmage (2004b) and others contend, differences exist between the ways in which parents see their multiracial children and assign their racial identification, and multiracial children see themselves. While Brunsma (2005) and Gallagher (2004) argue that parents prefer to label their part white multiracial children as white (as discussed above), little research empirically documents disagreements or disjunctures between the position of parents and children regarding the racial identity and identification of the multiracial children (i.e., when multiracial reject racial redistricting and challenge their parents’ racial assignments). Furthermore, investigations of parents’ motivations to engage in “racial redistricting” have neglected to fully consider the multiracial children’s perspective, phenotype, or other contributing factors that might account for parents promoting whiteness.

Though evidence exists documenting the manner in which parents of racial minorities typically engage in “anticipatory racial discrimination” socialization, by preparing them for future (presumably inevitable) encounters with racism, the same evidence does not exist for parents of multiracial children. Rather than too quickly conclude that protective border patrolling indicates racial prejudice, it is important to consider the unique set of social situations parents of multiracial children must equip them to handle. Parents assuming responsibility for this might rely on their own

(mis)perception of their multiracial children's identity to educate them about their choices of identity and partners, hence the possible emergence of protective borderism.

Take for example the experience of Leilani, a black-identified (black and Hawaiian), who made an honest admission by recognizing that she has adopted the border patrolling practices of her black mother and Hawaiian father, whom she ambivalently described as "kind of racist and not really":

> Well, he doesn't really like white people. Just because of issues he's had when he was younger. So I think if I bring home any other race aside from white, for him that would be okay. For my mother, I think she really wants me to be with a black male but if I bring home a white male or an Asian guy or whatever, she's gonna be fine with it because she herself didn't marry a black man.

As the older daughter, Leilani also contended with the protectiveness of her father, which she defended later in the interview. "Once I told my mother that I was dating [my long term boyfriend who is black], she didn't seem to have a problem. Once I told my father that I was dating him, his main concern was that I was dating. It really wasn't about his race." In observing the protective borderism of Leilani's parents, we can begin to link this behavior to what they have been exposed to and experienced.

> My grandmother has a major problem with my mother. You could tell in all her actions. She wouldn't blatantly just come out and say, "I don't like you. I don't like this," but she'd always just do little stuff that you could tell like, she wouldn't be doing that to…[relatives of] the same race. But you could tell she definitely had a problem. And she also treated me differently (worse) from my four or five other cousins….I guess I didn't really notice it at the time but my mom always noticed it and I notice it now, now that I'm older and looking back.

This subtle opposition to interracial intimacy is increasingly characteristic of the style in which people choose to express themselves and their racial attitudes (Bonilla-Silva 2002; Childs 2005; Schuman, Steeh, Bobo, and Krysan 1997).

Leilani's choice to assert a border identity with a primarily black emphasis (Rockquemore and Lazloffy 2005) may have a lot of do with trying to negate or counter her physical approximation of whiteness and relocate herself closer to blackness. In doing so, she may be 1) seeking the approval of her grandmother, or 2) trying to actively affirm and confirm her blackness because its invisibility otherwise calls her racial identity into question. Lewis (2006) makes this point, arguing that some multiracial people vocally embrace that which others cannot or refuse to readily see.

For Grace, a black/Native American woman, negotiating her identity and partner choice among family required her to have an awareness of her family's reception (resistance) to potential or actual partners she considers bringing home.

> I know my parents would look at it, "Well, if they're white, it's interracial," but anything else, whether they claim 600 nationalities, they're black. They're black. But I know when I was talking to that guy who was Irish, Indian, Native American, and all that, they would've considered that- they would've looked at me like, "Whoa! Why are you bringing him home?"…. They wouldn't have cared but they would have. I know they would've said something to me when he left.

With some ambivalence, Grace explained that her family would express supportive opposition of her partner choice. Because they see her as black (as opposed to how she sees herself- black and Native American), they encourage racially homogamous relationships, while dissuading racially mixed ones. She inferred that a racially mixed person who physically approximated her family could potentially blend in and be welcomed in the family, while a visibly white man would not have this experience. Contrary to contemporary colorblind discourses (as illustrated by her mother's implicit borderism), Grace's grandparents explicitly expressed their borderism:

> "Don't bring a white guy home." And with my mom, it's kind of like silent spoken. Like she doesn't care but in a sense she does. It's just all because my

> brother only likes [and dates] white women. I think he's had a couple black girlfriends, but the majority of his girlfriends are white…. [With my mom] It's cool but please bring somebody black home.

The intersections of race, gender, and sexuality converge to create a unique kind of borderism from significant others for Grace:

> I think it'd be easier to tell them I was bisexual than it'd be to bring home a white guy because the option with the white guy, "Oh, you could marry this guy." It's just like, "Whoa!" And the thing with being bisexual, well, I would tell them, "Well, I'm not trying to have a relationship with a woman but sexually I am involved with women," then I think they would be like, "Wow, okay." But at least I'm not marrying a woman. If I'm marrying a white guy, it'd be like, "Excuse me?!"

I interpreted Grace's comments to mean that her mother views white men as more threatening than women because the former could lead to pregnancy, marriage, and permanence. The latter, in her mother's imagination, symbolizes whimsy, a phase, something temporary. While this logic is faulty (given the obvious permanence of many non-heterosexual relationships, and the increasing push to legalized these relationships by offering marital rights to everyone), her mother sees white heterosexual masculinity as more of a menace to Grace than any queer desires Grace might have.

Toni related a corresponding experience (regarding parental patrolling). When asked if she had ever been interested in a man who did not reciprocate her interest, Toni deployed discursive practices far more revealing than she intended; she displaced and decentered whiteness, disrupting its invisibility by pointedly drawing attention to its "exceptions."

> Oh, that was when I was in 9th grade. The guy was actually white. But I think I just liked him because of the way he looked. He was nice looking, but he was just like, "Whatever." What I mean is he was a really cute white guy.

By making whiteness seem so foreign and insignificant, she solidified the cognitive divide between "us" and "them." In assuring me that he was not just "cute for a white guy," Toni explained, "He is kind of off-limits, though. Because…if I was to bring a white guy home, they'd--my dad would be like, "Uh-huh" (No). I don't think he'd accept that really."

Although Toni's mother is herself racially mixed, a fact that Toni's father is not "really aware of," her father dissuades her from having an interest in white men. By communicating this dissuasion, he border patrols from the position of insider-other; manages to maintain the illusion of a singularly "black" family; and identifies the appropriate potential partners for his adult daughter: black men. Toni observed, "He did say one time, 'Don't date a white guy.' This was a long time ago though. He was just like, 'Don't think that you can bring a white guy to my house, because I don't like that 'dating outside of your race' stuff."

Toni's narrative paralleled that of Tito, a black-identified (black/white) man. He reported hearing similar advice from his black/white biracial parents, who cautioned him about interracial relationships specifically with whites, since they regarded these relationships as mostly physical and sexual in nature. In their attempts to protect their son, they advised, "'Don't bring a white girl home.'" Now that Tito dates, he rejects their advice, ignores their anxieties, and refuses to regulate his romantic partner choice. As a result, he dates mostly non-black women. Though it is not his intention to subvert racial categories, he does so by identifying as black, appearing biracial, and dating mostly white or honorary white women. Crossing the black/white divide challenges the color line; his

parents' perception of him as singularly black; and the "danger" unfairly attached to black men desiring white and honorary white woman (Douglas 2002; Kennedy 2003).

While Tito remained admirably unapologetic about his partner choice, Toni appeared defensive about her own. This gender difference exposes asymmetrical expectations and pressures on men and women, suggesting that men have an ostensibly easier time navigating "multiracial" "interracial" borders as well (see Rockquemore 2005). Furthermore, Tito had an awareness of his parents' preference for both his identity and partner choices while Toni either did not (or chose not) to see the connections between her father's dissuading words and her eventual partner choice. When she spoke of a notable exception to his rule ("that was the only time I was somewhat attracted to a white person"), she does not embrace the transgression as Tito would. Instead, she blunts both her father's and her own borderism. Shifting the focus to her prototypically overprotective father strategically deflects attention away from Toni's resistance to crossing color lines. Drawing attention to his opposition of her potential interracial relationship, Toni appears supportive of such arrangements. Later comments reveal a more complex positioning on the issue:

> Toni: I've never seen white guys and thought, 'Okay, he looks nice,' but that was it because… (long pause)
>
> MM: Because you suspect it'll never be able to go any further?
>
> Toni: That too. And then black guys, you know, that's it! Really! I really like--I *like* black guys. I like my boyfriend so that's something that would never really happen…. I wouldn't think a person has more in common with a black guy *naturally* and it's black guys and females are attracted in ways that I don't know….It's different among the white culture because I would assume that if I was trying to get a white guy to notice me, I would have to act a certain way, in order for me to get his attention. You know what I'm saying?

Despite facing accusations of "acting white," Toni suggested that she would have to alter her appearance and approach in order to appeal to white men.

> I would probably have to dress like a white girl [which means] with the preppy look, the polo shirts with the collars up, and big shades. You know? Flip flops. I don't know….But those are the only ways I can think of…. [I would have to start] probably hanging around all white people. Go to a predominantly white institution.

In other words, Toni imagined that attracting a white man required her to approximate whiteness or embody whiteness through these behavioral markers, since her skin color would mean "they still may perceive me as black (or acting black)." To counteract this perception, Toni felt she would need to create an "inner circle" of white friends to dissolve some of the social barriers between "whites" and "blacks." This inner circle would then signify that Toni "must be cool with white people." In appearing "interested in white guys," Toni imagined they would think, "Yeah…I would approach her."

Toni contended that having a core group of exclusively white friends would quickly and easily attract the attention of white men, since such a friendship group would symbolize efforts to approximate or aspire to whiteness. This willingness, in her estimation, would be rewarded with said attention from white men. In addition, her incoherence reflects one colorblind discursive strategy, which she uses to evade the pesky question of why she border patrols her actual and potential partner choices (and herself) in the process of mate selection. This evasion ends when she finally admitted:

> The comment that my dad made was old. A long time ago. I don't really worry about him because I'm an adult now, but I don't think I would date interracially. I'm used to dating black guys. I'm used to dating my boyfriend. I don't really see myself going out and marrying a white guy or an Asian guy, or a Latino guy at all. Because there are differences that I can't get over and the comfort level also, because I know, like my boyfriend and I, we can trip out about things that I wouldn't be able to trip out with a white guy about. You see what I'm saying? (She laughs) Like we talk about black churches, for instance. We think it's so

> funny. They stay in church all day and the things that they wear, the people in the congregation. That's just something that's funny to us, and we actually poke fun at our own race. They're dressed. They're *very* dressed, for the occasion. We just think that's crazy.

Thus, Toni internalized the borderism she faced from significant others, and developed an explanation for policing her own partner choice that buffers her father from criticism.

Alicia, a black-identified woman of black/white parentage, spoke about her father's border patrolling behavior. In junior high school, she dated a white guy, and like their relationship. Despite this, they broke up after 10 months of dating. "My father made it abundantly clear that he did not want anyone white at his house…. 'Can't you find anybody black?'" His comments to her perfectly illustrate border patrolling of both identity and interracial relationships, because he negated her racial mixture by also ignoring his wife's biracial identity; and cemented his expectation of homogeny by clearly communicating whom she could and could not date under the guise of "fatherly love." This discursive strategy enabled him to convey that he favored another candidate over the ones that directly met his disapproval.

He made little space for accommodating racial mixture discursively and in his family, to the point where he extended his border patrolling behavior Alicia's biracial husband. Based on her accounts, Alicia had not found a "sufficiently black" man, and her father insinuated that she keep looking for someone black. He disqualified her husband who was "too light to be black" and had a French-sounding name, unable to reconcile French-ness, lightness, and blackness in his border-patrolling mind.

Some scholars suggest that parents most significantly influence their children's racial identity (Tizard and Phoenix 2002). Thus, the impact of protective policing of identity and partner choice exposes how parents' racial discourses seriously constrain

choice from within, rather than outside of, already "interracial" families. I am left to wonder about how the absence of this policing would impact Alicia's choices, including whether or not she would continue to assert a singular black identity, or might have remained in that "interracial" relationship with her white ex-boyfriend. While her family members ultimately cared about men treating her respectfully, her father's words erected racial barriers in her imagination that she reinforced in reality. By choosing someone similar to her, Alicia may have decided that finding a partner of the same racial combination and heritage (black and white) would validate her, while placating her father (if even to a limited degree).

With experiences that paralleled Alicia's, Keisha, a black-identified woman of Black, Native American, and white heritage, mentioned one casual "interracial" relationship ("There was this white guy. We'd talk on the phone. He'd bring me candy, but it never got serious.), indicating that all of her friends questioned her in discouraging, policing ways (i.e., "Are you dating him?"; "He acts black".). As a result of friends' borderism of her identity and partner choices, Keisha openly expressed her dubious position regarding interracial relationships:

> I don't know if I'd be open to dating a white guy…. Just for me, it kind of causes problems…. Because of the color of my skin, people will say, "You're acting white."[73]…I mean, when you see a black woman with a white man, she just--that automatically discredits her as being a strong black female. My uncle, he's married to a white woman. Their children, especially still living in the South, they still get judged and stared at. Because there are these really, really light skinned kids with this dark man, and then the wife is there, so I feel like, would I want to put my children in that position because other people (oppose that)?[74]

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[73] Scales-Trent (1995) describes her experience with borderism by discussing how being a white black woman exposes her to racial discourses that others openly and unsuspectingly share with her, believing that she is white. Keisha also appears as an "almost white" black woman, but she encounters prohibitive racial discourses designed to remind her of who she *really* is (black) and who she should date (black men).

[74] Interestingly, Keisha deploys the familiar discourse of concern (What about the children?) from the inside, as opposed to the more typical outside. In doing so, she illustrated how facing borderism from

Since Keisha felt that people read her light skin and other physical features with curiosity, she also believed that partnering with a white man would adversely impact her, by intensifying the kinds of racial surveillance visited upon her. As Twine (1997) pointed out in "Heterosexual Alliances," people often use the romantic partners of others to racially decode racially and ethnically ambiguous multiracial individuals, and determine their racial loyalty, allegiance, and affiliation or a lack thereof. She acknowledged the difficulty that resides in picking a partner who not only makes her racially trickier to read, but also raises others' suspicions about her racial loyalty and positionality (which is already difficult to identify- a circuitous racial reality for her). Choosing a white partner would certainly disqualify her as black (in the eyes of borderists), disloyal to blacks through her romantic affiliation with this white person (Twine 1997).

Seeing how her cousins encounter interrogations from others about their racial identity, Keisha reported taking the path of least resistance. She, like many other respondents with partial African or black ancestry, preferred circumventing and eliding that kind of racialized attention. By choosing an identity that conforms with the persistent rule of hypodescent, and choosing partners that make the two (her and her partner) look as if they are in a monoracial relationship, she is generally successful at avoiding, or minimizing this attention.

Other respondents, such as Vanessa, a black-identified woman with African American, Native American, and White ancestry, and Anna, a biracial-identified black/white woman, also mentioned feeling motivated to engage in evasive behaviors to

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generalized and significant others discouraged her from partnering with someone who might further complicate her daily racial negotiations.

avoid racialized attention from others. I found Anna's discussion of her aversion to this attention profound and troubling, since she described feelings parallel to agoraphobia. In Anna's account, the perpetual attention that she receives dissuades her from enjoying being in public spaces. While this has not inhibited her behavior, she has felt hyper-conscious of being "colorful…an enigma walking[75]," or the spectacle (DeBord 1995) she serves for border patrolling others.

Allison, a black/white biracial woman who was adopted by white parents[76], described the way she experienced borderism from significant others. She recalled that her first boyfriend, who was black, "got shit for dating a half white girl….His friends all had jokes because my reputation through school was as this half white girl who's mostly white, you know?" Allison explained that being "half and half" racially translated into "mostly white." She posits, "Like, she's half black but she's mostly white….It's kind of like, 'I don't know what you're messing around with that half white girl for.'" Allison astutely describes having people point out, "'She's only half white'," is "kind of like having a little splinter. It's kind of always annoying."

This, coupled with the public reactions to them being together, frustrated her in a way that motivated her to ignore the unsolicited attention. "Well, I just don't really notice, because for the longest time, I would feel so uncomfortable when people would stare at me for whatever reason, so then I learned to block it out." That is, being mixed proved much less (if at all) problematic than being a racialized spectacle under perpetual scrutiny and surveillance:

> When we walked through the mall, everyone would stare at us…Just kind of blank stares. I wasn't really into why they were staring at me like that. I mean if

[75] Lyrics from "Colorful" by Rocco Deluca and the Burden (2005).
[76] They also adopted two other biracial children.

> you wanna stare, whatever. Like my mom taught me it's not nice to stare, even if you're staring because you think I'm pretty, because you think I'm ugly. You don't stare. If you wanna do that, that's your business.

Allison's upbringing has allowed her to have both an awareness of border patrolling behavior as inappropriate, as well as a feigned nonchalance about border patrollers. Framed as flawed etiquette rather than a failure at racial etiquette, Allison dismissed others' behavior as rude rather than indicative of others policing her identity or partner choice. Her confidence and sense of humor also allow her to engage border patrollers who stare too long at her. Whatever reasons people have for staring (because they view her as pretty, or as ugly), that does not excuse their rudeness. By generating conversation with them, she was able to show them that she is not a spectacular racial object to behold, but a person with agency. Allison observed, "I don't know if they're just trying to figure out, you know, 'where she's from, thinks she is.' You know? Or maybe the whole 'light skinned' thing. I do know that…. You know, like, 'Oh, you're light skinned. That's awesome.'" Rather than negotiate all of these possibilities, she interacts with others in as straightforward a way as possible, to disrupt the staring and the discomfort she might be feeling.

When Chloe (a black-identified black, white, and Native American woman) attempted a casual conversation with an Asian Indian male friend she had a budding romantic interest during high school, she discovered his borderism: "I asked, trying to be subtle, if he'd ever date somebody that wasn't Indian and he said, 'No.' And I asked him why and he said, he didn't think his parents, you know, would allow it. I was like, 'Screw your parents.'" Calling him out for using his culture as a crutch, Chloe reported

feeling slighted by his rejection, as delivered in the cushion of culture and parental opposition.

> I think I felt a slap in the face at first. But after[wards] he explained, and I think he is a little naïve, and I don't think he understood what I was getting at….I think at first it was like, "Ouch." But after he explained everything, he was like, "It wouldn't work out because I wouldn't have a family you know, if I decided to be with somebody." And I was like, "Well, you know, that sucks. I hope you don't do that to your kids. But good luck with that."

While Chloe understood the consequences of making the "wrong" (strongly disapproved of/forbidden) mate selection choices involved facing familial alienation and losing one's connection to family, she was dubious of his perfectly choreographed deference to culture, family, and heritage when confronted with this interracial, intercultural choice.

Seeing through his explanation, Chloe rejected it upon recognizing the way he, like others, deferred to family and culture as reason to stick to his own kind. Perhaps she believed he situationally or suddenly embraced his ethnicity and culture, seeing that as a convenient explanation for not being able to date her. She neglected to recognize how he was navigating borderism while engaging in his own protective border patrolling behavior with her (since she was not an Asian Indian, and thus an inappropriate mate for him; and in an effort to maintain the integrity of his culture. When Chloe concluded their conversation by saying, "I hope you don't do that to your kids," she tried to discursively disrupt the cycle of protective border patrolling.

Her narrative illustrated how individuals from racially and ethnically mixed families, while familiar with opposition to such mixing, must still sort out their own feelings and reactions to being border patrolled by those who otherwise seem to enjoy their presence or friendship. Being border patrolled then may never lose its sting,

particularly when people of romantic interest, as friends, disqualify them from the pool of potential partners because of real or imagined racial, ethnic, and/or cultural differences.

While protective border patrolling works to preserve racial and cultural heritage, it does so in a way that reproduces racial divides.

Malevolent Border Patrolling: "I'll Disown You If You Marry Someone of Another Race."

Many significant others explicitly expressed concern about the partner choices of respondents, cautioning them to avoid certain groups while steering them clearly towards others. For example, Rose, a white-identified woman, indicated: "My parents, well, my mom always told me that my dad would disown me if I married someone of another race….Any other race." "Even if they were mixed, part white?" "Yeah, any other race." This illustrates the ways that parents patrol respondents' racial identity, to the degree that a singular white racial identity is imposed and then chosen, and by extension, then Rose must partner along those racial lines. In some ways, Rose's comments suggested that both her identity and partner choice are being patrolled, although this is a technicality, since Rose claims a singular white identity for herself. One must wonder about the impact of this racial socialization, since such messages not only reinforce one's racial identity as white and singular, while erasing the mixture that Rose acknowledges, but cement the racial borders between groups perceived as different. Assuming that she and her family, and her father in particular, have a close relationship, she will value this message or at least consider its importance and role in allowing her to maintain this connection to her parents.

Going out of bounds by choosing outside of whiteness solidifies the imagined racial parameters around whiteness. Such behavior would constitute racial treason or operate as an act of betrayal, to the extent that her father would disown her. Whether truth or fiction, this threat of being disowned is an incredibly powerful kind of border patrolling. Her father has effectively, through this threatening discourse, managed to regulate race and socially control his daughter's actions with regards to her partner choice. Given the kinds of power and privilege that white males work hard to protect in this society, and the degree to which members of this group exact control over many women in their lives, this should not be too surprising. By sending Rose this message, he attempted to ensure that the whiteness they have constructed within their family stay that way. (As an aside, Rose mentioned that both her younger siblings will date only whites. "My brother will not talk about girls he likes, but according to my sister, they're all white and blonde, so what does that say? I don't know... He won't talk to me. My sister will only date white guys. I don't think she finds other races attractive.")

To complicate this, Rose mentioned that her mother may feel similarly, but conceals her feelings or deflects them by deferring to Rose's father as proverbially "having the last word." In Rose's account, her mother hides her honest feelings about issues by blaming her husband, Rose's father. Rose speculated:

> [If my current boyfriend were black instead of white], I think she would've had a bigger problem with it if he was black, for whatever reason. Maybe it's the tone of the skin….She's very basic when it comes to skin colors and she judges people face value. So I think if she saw a really, really dark skinned person, she'd think, "Oh, they're a gangster, and they're going to come rob me," and the lighter the skin goes, the more trusting she is of the person. So I definitely think if he was a dark skinned black man, she would've been upset more.

Rose's mother's mention of skin color parallels the concern of Sarah's boyfriend's mother who expressed colorist and racist anxieties about blackness. Both believed that "lighter" meant "better" and comfortably communicated these racist ideologies to the respective respondents. The themes of parental opposition in Rose's narrative also correspond to that of Peg, who described her reluctance and anxiety over introducing her black-identified boyfriend to her family: "I was so fearful of him meeting my parents, not because of the whole, 'You're going to meet the parents.' Not that but…the race factor. That is the main reason. My boyfriend, he has no idea that my parents are racist." Peg then elaborated on the emotional energy (Hochschild 1983) involved in constructing an ostensibly "ideal" environment in which to have these introductions, and revealed the less than ideal outcome:

> And so he comes over and my parents, they walk in the room and they are a bit surprised because my boyfriend is tall. He's a tall guy. And he walks in and for some odd reason, I know my mom was like frightened because my mom is like 5'2" and she's like 93 pounds. She's very small and she looks at this big guy and he's black. But he's black and Indian but he's black. You know? Like they see a big tall black guy. With their daughter, their precious daughter in the kitchen, and you know, I wasn't there long, and then my mom was just like, 'Come here!' She wanted to give me something in private but I didn't want to take it because I'm like…my dad and my boyfriend are going to be alone….and so I wanted to get out of there so we go into the bedroom and she gives me something and she's like, "Who is that guy and you know, like after I introduce him, I'm like, 'Oh, that's (boyfriend's name). He's just a friend.' And remind you, every guy I have is a friend, no matter what, just a friend. And I'm like, 'Yeah, he's just a friend.' She's like, "Okay." And I'm like, "Okay." "Because you don't want to be seen with a 'gumdingy.' I was like, "What?" and I was just like, "Okay." Like 'gumdingy,' it's Korean slang for, I guess the equivalent to, I don't know, (the n word), I'm assuming. I'm not, the thing is, I don't know the meaning of that word explicitly but I do know when I heard it that it wasn't, it was almost like the first time I heard the n word. I don't really need a definition. I just knew it was bad….And she was like, "You don't want to be seen or be with one." I'm like, "Okay, now I know more so, and because the thing is even though I always knew my parents had racist tendencies, or whatever, they never really explicitly said it, or I never really heard my parents say shit like—well, no. I've heard my dad say the n word. The last time I heard him was when I was fifteen, going through

> driver's training but it wasn't frequent. I said it to an actual person…I am completely the opposite of my parents, you know?… I think my parents kind of expected me to grow up in the same type of thinking that they had, to be fearful of Mexicans and blacks, and you know, don't trust them. You know what I mean?

Worried that Peg and her boyfriend (whom she introduced as "her friend") have developed a serious relationship, Peg's father called to offer his advice. His discursive practices paralleled that of Rose's mother, in its characteristic deflection and displacement of race:

> "Well, you don't want to be dating a black guy because some people out there, they may not want to date you because you date a black guy.' And I'm thinking he's talking about those people, you know? "Alright, I see where you are coming from and then he's like, 'And you may not get hired based on, you know, dating. I'm like, "Okay, whatever. There are stories." And then he's like, "Plus, black people and I just don't get along." And I was like, "What do you mean?" And he was like, "Well, I was in the army, and we just don't get along."

The emotional labor of confronting borderism from significant others who are themselves members of interracial families should not be understated and constitutes a significant part of one's negotiation of race inside and outside of the romantic relationship.

Amidst evidence documenting the persistent anti-black discrimination, some of Peg's friends, who were "so surprised" at this border patrolling, pointed out, "Well, that doesn't make any sense. You're Asian and they're interracial. And I'm like, "Yes, but no" because I'm, my dad doesn't see me as "Other" meaning the "Other" as in a bad group to date or whatever." Because they have developed the "kinder, gentler" style of racism (a term I suspect Peg borrowed from Bonilla-Silva), some of Peg's friends could unflinchingly say, "'You know, black people, we can be friends with them; we can be nice to them but um…'" (Just don't marry one.) While her friends attempted to empathize with her, they failed, in her estimation, because they were well-versed in the discursive strategies of colorblindness.

> The language you use, the types of feelings you have about race, and you're trying to--like the way I felt like was talking to some of my friends, like they were trying to say they were better than my parents because they could be open about this kind of stuff and I'm just like, "You know what? What do you say when someone says, "Well, why don't you date a black guy?" and you're like, "Well, I'm just not attracted to black people." What is that, you know what I mean? How is that any better than my parents being the way they are? I'm just like, "Don't try to trump my parents with your supposed openness and socially aware conscience."

While she agreed that her friends might be confused or perplexed that she does not identify as white, by reading her as white, they can maintain what Peg sees as the "illusion of inclusion" (Collins 1998; Gallagher 2004a). By espousing "bleeding heart liberal" rhetoric, they can present themselves as open and accepting, while privately maintaining views that may compromise this presentation of self. That is what Peg is critical of. In that sense, she groups her parents and these friends into the same border patrolling category, though she respects the direct manner in which her father expresses his opposition, while disliking what seems duplicitous on her friends' part.

For Peg, being in a relationship with a black man required her to confront colorblindness and the racial ideologies guiding her family's opposition to and friends' ostensible support of her associating with black men. She indicated that her parents would want to know "what my boyfriend does for a living," so that they can figure out "what type of black person he is." That is, they would ask loaded questions, judging questions…not questions just out of curiosity. "It's like, 'I wanna find out and I want to see where I can place this guy.'"

In her current relationship, Peg experiences a kind of identity validation that was absent in previous ones[77]. Although her boyfriend asserts a singular identity, he too has

[77] I remember my first relationship where my identity was like, it wasn't there, where my ex-boyfriend and I got into an argument and it was something that I experienced, like a racist incident. I don't recall but I do

parents of different races. As a result, Peg says that he "recognizes that I'm Asian and stuff like that. He jokes around and stuff. Like he'll tell me, "'Yeah, I'm going out with a Korean girl.' And I was like, "Why do you have to say that?" she recalled, laughing. "He'll say, 'Oh, it's just a joke.' And then his friends were like, 'For real, you're going out with an Asian girl,' and then they make some sexual reference like, 'Oh, they got them sideways pussy.'" Though the experience of being recognized as Asian comes with price--sexual fetishism—Peg appreciated the validated identity, since she does not aspire to whiteness, or does "not want to be like white." Peg acknowledged throughout the interview just how much being Asian means "being the exotic other," observing, "I was sexy being Asian, but can I get any sexier? No."

In her current relationship, Peg noted her appreciation for the more genuine racial or ethnic empathy that her current boyfriend expresses, since he relates to many of her experiences and allows her to joke around with him in a way that was off-limits with her previous white boyfriend. "I can talk to my current boyfriend about white people and not feel as if I have to explain it. With my previous boyfriend, I still was aware of all this kind of stuff. I couldn't verbalize it with him without trying to teach him." The reward then of racial empathy is two-fold: having your partner's firsthand understanding of racism or your experiences with racism, as related to their own; and not having to engage in the emotional labor that comes with explaining such experiences. In the absence of

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remember that I was upset and um, for him he thought this would comfort me. He was just like, "But I don't see you as a minority." And the thing is I said to him, I told him, "No, but I want you to see me as a minority. Don't you know what I mean? According to Peg, this boyfriend probably perceived her as "like white" or "the acceptable one to bring home to the family."…. I think he got it, in the sense of I am a minority, but I don't think he got it in like, the whole aspects of like, you know, just how I'm going to be treated. It was almost like I'm a minority, just like physical, and that's it. But like all the other things that go along with these physical attributes I think he just (ignored). Peg's description suggested that this boyfriend detached or displaced meaning from her race, and only chose to recognize her race in superficial ways, rather than meaningful ones that shaped their relationship and individual experiences.

such empathy, individuals are encouraged to engage in even more emotional labor, to explain their experiences, and convince others of their legitimacy. This expectation compounds the existing emotional labor, leaving individuals feeling frustrated or exhausted in their search for validation and legitimation. When one partner negates the experiences of the other, this can feel unsupportive and alienating as well. Peg contrasted her current boyfriend's awareness of her as a racial minority (and not—in part because "he sees that I surround myself with white friends and all this stuff".); and his racial and ethnic empathy with a previous white boyfriend who wanted her to be white. The two openly joke with one another as well:

> "He's like…. "'No one else sees you as white. You're Asian. You look Asian." That's a joking thing between he and I have because I say to him, "You're not Asian. Because I'm like Asian. Asian people who look like me. I'm like, "That is what Asian America is like. You are not Asian."

Because both identify as Asian or Asian American, the two share this racial heritage, but have different Asian ethnicities. As a result, Peg jokingly disqualifies her boyfriend as "not Asian" because he does not "look" Asian. While we could interpret her joking as a form of benevolent border patrolling, we can also see that Peg relies on this jocular style to highlight the "same/difference" between her and her boyfriend. While she looks more Asian than he does, that does not make her more Asian than him. In fact, her narrative suggests that she is often betrayed by her appearance, such that significant others often read her as white (or as approximating whiteness). In this way, both she and her boyfriend are invisibly Asian, or Asian mainly in their own acknowledgement of this heritage. Again, they share this experience, but her Korean and his Indian heritage also create differences for them socially. It is interesting to think about how she might border patrol her boyfriend, were he to start asserting a multiracial or singular Asian identity.

Peg explained, “People have taught me that ‘Asian American’ is people who look like me, and it was only recently that I started becoming aware of this. I was like, ‘Oh, okay.” Because for the longest time, it was just like Asian Americans are people who have black hair, slanted eyes, small frame, pale skin.”

Tracy, the only child of her Black mother and Filipino father, indirectly and vicariously experienced border patrolling behavior from her parents, who interrogated her white boyfriend about his motivations for being with her.

> My parents were dating him, too. And he goes to the same church back home. So seeing him act one way, then treat me another way. It was really hard for them, but they didn’t really- they just left it alone and let me handle it. And um, when he started coming over to my house all the time, when my boyfriend showed how serious he was, he drove from Atlanta because I went back home last summer to work, and he lived in Atlanta, he drove home every weekend and spent the weekend with me. So they started seeing, “He’s serious. He actually wants to be with her.” And um, I just remember first, one night I was asleep and they were out on the porch sitting talking ‘til 1 a.m. and my mom was like, “I just wanna get to the knitty gritty of this.” He was like, “Okay.” “I know it’s 1 o’clock in the morning, but what makes you wanna date colored people? So he kind of was like, “Ah, I just like ‘em.” So yeah, I guess that kind of just kicked off the way they met. And after my mom got over that he wanted to date colored people, as she put it, it was okay…. He was just like I’ve never looked at color! You know? It’s just what I like. It kind of made my mother be like, “Oh, you like my daughter.” He earned so many points with my dad. (It worked out that) I was staying at home, and he’d stay at his mom’s house for the weekend, so every Friday he was home, and every Sunday night, he’d stay ‘til 11 p.m., even though he had to be at work at 6. But he was just like, “I just wanna spend as much time with you as I can.” So my mom was just like, “Hmm,” and he grilled (cooked out) with my dad. Like it wasn’t like he’d just come home and see me, and not speak to my parents. He actually like spent time with my parents without me. He’d just come over to watch tv. And they’d all be watching tv together, and I’d come home from work, and they’d all be like, “Hey.” It’s just like, “How long have you been here?” “Why were you here for 5 hours?”…. He grills/BBQs with my dad. My dad--boyfriend is a computer science major, and he came home one time and we have like 5 computers and they were all acting up and he came down from Atlanta and fixed them. Ever since then he’s been my dad’s best friend. Yeah, that’s what did it for him. He’s in the family.

Because Tracy acknowledged that not only she but her family would be dating her boyfriend, she understood the importance of her parents questioning him and his motivations. Their questions allowed him to express his sincere interest in their daughter, while working to establish trust with them. This kind of malevolent border patrolling proved purposeful but could have discouraged a more easily discouraged boyfriend from pursuing the relationship with Tracy even further. Luckily, Tracy's boyfriend shared interests with her parents, proved his respect for the family (daughter and parents) and was not dissuaded by her parent's inquisition. This is notable in the sense that such dissuasion is often the very intention of malevolent border patrolling behavior.

Sanchez, a black Latino young man, described his experience encountering border patrolling in response to his participation in an interracial relationship with a white woman that lasted about a year. "I got her number and just talked to her for a little while. She was a very cool person. I would say she was very interesting. I liked her." Because of his interest in a white woman, he faced opposition from others, especially black woman who looked at him with "disgust and just walked away" when he publicly appeared partnered with a white woman. "Wooh…I was the Judas with black women…. That's like the only way I can describe it…. I thought I was cool with them, but I guess not." When the interracial couple showed up to Prom, they received such dirty looks that Sanchez had to reassure his date, "'You here with me. I like you; you like me. Pssh. It's all whatever.'"

Sanchez faced the scorn of black women who, he pointed out, rejected him first, and felt entitled to reserving their right to do so ("You know, I try to ask them out, they

all say no.") Only upon dating a white woman did they express their own sense of rejection, a point not lost on Sanchez.

> Then when I date this other girl, I was like, "Whoever I talk to, and whoever says yes, it's all good." Uh, what happened was, she was white, so they're like, "Oh, you dating a white girl." And this one black girl…she just came by to visit and she was like, "I heard that you--you need to stop messing with "the white," man. You might catch something…We know about you. You need to stop messing with the white women. I heard you've been running around campus, just trying to get with all, all the white women you can get.

In one fell swoop, Sanchez went from race traitor to "player," presumably entertaining not one, but several white women at once. Because he was "hanging out with the white group" in school, black women in particular quickly but incorrectly concluded he was whitewashed and by extension "whoring it up" like "the white" (women) do. In their racial imagination, he acquired unflattering "white" characteristics and lost his racial roadmap. This point was expressed when an Asian girlfriend he later formed a relationship with so agitated a black woman that she demanded, "'What side are you on?' I was like, 'What?! What side am I on?!' I didn't want to get into it. It was like whatever. I know what side! I was like, 'I know who I am. Do you?'"

Sanchez found the border patrolling from black women curious, given this:

> Well, first of all, "I did choose most of you, and you all denied, so what am I going to say? I mean I've tried to be nice to you; I've tried like every trick in the book and you still say no." So I'm like, "Okay. Alright. I'll go to someone else." I don't care. I was like, I'm a glutton for punishment, but if I don't see no, uh, progress, that's it. If I don't see no progress for the past 2-3 weeks, that's enough…. Well, basically, I don't really look at skin color. Basically, if there's a chick out there that's right for you, by all means, you should go out and just…date her. If she's the one for you. Regardless, if she's black, white, whatever. If she's the one for you, you should, you should go for it. No one is off-limits.

Rather than see this solely as race-based border patrolling behavior, Sanchez reframed what I see as an obvious opposition as "negativity."

> See the thing is, it's not like black and white, but with them, those particular black people, they pull negativity and jealousy and all that, and I just couldn't deal with it, so I'll just hang with people who bring me positive vibes. So basically, there's all these different, I wouldn't say predominantly white people, but it's like Asians, blacks, Spanish people, they all sit there too.

While Sanchez did confront the border patrolling black women by pointing out their rejection of him prior to his dating this white woman, they did not accept this explanation. To them, he added "insult to injury," once one relationship ended when he started to "date this Asian chick, beautiful Asian Indian woman…. She was very beautiful. All these women I've talked to over the years are beautiful. I was like, whether it's like physical beauty or just you know, personality, they're beautiful."

As a black Hispanic or "Blackerican," Sanchez found that the visibility of his blackness concealed his Puerto Rican parentage. With his blackness visible, he encountered black border patrolling from black women who felt betrayed and angered by his disloyalty. This fact of his parentage matters little, given Sanchez's "collective black" identity. Based on his description of the black women's behavior, his being both black and Puerto Rican would not facilitate his evasion of border patrolling but in fact might further their feelings of rejection (that he presumably like neither black nor Puerto Rican/Latina women). Nevertheless, Sanchez's experiences suggest that he is encountering border patrolling of his identity *and* partner choice. Because the black women who desire his attention perceive him as black, and presumably do so partially in order to form racially homogamous relationships, they are negating his racial mixture and imposing their own investment in homogamy onto him. In doing so, they reject or ignore his reality as both black and Latino, as well as deny Sanchez his own agency in choosing a romantic partner regardless of the racial parameters society subscribes.

James, a black-identified man with Native American ancestry, expressed similar experiences, feeling disqualified as a black man because he actively challenges controlling images and societal expectations of black masculinity:

> I think many times I do get read as not masculine enough….and I think I've been in many instances where they *were* dismissive of me, but I can only assume that, over time, I have to some degree closed myself as well. Not completely but everybody's different. All of the situations that I've come across that have been negative, but there have been many positive ones as well; I'm sure that all of the time that wasn't just the other person. You do form stereotypes or methods of operating based on what we experience.

While willing to assume his share of responsibility in relationships and friendships, he also acknowledged how stereotypes operated to impact both in positive and negative ways. He sensed that, when he was younger, these stereotypes impeded his ability to form interracial relationships with his female friends, who were "of many different races, ah, Indian, Caucasian, Hispanic, um, but as I've gotten older, they've, they're more African American, more black." The stereotypes, institutional barriers to interracial contact, and the apprehension or opposition of racially different women created a convergence of border patrolling forces that made interracial relationships seem impossible.

Multiracial respondents of other racial combinations also encountered a policing of their identity and relationships. Sarah, a self-identified "Anglo-Indian" (White and Asian Indian) young woman who also embraced her Chinese ethnicity, encountered such invalidation and opposition from the mother of a boyfriend she dated in high school.

> I was taking my boyfriend to a Chinese New Year thing with my father…His mother, she got mad about something and said, "You're not taking my son to that Chinese shit!" or something and it really hurt my feelings and made me feel embarrassed and ashamed that my family was different. And sometimes it was embarrassing that we all looked different and we have different last names…but now I don't care.

That exchange not only exposed how her high school boyfriend's mother felt about Chinese people, but also revealed how invested in Chinese culture and connected to Chinese people Sarah remains. In addition, the mother also must not have recognized Sarah's Asian identity and pan-ethnicity. By "talking trash" about Chinese New Year, the mother alienated and offended part-Asian Sarah, who also has a Chinese step-father. This double whammy of a disqualification may explain why Sarah so enjoys the sincere emotional closeness with her current boyfriend and his family, both of whom "validate me or make me feel good."

While she was dating a multiracial man, also White and Asian, Sarah enjoyed being able to access Indian people, culture, and family life through this relationship; and spend with his family, particularly the father, who is Indian. Since she had not met her biological father until recently, she allowed her boyfriend's father to fulfill the role of the also Indian father she hardly knew in life. "I'd go over to (their) house and I'd get all of my questions answered through him (the father)…. I just became really close to him. That sounds really weird. As a friend (She clarified). We just became very close. I love him. And he ended up paying for my plane ticket to India." Framed as a surrogacy or sincere substitution, we can interpret the relationship between Sarah and her then boyfriend's father as one that provided her with an emotional but also cultural connection she longed for in the absence of her Indian father.

As the "cute light skinned girl," Flora was resented for being seen as "one that gets all the guys." While her closest friends know not to feel threatened by the currency of Flora's light skin, other females view Flora as competition. Not only do "they look at me funny, and then [they] look to my black female friends like, "Is she okay?" [an ally],

they look at Flora as if "she's taking our men." Once her black friends, who were also initially suspicious of her racial loyalty, vouch for her alliance to other black women, Flora is read as less as competition, and more as non-threatening. When policed by black women, Flora responded in ways that corresponded to other respondents, by largely taking a non-confrontational approach, "because for the most part, I'm not going to win. They're gonna be…rude and obnoxious, and give me those looks no matter what I say. So I just leave it and let it go."

Juanita, a black-identified woman of African American, Native American, Creole, and Puerto Rican (and possibly Irish) heritage, also spoke of negotiating black border patrolling and the color line as a light skinned woman. Recognizing others' observations (i.e., "She's light," or "She's got good/light/nice hair") as ostensible compliments that generated conflict between women who are "way more negative" than men with her, Juanita was "extra friendly" and went out of her "way to make sure you feel comfortable…. Yeah, I find myself doing that. [Sometimes] it doesn't matter how nice I am. They already have their minds made up. It just gets worse, you know. I have to just end up forgetting about it anyways. Or someone else has befriended me, then maybe they feel like, 'Okay, I can be her friend too.'"

In feeling what I call "too light to be liked," Juanita spoke of the adverse impact of colorism on her friendships with other women and the perpetual presumed competition between them. She observed:

> I just kind of work with it. It has become like *so much* of my everyday, it's unfortunate, but it's like, I just go with it because I already know it's coming. I've dealt with it for so long; it's just a thing…. I don't have that many (black women friends) because of that (competition). The ones that I do, it's always much later after the fact that they'll come back and say, "Okay, I thought this about you but now I don't." But I still get comments every so often like it's jokes to them, you know, like, "Ah, you're (nervously laughs), you think you're cute because you're light."; "Ha, ha, ha, ha, oh she's so high yellow," you know.

> It's usually just like, maybe we'll be talking, about--I don't know, maybe when we met or something like that and it's just like, "Oh yeah, I remember when I first met you. I thought you were whatever, I thought you were conceited." Or something like that.

Even though she was made to feel *really* uncomfortable, Juanita ignored her feelings and invested in making others comfortable. She did this to challenge others' unflattering perceptions of her and the attendant adverse interactions that stemmed from others' resentment of her unearned privilege, light skin, or likewise. Her discussion shows that malevolent border patrolling works to be divisive, and to disqualify her. The border patrolling works to put her in her place, in case she feels superior because of her physical appearance. The different responses that women and men have to her, given the "band-aid" color skin tone she describes herself as having, support existing literature on gendered racialized border patrolling (see Rockquemore 1998 and Hunter 2005, Rondilla and Spickard 2007; among others). Rockquemore discussed this in terms of the unique experiences that mixed race women face, while Hunter (2005) focused on the beauty queue that positions lighter skin women ahead of darker skin women, in terms of employment, housing, and mate selection.

Rather than view Juanita as an ally, many women viewed her in unflattering, stereotypical ways. Like the elephant in the room, the competition and colorism haunts Juanita by impeding her friendships. "It's always there it seems like, even with people I think of as pretty good friends, it always comes up eventually. It's always there." The antagonistic undertone that informs and impedes Juanita's friendship formations also impacts her relationships such that she made this observation: "A lot of times, I feel like I'm being stared at, usually by girls." While this may be the case, Juanita also garnered a lot of male attention as well, and much less benevolent in quality. Where Juanita has "been approached by a pretty good variety of men," she still feels that "with black

groups, I have not been approached…because my butt's not big enough." To counter some of the border patrolling she regularly encounters, Juanita mentioned enjoying enveloping herself in certain areas of the city, such as "different little Latin clubs because I don't get any questions and I feel comfortable there. I feel like, people look like me, I feel understood. There's an understanding I guess."

Conclusions

Given the persistence of the one-drop rule and society's need to know how to socially locate others; the racial hierarchy that differentially distributes power and privilege by racial classification; and a generalized anxiety with ambiguity, the practice of border patrolling enables people to express their feelings about racial identity and race mixing. Border patrolling also allows individuals to gather information about the various social locations of those blurring racial boundaries. With social norms encouraging racial homogeny and endogamy, and discouraging heterogeneity and exogamy, border patrollers defend those norms. By regulating dating, mating, and marriage, border patrollers regulate racial boundaries. For significant others, the policing of racial borders involves what I call "multiracial border patrolling." I consider the concept a triple (even quadruple) entendre. Different parts of the term apply to a different part of the process. *Multiracial* border patrolling includes others patrolling multiracial people (1) *and* their families of origin (2) and/or procreation (3). Multiracial border patrolling also introduces multiracial people into the process as actors. In this way, multiracial people border patrol themselves and others. Much like racism gets normalized, internalized, and perpetuated, so too does border patrolling. As members of multiracial/interracial families, they

generally have had exposure to border patrolling (as targets). As members of a society that encourages many kinds of border patrolling, multiracial people are not immune to these pressures. As a result, many multiracial people border patrol. The idea of multiracial people as border patrolling actors (versus targets) is new, given the common misperception of them as the targets, not initiators, of borderism.

I explored this unlikely source to draw attention to the extent that everyone in a colorblind yet racially divisive society is encouraged to not notice race, while recognizing race in particular ways (on the basis of the dominant racial paradigm). To this end, many members of interracial families 1) did not consider themselves as such, and 2) policed racial borders to preserve the very racial categories they blended in forming their families. Understanding how these individuals replicate the behavior of border patrollers outside of the family helps us understand how the idea and the reality of multiracial children often reify existing racial categories.

CHAPTER FIVE: BORDERISM FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Although many scholars point to the increasing ease with which people can claim their multiracial heritage in this "mulatto millennium" (Senna 1998, 2004), evidence still suggests that people have differentially embraced this cause for celebration (Spencer 2006, 2004). How is it that, at a time of increased freedom of choice, individuals with mixed race parentage and heritage sometimes reject this opportunity, internalize and invest in the racial hierarchy that divides, and opt instead for racial singularity in identity and similarity in partners? How do multiracial people border patrol themselves? How do they police their own partner choices?

That multiracial individuals have their own racial ideologies means they are not immune from developing problematic prejudicial ways of thinking and discriminating ways of acting. It may seem counterintuitive that many multiracial people police racial borders, instead of blend them as often imagined. One must only look to the ways that multiracial people encounter borderism from generalized and significant others to understand auto-borderism. In this chapter, I discuss this process and provide some explanations for multiracial people patrolling, rather than blending, racial borders.

When People Border Patrol Their Own Identities

In this post-*Loving v. Virginia* moment (Alonso 2000), individuals with multiracial identities benefit from this legislative decision, which allegedly resulted in the steady increase in interracial unions. While multiracial identities are more easily accommodated in general, some respondents noted some difficulty in being "racial border borders." Instead, they opted for what seemed like the easier option: choosing singular racial identities.

Instead of easily being "racial border blenders," these respondents primarily opted for singular racial identities. Based on their accounts of borderism, they felt unable to assert their preferred racial identities, choosing instead to dissolve their complex racial realities into tidy racial categories. Lacking information about familial histories; encountering invalidation or opposition from others; or wanting to evade racial surveillance from others, respondents who border patrolled themselves seemed to internalize the policing of strangers and significant others. I acknowledge these connections between border patrolling from the outside in, outsider within, and inside out, focusing here on the latter.

Benevolent Border Patrolling

> Black is the umbrella for minorities to kind of come together under because black, as it has evolved, does not necessarily just refer to African Americans. On the other side, when you're saying that you're black, you're still keeping the dichotomy of black and white, which aside from not being fair to other groups, I think it's just not realistic as well. And it also causes some limiting there as well, because even though black is an umbrella term for minorities, it's still kind of rooted in some notion of an African American identity as well (James, a black-identified Black/Native American man).

Like many other respondents, James asserted what I understood as a singular black identity, but one that reflected his attempts to problematize blackness (Hintzen and Rahier 2003), much like Jessica, Julie, and other respondents did. In attempting to sort out the mysteries of histories in his family, James asks "a lot of questions" to disentangle his heritage, and understand more fully his Nigerian and Native American ancestry. Recognizing both his African American and Native American ancestry is a practice that allows black-American Indian respondents to acknowledge "intermarriage further back in their family history." (Campbell 2007:926).

While exploring his family biography in an attempt to satisfy some of his curiosities about his identity, James maintained a singular black identity but assigned expansive and inclusive meanings to blackness, in its chosen (not forced) form (Hintzen and Rahier 2003). That is, "black" weaved together a multiplicity of races and ethnicities.

This contrasted with Alicia, a black-identified black/white woman, who had "been socialized to see myself as black and to hear my father say, 'No whites. Just blacks.'" These explicit directions reinforced divisions between black and white, even within families consisting of members of both races. Abigail, an African American-identified woman (also of Native American [Cherokee] heritage), provided a similar explanation about how she arrived at a singular black identity. "I'm not mixed race. I appear to be more African American than anything else, you know?" Because she believes others see her as black, or that others do not see her mixed race heritage, she refutes this mixture herself and adopts a black identity. Abigail "thinks mixture" in commonly myopic and hegemonic ways: black and white. Doing so places her racially out of bounds of mixture. Not unlike other respondents, Abigail offered contradictions on her own racial location:

> I racially identify as African American basically but I remember that my mother told me when I was very young, she said, "Don't ever forget that you are part Cherokee, part Cherokee Indian, Native American." But all of my life, I socialized, was socialized as an African American or black child, you know, listening to R and B, and you know, dancing and everything was geared towards African American culture…. At the time, I didn't question it. It meant, as I got older, that there's something other than African American about me, something different about me…. That I just wasn't all African. That, you know, there's a part of me that was the "Other" if you wanna call it that. That wasn't defined. It made me intercept my thinking I was all black. Well, not all black, your DNA might come back saying you're all black. My appearance is black. Her words made me question that.

Despite this questioning about family histories, she, like other part black respondents, identified as black, while admitting to this mixture (see Campbell 2007). In contrast to people with known Asian, Latino, and Native American ancestry claiming a white identity, people with known African ancestry cannot usually claim a non-black identity (Bratter 2008; Khanna 2008), as Abigail illustrated.

Growing up in "basically black or white" spaces (schools, neighborhoods, etc.), Sanchez, a black Puerto Rican man, noted how the absence of Asians or "any other race" created a white/black binary that meant he "was defined as a black person. I was like, 'Okay, I know that I'm a black person. I mean my skin color is dark, so therefore I'm a black person.' And I never really, to tell you the truth, when I was younger, I never really thought about race as much as I do today."

Frank, a 21-year-old black-identified man, explained his benevolent borderism:

> I identify racially as African American or Black. Now ethnically, I consider myself a mix and I'm a mix of different races- I mean different groups of people. Ah, Native American; as well as Spanish and oh no, not Spanish. Sorry, Um, German and French. My African American identity is dominant. It's almost like chromosomes. You have dominant and you have recessive. So the Native American history, the Native American heritage or ethnicity, they're all the same; they're all related. The ethnicity is sort of recessive…. I experience being African American. In all honesty, I don't think it has much to do with how I identify because even if I didn't identify as African American, I would still be treated like an African American…. Because that's how I look. I look African American. I guess I'm not light enough or um, of the consistency or what not, or whatever the case may be, to be considered mixed, so when they, for example, see me, the first thing they think of is black. The first thing that comes out of their mouth is "black."

Frank contrasted his self-image with others' perceptions of his race, pointing to the pattern in which others see him as black. Because of his (dark skin) appearance, Frank (like Abigail) believed that asserting a mixed identity would prove arduous. The absence of discernible markers of mixture dissuaded Frank from incorporating mixture

immediately into his identity.[78] He believed visible mixture requisite criteria for claiming a mixed identity, despite discursively recognizing a "multiethnic," if not multiracial heritage. He explained his rejection of the label "mixed," citing his re

> The diversity is not allowed to exist. That's why it's recessive. The resistance is everywhere. It's in institutions, with your peers…Institutionally, for instance, you, until recently, weren't allowed to identify as anything more than, either, you're African American, you're white, you're not European American, or you're Asian American and so forth. Even if I put on (forms), considering that I have Spanish and German, Native American, African American, I could put on there "white" but if I get stopped by a police officer, shoot, no matter what, pick one, no matter what happens if, they'll look at you, and you say white, they'll say, "Yeah, right. Yeah, stop lying." You know. You could have a black person immigrate from Germany to America and they say, "Okay, you're German. You're black. You're African American." Which they don't know how far back you have to go to get to Africa in this heritage but it's got to be back there somewhere because you're black. And African American to my peers is devalued. It is considered an insult, like you're denying yourself or you're insulting your race or your heritage to say, Okay that you're not just black because you have the oppressor and you have the oppressed and the oppressor.

Frank chose blackness despite its imputation:

> I mean, I like the African American ethnicity. I think I identify with it, I think I would also, however, at least identify with my Native American heritage, I'm not so partial to my German and French heritage in that, it's basis is on people being forced to come. It's not like they had a choice in the matter. If you get over here and you don't like it, there's a chain and you get whipped up. I mean, so, granted I am very much an admirer of Germany's brilliance and France's, you know, medical and scientific advancements, as well, you know, in that I have great respect for them.

He also decidedly interpreted race and arrived at his own racial identity on the basis of hypodescent (Khanna 2008). By doing so, he border patrolled his racial identity choices. He also overlooked how many visibily multiracial people face similar kinds of identity invalidation, if they too do not look sufficiently mixed, or are not clearly ambiguous.

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[78] He held this belief despite saying, "Almost everybody's a mixture of the oppressed and the oppressor because when you look at how many children were the children of sexual, I mean, I hate to say it but, sexual molestation of the white master on the black slave. A lot of kids came from that. And so you are a mixture of the oppressor and the oppressed."

Like Frank, Kelly (a black-identified woman with French Guyanese, French, East [Asian] Indian Blackfoot Indian, Black American, and German, and a "splash of Irish" ancestry) racially identified as black or "Black American because…that's how the general public perceives me." Both felt that they would be treated accordingly, implying they would face anti-black racial discrimination and devaluation (see also Yancey 2003), alienation, or differential treatment because of their perceived blackness. Though Kelly thought she "would claim a multiracial identity if society allowed," she made clear her satisfaction and "comfort with being black." Rather than adopt an "anything but black" position (Bonilla-Silva 2003b), Kelly and others actively challenged such anti-black ideologies and some people's maneuvers away from blackness.

Kelly explained that the racial mixture in her family was "more distant…not direct (since) it's not like my mom's one mono-race, and my father's one mono-race." In socially constructing her parents as monoracial, Kelly made claiming a multiracial identity that much more off-limits. Given the absence of immediate, visual markers of racial mixture, she felt neither entitled nor certain about claiming a multiracial identity, and remained ambivalent as a result. Like Frank, her reluctance rested in her perception and understanding of what counts as mixed, and illustrates Bratter's (2007) concern about multiracial identification surviving "the next generation." Having grown up in and been socialized as part of a black family, Kelly did not exactly understand herself as a "first-generation" multiracial (Daniel 2002) and felt she would not be able to claim a validated border (mixed) identity (see Campbell 2007). In fact, one quarter of the respondents asserted a singular black identity, evidence that supports existing literature indicating that a very small portion of blacks claims a multiracial identity (Lee and Bean 2004).

Notably, Kelly mentioned others' interpellating or hailing her (Althusser 1971) as "more than black" (Daniel 2002). "I mean I've had people ask me, 'So, what are you?' And…for simplicity sake, you know, I say, 'I'm black.' 'No, but really, what are you?'" That some people see her in this way suggests that, should she choose, she *could* assert a validated multiracial identity in those moments, rather than fear imminent invalidation and contestation. Nevertheless, Kelly seemed to resent and reject the intended "compliments" others provided in presuming her Brazilian (mixed, not black); or when "saying, 'Oh, you don't look fully black.' Or 'You know you have…a little bit of oh, something *else* in you.'"

Many part black respondents expressed similar views, finding that absence of a presence (Fine 2002), of racial mixture in the form of visibly recognizable or legible interracial family (nuclear or extended) denied them the chance to choose "mixed" (with many wanting to explore more of their family heritage and multiracial ancestry). Their choosing blackness then can be understood as both constrained and concerted, since their ("too dark to *not* be black") skin color marked them as black (because of the one-drop rule) (Khanna 2008) but also allowed them to embrace blackness actively. Had her parents looked more dissimilar to one another ("obviously interracial" or visibly mixed), and had chosen non-black or multiracial identities, Kelly might have felt more compelled to opt for mixed. Without these verbal or visible markers of mixture in significant others, who gets to claim such a validated multiracial identity remains exclusive and contested terrain (Morning 2000).

Beneficiary Border Patrolling

For some of my respondents, acknowledging a racially mixed *heritage* proved easier or more possible (socially acceptable and validating) than asserting their own mixed race *identity*. Doing so enabled them to preserve the privileges associated with the identities they chose. Unlike benevolent border patrolling of identity, beneficiary border patrolling involved respondents generally claiming a singular race that ensured greater social status than the races not embraced. Most examples of beneficiary border patrolling came from White/Asian and White/Latino respondents, and one White/Native American respondent. In these cases, I saw these respondents as avoiding a multiracial identity for its lesser social status, in comparison to the whiteness they opted for instead (as well as when situated in the various racial hierarchies).

Consistent with the ways a white person interprets their "ethnic options," (Waters 1990), Dakota explained: "I do identify as Korean when it is convenient,[79] I guess because only for test sake or things like that; I always say that I am White on the standardized tests and things like that, but in social situations, when I am talking to people, I always say that I am half Korean. I guess it makes things more interesting and I don't feel that I am a boring White girl." This last observation that Dakota made suggests that she was "thinking the border" strategically. Consistent with discussions of the emergent multiracial "identity grab bag" (Brunsma, Rockquemore, and Delgado, forthcoming), Dakota defaulted to whiteness because her physical appearance does not

[79] Dakota revisits this term and provides the following elaboration: "My mom's best friend is also Korean and married to a White man. They have two daughters which are half Korean and so when we are out, we are like whatever, but when they are at home with us and mom, and they are speaking Korean, we can start to be like little Korean girls or whatever, but only when it's convenient like that. That's what I meant when I said 'convenient.'"

deny her that option. However, others read her as ambiguous, which accounts for the different groups to which others perceive her as belonging.

Finally, her convenient deployment of her Korean parentage and identity allowed her to "spice up" her vanilla existence and reaffirm her whiteness. This "illustrates a commodification of the racial otherness as 'a spice, seasoning that can liven up the dull dish that is mainstream white culture.' The white woman does not seem to seek a broader cultural appreciation, but rather a brief cultural appropriation…She can perhaps have the fun of pretending to be black for one night, but can soon return to her privileged white appearance and style." (hooks 1992:21). For part white multiracials who "spice" themselves up, they are reaffirming their predominantly white racial identity. They normalize their choice for whiteness through these "Othering" discourses (Frankenberg 1993). Rather than respect and celebrate difference, Othering discourses fetishize or orientalize (Said 1978).

Some respondents reluctant to embrace a mixed identity also illustrated that they were in transition into an incipient identity that more readily recognizes multiraciality (by learning more about their family's racial diversity). With first-hand exposure to racism, coupled with feelings of disqualification with regard to being Korean, Dakota understandably expressed conflicting accounts. For example, at one point in the interview, she stated, "I always feel White"; described a disconnection to Korean culture, language, and people (resulting from being border patrolled by significant others, as previously discussed); and a feeling of facing disqualification for not looking "Asian enough."

> I see really cute Asian girls and sometimes I do wish that I looked Korean because, I don't know why, but I just think they are so cute. But there is nothing I

> can do….I look at myself and I don't feel like really Korean a lot, other than my hair color and a little bit my eyes. You know, like typical Korean girls have really small bodies, too thin.

Rather than reject Korean culture, she seemed ambivalent towards it: "I mean, it's not like I am trying *not* to engage my Korean culture or anything like that. But I just think it's that my mom didn't really force Korean culture onto me…I mean I feel strange going to the Korean market." Were she to be both darker and smaller, Dakota discussed, she might feel more entitled to actively and publicly claim a Korean identity. This is so largely because people essentialize ethnicity and race, proscribing what counts as Korean or not. Believing herself a social failure with regard to a variety of authenticity tests, Dakota instead opts for white.

Rose, a white-identified woman, readily acknowledged some Native American heritage but did so in ways that made recognizing the racial differences between her grandfather (part Cherokee and presumably brown) and other (white) relatives problematic. Registering this racial difference discursively distanced and disconnected Rose racially from the physically or phenotypically different relative, thereby keeping her whiteness intact, as well as maintained myths of white purity). Such discursive practices then stabilize the category of whiteness, without compromising its purity, even through the acknowledgment of racial mixture. That is, Rose asserts and maintains a singular white identity comfortably, though she "spices" up her vanilla whiteness with the difference of "Otherness," in this case, her Native American ancestry[80] (see hooks 1992;

[80] More evidence of this "spicing up" of whiteness occurred with Rose's discussion of exploring more of her Native American ancestry: "I think it would be fun, something to learn, about my culture…. Um, I think I would try to promote the heritage more, if I could, I'm not saying that I wouldn't promote it, I think it's great to promote other cultures but I think if I knew I was definitely a part of it, then I would try to participate in more things that were culturally from that sect of Indian culture."

Rubin 1994). ("My mom's dad, he was a quarter Cherokee. They didn't have a good relationship. I never knew him. I think he's dead. I really couldn't say. There's no documentation [proving his Indian identity], it's just what they're telling me.")

Because her family socialized her as white (rather than multiracial), Rose learned to identify as white. At some point, her mother "just kind of brought up that there was Indian blood in us," and said, "'Oh yeah, we have some Indian in us….I think it's Cherokee. Yeah, it's Cherokee.' And I've always been interested in Indian heritage. I think it's neat. I don't know how else to put it. I don't know the "P.C." way to put it." Amidst her curiosity about her "one-sixteenth" Cherokee "blood," Rose indicated, "I think I would still identify as white, depending on the situation." Because of this, and the fact that she knew precisely what "fraction" Native American she was, she appeared to me to be a beneficiary border patroller. The border patrolling that she experienced from outsider within (significant others) partially related to her own border patrolling of identity. This is not indicative of the racial treason that scholars have described (see Segrest 1993). Instead of having traitorous identities that reject "whitely scripts[81]," Rose and her family embraced white privilege and engaged in racial redistricting to remain race evasive and privileged (Fischer 2006; Frankenberg 1993; Thompson 2001). Her conversation around her uncertainty concerning her grandfather's mortality and identity exposed racial ideology that partially explained his peripheral position in her family and memory.

> I can't exactly remember…I was just looking at pictures, and I saw a picture and apparently it was my grandfather but he didn't look related to me at all, like he was very dark skinned, with dark hair. His nose was a little bit bigger, I guess. And just looked mean to me. He just looked angry, but my grandfather and

[81] Rosalind Fischer (2006) described these as "rules and roles that support and maintain the domination of people of color."

> grandmother weren't together for very long so it could have been likely that he was really mean….You know, he drank too much; he was not necessarily physically abusive but definitely verbally abusive, and um, kind of a slacker. Wasn't around, didn't want to work.

One can speculate that the rocky relationship between Rose's maternal grandparents colored and contaminated her perception of her grandfather. The negligible relationship that Rose had with him seemed soured by others' unfavorable accounts of his personality. Another reading of this requires attention to her inability (or somewhat understandable unwillingness) to recognize herself in her grandfather. While it is difficult to say whether or not her perception of differences in terms of gender, color, physical features, and other characteristics largely stems from the disparaging remarks of others, I do think Rose's discussion of these differences dances around the idea of "real" racial differences, as evidenced through her description of him as only one-quarter Cherokee. That Rose indicated that it would be easier to opt for white in any situation (social or professional)[82], rather than just as easy to assert any racial identity, particularly one that acknowledges her Native American heritage, communicated her desire to possessively invest in whiteness (Lipsitz 1998). Rose imagined others' disinterest in the details of her mixture, and speculated that she would not "want to overstep my boundary of information."

She suggested that sharing would be contextual, restrained, and relevant to the social situation. However, it is more instructive to consider what information she is willing to share about herself racially, that she is white. Interestingly, when she mentioned lacking evidence of her racial mixture, she did not feel this dearth in relation

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[82] "I think if it was like in a class, where people were asking about it, I'd want to share more about it, but maybe professional situation where they don't want to know details, just they want to know, 'What are you?' Okay, move on. I would probably just say white."

to proving her whiteness. That is, she did not speak to needing to prove whiteness in ways that contrast with her need to prove her Native American ancestry. It is as if she has internalized government requirements to "document" or legitimate her identity, not only to herself but to others as well.

> I think, you know, if I found out undeniable *proof* then I would probably say White and Native American, just that I would give an explanation. But if I couldn't prove it, then I wouldn't want to give false information. I'd just say White. I wouldn't want people to be like, "Oh, well tell me about your history." Like, "Gasp."… I think it's also, I don't know, I would sort of be proud if I was a part of that history that's been pretty much demolished. I'd be proud to have the opportunity to carry on some part of that because I know that there isn't a whole lot of it being passed on. Um, I don't know.

Another interpretation of Rose's identity articulation relates her fear of facing further invalidation as a white-looking person trying to acknowledge more mixture in their heritage. Asserting a mixed race identity marks a risky proposition, in that doing so jeopardizes white privilege. As with other respondents, Rose reported that her phenotypical whiteness motivated her singular white identity, and explains her borderism.

Soraya conveniently chose whiteness as well, but recalled an incident in which her best friend questioned Soraya's formal identity as white. When the best friend responded with obvious surprise, and sought some reasoning for Soraya's choice, Soraya explained,

> I said, "I don't know. I've just always have done that" and I know it's weird but I've never thought of myself as multiracial even though I *am*. That word has never been used in my head to describe myself, which is kind of weird. But that was the first time she put it in my head.

Up until that conversation, Soraya did not seem to question her own racial identity choices, but began to once she struggled with contradictions (asserting a white identity;

sometimes saying that she is “half Indian”; and having an awareness that she is “obviously multiracial”).

Unlike those (White/Asian multiracial) respondents who claimed a white or tentatively multiracial identity, or enjoyed honorary whiteness, Peg rejected her honorary whiteness by increasingly attempting to assert a validated Korean identity. In the South, she found relative ease in emphasizing her Korean heritage. She had no “concept of like being identified as white.” However, her racial sense of self shifted, such that she no longer saw herself as primarily Korean. Peg tired of others’ inability to *not* see her as Korean, especially as she moved away from and became increasingly ashamed of being Korean. This moving away from being Korean did not translate into intentionally moving towards whiteness. As Peg explained, she was essentially becoming white; the white culture, and mostly white friends in their “completely white world” made being Korean “different” but also “honorary white.” Even though she “blended in very well” into these whitespaces (Horton 2006), Peg described feelings of racial alienation. Though “it was understood that I was Asian because I was different,” many of the (white) people in Peg’s life treated her as white. This behavior included making disparaging comments about other (than white) races. This exposure to how white friends felt about her as an Asian solidified her honorary white status, but also alienated her from these friends. The ease with which they revealed ugly truths concealed in their race talk (Houts Picca and Feagin 2007) drew a wedge between them and Peg, since she felt increasing dissonance over her friendships with whites who accounted for and then effectively denied her racial and ethnic sense of self. By not expressing criticism of their racism, Peg maintained her honorary white status with them, using it to her advantage.

While none admitted to wanting to access white privilege, respondents who claimed a white identity also spoke of the non-white (or part white) parent as highly assimilated. Also, they espoused a rather colorblind view of society, and centered whiteness throughout the interviews. In that way, many of the part white respondents engaged in beneficiary border patrolling of their identities because they knew they could access the unearned privileges of claiming a white or multiracial identity versus a singular Asian or black identity. This strategy reaffirmed the new racial hierarchy in which most multiracial individuals enjoy honorary white or white status in society. That is, respondents with part white parentage or ancestry could and would more easily acknowledge their partial whiteness and its attendant privileges, while those with part black parentage or ancestry were more likely to claim a biracial or black identity, than a singular white, Asian, or Hispanic one.

Protective Border Patrolling

Often identity options were informed and constrained by the shifting racial hierarchies. Darker-skinned multiracial individuals with partial black parentage opted for black or multiracial (rather than white) identities. As Gloria, one black/white biracial respondent recognized, whiteness was out of bounds for her. Her experience illustrates that the boundaries of whiteness seldom expand to include black/white multiracials, a point made by Gallagher 2004a; Lee and Bean 2004; among others). This explained why she asserted a protean identity (black/white, biracial, “Other” [her term]), but never a singular white identity.

The option of whiteness was socially denied her, as exemplified by her response when asked about it (if she ever opted for whiteness): “I don’t think I could get away

with it (whiteness)." Getting away with whiteness involved looking white, not simply having a white parent. That Gloria has "never thought about that, honestly" shows the extent to which whiteness expands selectively, careful to exclude part black multiracials in the process. Her never thinking about this issue could also be read as deference to a colorblind kind of explanation. Deploying colorblind explanations deflects attention away from any unearned privileges she enjoys as she approximates whiteness. Her comments that directly engaged racial matters in the interview contrast with some of her colorblind narratives. For example, she communicated that she claims a protean multiracial identity and has thought about that enough to equate whiteness and blackness with mixture. A more likely explanation again rests in the racial hierarchy that rigidly places this medium-tone woman in the collective black category, or more definitively *not* in the white category.

Chloe, an African American and Native American-identified woman (with Irish/Italian ancestry), also discussed how she defended her racial identity to family members. When some of her black relatives made disparaging comments about whites, Chloe, "out of defense," reminded them of her Irish and Italian parentage (mother). In recognizing her behavior as a "defense mechanism," Chloe took those comments personally because of her white mother. She observed, "If you [relatives] think this about white people, well then, what do you think about me, or my mother, or her side of the family? Despite this defensiveness, Chloe acknowledged that she mostly asserts a black or Native American identity. Doing so replicated others' invalidation of her racial mixture, and made her seem as others prefer: "more black" than any other race(s). Though not her intention, Chloe (in opting for black) also alienated some white relatives

who saw her as multiracial, not black. She chose blackness to "uncomplicate things" while challenging the societal devaluation of blackness.

> I definitely don't think I can get away with saying I'm white. "What? Did you just come back from vacation?" But yeah, I mean it's not something that I'd do. But you know, I'd love to say, I'm Italian, too, but what Italian community is really going to accept me? And the rest of the world, you know, maybe one community might accept me, but the rest of the world, when I step outside, they'll be like, "Italian?" Yeah. "She's Irish, you know?"

Chloe also linked how she arrived at her racial identity in relation to the racial socialization she received primarily from her father who "definitely wants us to identify as black" because of "decades of conditioning." Chloe's father prepared his children for the possibility of facing racial discrimination resulting from others' misperception of them (as black and stereotypically so):

> He definitely wants [us] to know that…when we step outside, nobody really cares that our mother's white…. He's done it subtly you know? He hasn't actually sat us down, and said, "Well, you do know that you're black." Or "There's some things that come along with being black."…. He's subtly reminded us countless times that we can't expect the rest of the world to like buy into this biracial wonderland that we have at home, maybe.

In her "biracial wonderland," Chloe expressed a dichotomy between the public and private selves (Goffman 1967), or what others have called "public identity" and "internalized identity" (Khanna 2008). In Chloe's public presentation of self (Goffman 1963, 1967), she performs blackness, while in the comfort of her wonderland, she can more easily claim her racial mixture (though not without occasional contestation from both white and black relatives) (see Brunsma 2006).

Vanessa, a black-identified woman, explained why she too asserted a singular black identity as a protective mechanism: "I say I'm black because it's easier. I don't get a lot of questions that way." Opting for black enabled her to evade racialized attention or

the racial panopticon (Foucault 1977) of border-patrolling others. In a way, her choice to collapse her multiracial parentage into blackness can be interpreted as a kind of border patrolling of self. Her choice also shows how "multiracial" does not always survive to the next generation (Bratter 2007).

> My father is Cherokee Indian and African American. He identifies himself as African American. My mother is Caucasian and African American, and she identifies as African American….My family also identified us as African American because that's how we are seen by society and that's how they see themselves. They feel like they'd be able to relate to, they can deal with issues they are given by identifying as African American instead of something else.

Similar to Kelly, Vanessa gets asked if she is "anything besides black." People often say that they think she looks "different" and "exotic," as if there is "something there that I don't see." I suspect that they see signs of racial mixture (Cherokee Indian, African American, and Caucasian) that Vanessa only partially acknowledges but does not incorporate into her identity. Her desire for privacy and simplicity does not always dissuade others who continue to wonder about Vanessa's racial identity. Identifying as black then backfires to the degree that it does little to deflect these inquiring and curious gazes.

Another respondent, Juanita, explained her own identity borderism:

> I say that I'm black but I'm not really sure how to say *it*, like when people ask me that question because I don't know how to include everything and so I just leave it (she laughs). "Everything" is of course African American, Native American, Creole, Puerto Rican, I think that's it. There's maybe something else…Some Caucasian but it's just further out (generations back).

Like Vanessa, Juanita opted for black, to elide attention and evade others' (un)spoken expectations of her to elaborate on her racial identity. She suggested that opting for black proves easier than elaborating on her racial mixture, "because I get less questions that way." Eliding inquiries and evading racial interrogations is possible by collapsing her

multiracial identity into blackness. That way Juanita avoids comments claiming that she is "confused" or a modern day "tragic mulatto" who struggles with "the Tiger Woods problem."

Like other black multiracial respondents, Jessica, a black-identified young woman of black and Asian Indian parentage, discussed having a black habitus[83], which largely influenced and explained her singular black identity. She shared her negotiation of the space in between, and the way she patrolled her own identity:

> I've always felt black but I've always identified myself as biracial so it's kind of weird, you know what I mean? Like I--I know it's not proper to say this: I act black you know, because that's how I grew up…. That's kind of what I identify with you know, but if like, I'm filling out a form or something, you know, I'll put multiracial. Whereas when I was younger, I'd used to always put black.

Jessica's response captures the conflict of racial identities in tension with one another, and in flux over the life course (Doyle and Kao 2004). Though Jessica wanted to "recognize both parents," but opted for black. Jessica's border patrolling worked to both affirm and problematize blackness (Hintzen and Rahier 2003). In celebrating her pride in being black and love of black people, Jessica overshadowed her Asian Indian identity while deferring to it in order to nuance her black experience. As with other respondents, Jessica had not thought about or noticed any unearned privileges she enjoyed because of her multiraciality and racial ambiguity. In not noticing, Jessica enjoyed her singular black identity in ways that preserved her occasional colorblindness and prevented her from registering how her skin color operates as a currency in this pigmentocracy (Bonilla-Silva 2003).

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[83] By this, I mean that she mostly grew up in predominantly black neighborhoods and "black settings; and established black friendship networks.

Like Jessica, Jamie also asserted a black identity, even though her light skin tone piques others' curiosity. Interested in her racial identity and ambiguity, people, (based on Jamie's accounts), often comment, "No, you're not black. You're black and something else." These comments troubled Jamie, since she grew up in a small Southern town and in a family where people are either black or white. She dogmatically denied racial mixture as the result of a white man's sexual exploitation of a black female relative that occurred generations ago. Her denial of mixture mimicked that of her family, who worked to preserve blackness by negating and erasing the trauma of rape (and the forced inclusion of whiteness).

When I asked her to elaborate on her reasons for choosing "black" over other options (i.e., "white," "mixed," "biracial," etc.), Jamie replied: "Because it wasn't a choice that they (black female relatives) slept with them, slept with the white people. It was rape. It wasn't by choice…. To be honest, if I could pass for white, I probably would say that I'm white, but I couldn't pass for it, so I wouldn't say it." Since Jamie felt too dark to be white, she resented relatives who passed as white and enjoyed "the advantages you get just by being white" (its attendant privileges) (see McIntosh 1998). She recalled having heard stories of white-looking black relatives trying to assert black identities and encountering resistance and invalidation: "They told her (a relative), 'No.' That she wasn't, they told her that she wasn't black. That she was white…. Oh, I have some pictures- they look exactly like white people but they're not white. They're black."

While Jamie acknowledges why her family actively preserves blackness by denying the painful racial reality of how whiteness was incorporated into the family, she remains conflicted over racial identity choice.

Curious about her conviction to reinforce the black-white binary, I asked Jamie to reflect on the term "biracial." We shared this exchange in discussing her views on the term:

> Jamie: I don't like it. I don't think there's such a thing (as biracial). It's either one or the other. Because you can't be *both*. You just can't; I just don't see how you can be both. You're either black or you're white, whichever is more *prominent*, that's the one you are, to me.
>
> MM: If one is *more* prominent than the other, then that means that the other still exists?
>
> Jamie: It exists, but you don't have to acknowledge it. You can't identify with both. When somebody asks you what race you are, you can't say, 'Oh, I'm multiracial," or "I'm mixed."
>
> MM: Why not?
>
> Jamie: You're just not. I just don't see it. I don't understand how you could say that. Like I have a cousin and my uncle, he's very light skinned, green eyes, and he's black but identifies either way though. But he had 2 kids by a white lady and they look white. Like you couldn't tell they have any black blood and they don't say that they're black or mixed. They don't say that they're black or mixed. They say that they're white. Because if they say, "Oh, I'm mixed," or "I'm black," people gonna look at them like they're crazy.

Jamie regarded racial mixture as impossible, relegating it to the body (but not something that should be socially claimed in reality). She lacked an awareness of the social construction of race, failing (or refusing) to see how her community and family reinforced a black/white racial divide in her life and mind. "Where I grew up at, you're either black or you're white. No in between. And those are the only two races: black or white." Although some scholars argue that members of the same family are of different races because of the ways we socially construct race in this country (Ferrante and Brown 2001), Jamie rejected that reality. Instead, she insisted on her black identity.

This insistence was compromised by some of her classmates ("white girls") who considered her white. Once on a class trip, one classmate commented, "I wanna get a tan like [Jamie]." Stumped by this white girl's perception of her, Jamie thought, "White with a tan?" She explained,

> Skin tone is a big thing for me; I'm just getting over it…. I don't want to be *dark*, like this is too dark for me. I don't know, I don't think that dark skin's pretty. [I got that idea from] my grandmother….She always used to tell us not to be out in the sun, and you know, that's not pretty. You don't wanna get *black*. There was some saying she used to say, I don't even remember it." (Emphasis hers).

Even though her maternal grandmother was light skinned enough to pass as white, she chose not to. Despite her choice, the grandmother conveyed the importance of lighter skin to Jamie, who observed that "they were seen to be a little bit better than the other black people…and it was mainly because of their skin tone." Jamie's mother also emphasized the importance of light skin and discouraged her daughter from darkening, by similarly admonishing her and advising her to stay inside (see Golden 2005; Rondilla and Spickard 2007). While Jamie's mother cleverly couched her advice in gendered terms, "Don't go outside, or you'll get dirty," and initially deflected attention away from a racial hierarchy, Jamie's reflection on her mother's (and grandmother's) comments suggests that, despite these attempts at racial displacement, she knew better than to ignore the significance of race in these narratives.

In order to avoid or minimize this border patrolling from strangers, black multiracial respondents who asserted a singular (black) identity hoped to elide this attention (Frankenberg 1993) and avoid being a racial spectacle (DeBord 1995), however benign the racialized gaze (Foucault 1977). Choosing blackness as a means of

circumventing interrogations and the usual inspection, or what Gloria Wade-Gayles (1997) calls "eye questions," then should be interpreted as protective border patrolling.

A few "honorary white" respondents had similar experiences. David, another respondent (white Hispanic) discussed his blended experience and described himself "racially as white and culturally as bicultural." In his elaboration, he explained how being both white and Hispanic meant enduring authenticity testing from various sources. In feeling these pressures, David works to protect his multiracial, bicultural identity.

> Because I grew up identifying as biracial but as I came to explore what race means, it became more and more evident to me that um, it's, it's much more of an identity that's assigned by the outside rather than a sense of self and it's, it's linked to um, how I've experienced the world because of privilege and things like that, and so, of my siblings, I'm the whitest one and, and I, you know, came to realize at some point that perhaps this was not just, "Oh, I worked really hard," That I'm the only one with a Ph.D. and the other two, one just has H.S. and she's the darkest of us, the one that's most immediately recognized as Spanish or "spic" (he says with a Southern accent) or Latina, however she's clearly recognized as something other than white and my youngest sister is kind of in the middle. And so I identify racially just sort of out of my awareness of um sort of oppression dynamics, power, privilege issues and my lens, my outward-looking lens, that's pretty impossible for me to define. I, I realize that, I know that I do not see the world as, um, people that I know that are white from both parents, um. It's very clear to me that, that I see the world very *differently* than they see the world. Even those who have had more awareness around racial constructs and things like that. And so it's a cognitive distinction that I'm easily able to make and in terms of Latino people, I, I don't experience a sense of belonging from the inside but as a legitimacy I guess is a better word. And so I clearly don't see the world from the perspective of people who are completely Latino because, or even Panamanian specifically, because my whole life, I've, I've sort of been given that, that sort of, you know, reminders that I'm the gringo, that I'm the white one. So I have no idea how I would, you know, describe…. my racial identity from the inside, because I can't, I can't -- to me I can only say there's something about this blended perspective.

For this and other white Hispanic/Latino/a respondents, being blended offers a unique vantage point for experiencing the world. While they situationally enjoyed the privileges of whiteness, they also experienced social life as "optional people of color" (Gonzales

2006) or "white people of color" (Alvarez 1998). As such, they may be read as "a different kind of white" due to their Spanish language ability, but they are also often read as "not quite Hispanic enough" and disqualified accordingly. Having many of his white American father's physical features and appearance, David endured authenticity testing throughout adolescence and young adulthood, as others evaluated his legitimacy as a "real" Panamanian. He even appeared to internalize some of this disqualification. He said,

> It was a strange reverse because the power dynamics of our, the racial dynamics of our society were reversed in my family. My mother, the Latina person, was the dominating figure and I grew up in a household that devalued white people. Everything from "their food has no rhythm" to "They're imperialist bastards." You know? And so, I grew up in a world where white was the bad guy, and um, for me, you know, I was never, you know, I was adored but it, it and so the bad guy didn't apply to me, um, in any of those ways. It applied to me in, "[He] doesn't like mangoes." I don't like mangoes. (Here he enunciates, mimicking/mocking whiteness through "hyperarticulation"). 'Mangoe,' (said with noticeable Spanish accent, presumably the "proper" pronunciation), whatever you wanna call it. And you know dancing, I can't do salsa…. I dance like a white guy. Yeah basically, that kind of stuff. And um, my older sister, has the, in addition to her physical features, she also had this notion, she was actually born in Panama, and so she is "real" Panamanian and I am not. And so since my mother was the idolized figure in the family, I have her personality traits, but I, I was raised with the notion that I got stuck with my father's physical traits.

The extent to which David participated in performing his racial and ethnic identity intentionally at some points and unintentionally at others is interesting. Throughout the discussion of disqualification and authenticity testing, he deploys his cultural knowledge and capital in a way that authenticates the very identity that others have disqualified. When he pronounced certain words such as "salsa," and "mangoes" he used a decidedly Spanish accent as if to stamp these words with his identity, to inflect them in ways that native Spanish speakers would, to solidify his position as a "real" Panamanian who speaks Spanish well. His hyperarticulation, the deliberate enunciation of both syllables,

offered up whiteness as hyperbolic, as well as a reference with which to contrast his Panamanian identity. When he said, "I don't like mangoes," he was almost mocking whiteness and himself, as he recognized that he is white and not white, but also inferred that he is not the kind of white that others suggest he is. He tentatively embraces whiteness, or reluctantly identifies with what whiteness connotes to the people who see him as only white. Another possible interpretation of this enunciation and interaction is that he may disidentify with the kind of whiteness these people are lumping him with.

To make whiteness this visible, David makes his performance of whiteness intentional, and recognizable in its clichéd form (starchy, "proper English" speaking). Doing so comfortably centers him in the interstice and affirms that he is both white and Spanish. This affirmation results from his ability to do race and ethnicity well. He can "sound" both white and Spanish in its most recognizable (hyperbolic) forms. This racial (and cultural) performance not only validated his knowledge of both but cemented his position in-between. This performance also begins to explain the blended perspective of which he spoke in the interview.

> It wasn't so much liked or did, because I liked and did. It was more of just the way I was; the most vivid example that comes to mind, I haven't thought about this, and I'm realizing there's some emotion in all of this as I am talking about this. I haven't talked about this in a while. Um, ah, I, I did not drink when I was a teenager, you know; I wasn't getting laid with as many women as possible. I wasn't you know, I wasn't a tough macho guy. I played the piano and so… I still, I remember my cousins, because I lived in Panama when I was in high school, and I remember my cousins you know, on the balcony of their, of their porch in Panama city, you know, and they each have a glass of scotch and soda and they say, "C'mon, you have to drink. You cannot be a Gonzalez unless you drink." I remember distinctly thinking, "Shit." You know. "Now I'm even more white because I don't like the taste of scotch and soda." And um, it wasn't until later in life that I looked back on that memory, which is a vivid memory, but it wasn't until later that I realized, you know, they were linking being Panamanian, um, with drinking, and toughness, and things like that. My cousins, every once in a while, would could home, like with a black eye, because they got into a fight.

> And I could hear my mother- "Over a girl!" and yeah probably, you know, or because they stood up for themselves, talking trash to some larger guy; and you know, I remember my mom contrasting, "[David] would never do that; he's smart; he's going to college" and all of that stuff. And so the very traits that were different were also somehow linked to the fact that I was going to achieve. And the only positive things my mother ever said about my father, um, there was a lot of playful, um, insulting as I was growing up, at him, she was, the most repeated thing was, "I only married him because he had blue eyes and fair skin." And that was a big accomplishment for a Panamanian woman in the 1960s.

As the lightest sibling in his family, David stood out as different. His skin color made him a target of ridicule and teasing, but also made him a symbol of potential, a sign of success. For him and other respondents, protecting one's preferred racial identity proved important. While most were recognized as mixed, they were not always validated as such. In maneuvering mixture, they opted to protect is mixture or as was the case with some part black respondents, they attempted to protect themselves from racial interrogations and identity invalidations by choosing blackness.

Malevolent Border Patrolling: Black, But Not *That* Kind of Black

Some respondents who confidently asserted a multiracial identity, deployed somewhat stereotypical thinking in affirming multiraciality. Take, Sanchez (a black Puerto Rican man):

> I'm not one-sided on my race in any degree. I'm basically like in the middle. I like Spanish food, like paella. Stuff like that. Platanos are really good. Reggaeton. Meringue. And stuff like that. I love that music. And of course, I'm black. I love hip hop and all that other stuff, like hip hop, rap, R and B, and of course fried chicken. And all those stereotypes.

Here, Sanchez presented himself as a divided self, one part Hispanic, the other black. Each part obediently follows what hegemonic culture dictates. These discursive practices cement the idea that all blacks like rap, or all Hispanics eat paella. Interestingly, Sanchez acknowledged how his friends were affected by the policing racial discourses of their

parents, who held stereotypical views of blacks as violent, criminal, "shacking up," uneducated, incarcerated sex fiends.

Jessica, who engaged in both protective and malevolent border patrolling, explained that growing up around black people both prompted and pressured her to identify as black because "that was really all I was exposed to." She continued,

> I identify with black culture. I listen to, you know, traditional black culture, stereotypical music, you know, hip hop, R and B, all types of music like that, and I mean, I guess just being around all black people helped me identify more with that side of me.

Jessica also described not knowing "a lot about Indian culture," since her mother, who "you can't tell is Indian just by talking to her" and is "pretty much fully Americanized," has "assimilated toward it, regular culture." In addition, "She cooks American food. She doesn't cook Indian food." With both sides of her family in the Midwest, Jessica noted that she has little contact with her parent's relatives and other extended kinship networks.

Jessica deployed similar stereotypes in explaining how she arrived at a black identity. Her contradictory comments above suggest that blackness was imposed on her (the racial identity to which she should default), even though she was aware that "when people see me, they don't see a black person because I don't look black. I look like I'm mixed." She actively chose and embraced blackness "because I love black people." She did so, despite being teased by other black people:

> If I say…an urban comment, you know…"What's up??" or something that's really urban, people will make fun of me and they'll be like, "You ain't black. Stop acting black."…. Like my boyfriend. He's black. Um, he grew up a certain way. Of course, he grew up with the mom who used to punish him, and beat him whenever he did something wrong. And he knows that the way I grew up, it wasn't like that because I didn't have a black mother, so you know I didn't get punishment all the time.

The deployment of these stereotypes (that black mothers physically punish their children as discipline; or that "real" black people "have it rough" growing up) is a curiosity in that Jessica used to both mark blackness and differentiate the respondent's blackness from the recognizably stereotypical form.

Others seemed less aware or equipped to deal with their own stereotypical thinking about race and racial identity. For example, Toni, a young African American-identified woman with Black, White, and Native American ancestry, also faced invalidation of her racially mixed heritage. "When I say I had a white great grandfather," some refute her assertion by saying, "'Everybody did. Who doesn't?'" Toni explained, "I acknowledge that (mixture) because that's just my history." Ironically, while confronting the racial ideologies of others and elaborating on others accusing her of "acting white," Toni reified many stereotypes about blacks (that they "go around with nails and hair" [presumably long and loud]; and look "ghetto' and expressed some problematic ideologies of her own.[84] When I asked her to clarify what "acting white" meant to her, she offered the following:

> People think I act white because I don't act like *that*, you know what I'm saying? (Emphasis hers)…. Well, I know I'm very reserved. I guess by the way I speak, that I don't speak slang, I guess. The way I carry myself…. The way I dress; the things that I wear…. And also because I, I've never, I don't hang around just black people. I've never gone to an all black institution, like schools. I've always been around whites (attended racially diverse schools)…. Except for one. I started off at an HBCU, and it was a culture shock for me…. Because they were African American through and through. They weren't like me…. They were a little bit wild, more outspoken.

By "wild," Toni meant "just flying off the handle about everything; cursing." She also suggested that many had "strong personalities, not saying that that's a black thing. But it

[84] Bonilla-Silva (2003) discussed how some non-white groups possess more pro-white attitudes than whites themselves. The converse, then, involves blacks having anti-black attitudes that match or exceed that of whites.

was just different than what I'm used to." After a year, Toni transferred to a predominantly white university. Her experience "wasn't as bad as at the HBCU [because] everyone acted like they were supposed to." Toni's comments illustrated that not only do some whites subscribe to racist ideologies, but often blacks do as well. The comments also contrasted blackness by differentiating between "good" and "bad" blacks. Toni was not alone in her deployment of these discursive practices.

In contrasting blackness, these respondents promoted themselves as having ostensibly "better kinds of black" identities by juxtaposing themselves with the more mythical, hyperbolic blackness. Alternately, black-identified respondents with multiracial parentage may experience border patrolling as an attempt (by others) to dis/qualify their blackness. Invoking stereotypical images of blackness can position one as an insider because it suggests an intimate familiarity with such mythologies. Conversely, circulating these stereotypes discursively could position one as an outsider, thereby compromising their blackness even further. Perhaps we could argue that a little bit of both are at play here. That Jessica performs her blackness by getting "a little ghetto" or "putting a little accent with my speech" suggests that she is both an insider and outsider. Pressured to prove her blackness, versus being both black and Asian Indian, Jessica border patrols herself. To alleviate some of the pressure of this border patrolling, she noted that increasingly she acknowledges that she is mixed, with plans to travel to India "to try to learn a little bit about that side of me."

Jessica's narrative contrasted slightly with that of Sa, who pointedly felt a sense of entitlement to freely explore a variety of experiences and cultures that her Black, Brazilian, and British relatives introduced and exposed her to throughout her life course.

> That's why I'm kinda like dipping into every little thing because it's just like from one side I have my [white British] grandmother showing me this [etiquette; tea parties; "ballet, opera, classical music…and museums"] from the other [black American] aunts and cousins introducing me to rap music and stuff like that ["jazz" and "Luther" Vandross].

In describing this freedom to choose, Sa not only contrasted (and racialized) the interests of family by race, she classed them as well. This classed divide designated the "white" pastimes as "high culture" while marking the "black" pastimes as "low culture." On a related note, respondents like Sa expressed an appreciation for being able to "border blend" by exploring their interests cross-racially. Respondents who were border patrolled by significant others did not seem to be as easygoing about border blending. They appeared more tentative and policing of their own interests as a result. Respondents whose families encouraged border blending then more easily seemed to embrace their racial composition. Unlike respondents who felt regulated and disciplined by others' borderism, Sa felt unrestricted. Since she had not internalized others' borderism, she felt free to explore her interests without being a docile body pressured to follow racial scripts (Foucault 1977).

Another expression of borderism involved respondents articulating antagonism about being racially and ethnically misread. While some respondents regarded such misreading as complimentary, such that it facilitated their blending ability and often increased their social access to more groups of people, other respondents regarded such misreading in pejorative ways. Zach revealed more interesting and almost inciting ideas about his reactions to being misread as Hispanic.

Because he jokingly referred to himself as a "flip," which some Filipinos do, I considered his experience a transition from "'flip' to 'spic'" to provocatively draw

attention to his internalized racism that seems apparent to me and the white privilege he enjoys as an "honorary white" or "not fully Asian" person.

> It seems like it's just a big joke, like my friends that are white, they're like, "Ah, you little Mexican, come here." I mean, they don't mean any harm by it. I know they're just kidding; they're just messing with me. Like I have one friend who's, he's a white guy, and I call him fatty, because he's a big guy. And he's like, "Come here, you little wetback. Will you come cut my grass?" That kind of stuff, and it's all fun and games so I don't take any offense to it. Like the thing that really irritates me though is when I go to a Mexican restaurant or someplace and like a Mexican, or a Latino generally, will come up to me or my girlfriend and just assume, right off the bat, that we speak Spanish. And I'm like, "Dude, I don't speak Spanish" and they have this look like, "Why not?" and I'm like, "Because I'm not Latino. I don't have to know Spanish."

His racial attitudes about Latinos are abrasive, particularly in the national and local context of intensified public debates and discussions regarding the presence (legal and/or illegal) of immigrants, especially Mexicans in the South. His vehemence becomes more visible and striking in opposition to the racist jocularity he exchanges among friends, most of whom identify as white. His racial attitudes about Latinos are abrasive, particularly in the national and local context of intensified public debates and discussions regarding the presence (legal and/or illegal) of immigrants, especially Mexicans in the South. His vehemence becomes more visible and striking in opposition to the racist jocularity he exchanges among friends, most of whom identify as white.

Rather than enjoy the multiple honorary memberships he is granted because of his ambiguity (that some mistake him as Hispanic), Zach reacted with frustration. Ironically, he remained tolerant of the racist jokes his friends casually deploy in his presence (see Houts Picca and Feagin 2007; Myers 2005). While he forgave them for joking, or actually did not even seem to find any offense in this type of humor, he took obvious offense to strangers misperceiving him as Hispanic. This in some ways exposed not only

how his white friends view him as “honorary white” or “not really Asian” (except for the “good food” his Asian mother is able to prepare), but also that he may 1) see himself similarly, as “honorary white,” and 2) that he harbors potentially prejudicial views of different racial/ethnic groups.

What is ironic about this opposition to honorary membership, or more generally to being perceived as of a group to which one does not claim membership involves the lack of information that people have about the very groups to which they *do* claim membership. For example, because one could understand “Filipino” as a mix of Chinese and Spanish (Root 1997), one could read Zach’s frustration with or rejection of being misperceived as Spanish as a form of internalized racism.

To not know the composite parts of his identity prohibits him from seeing that disliking or distancing himself from Hispanics/Latino/as could be interpreted as disliking or distancing from himself. While I cannot draw this conclusion, I share part of his narrative as an example of how easily some multiracial people can access white privilege, revise their own family histories to maintain this privilege or enjoy “honorary white” status, and reinforce socially constructed differences between racial/ethnic groups.

When People Border Patrol Both Their Identities and Partner Choices

Frequently, respondents minimized the impact of race in informing their mate selection process. Until asked pointedly, they tip-toed around the topic, hinting at matters of attributes (personality) or other factors (timing) as hindrances to relationship formation or duration. When probed specifically about people the respondents “preferred” or conversely, did not have a preference for, many couched their choice in non-racialized

terms. While it makes sense that most would not "out" themselves as racial border patrollers, some occasionally did. Those who made this disclosure discussed why they engaged in borderism. Two notable patterns emerged with regard to recognition of border patrolling: multiracial respondents of various combinations reported racialized preferences but discussed them differently.

Generally, part white multiracial respondents deferred to a race-minimization strategy that presented their relationship history as uninformed by race (their own or that of potential partners). Amidst this happenstance, these respondents reported having dated multiracial individuals (with part white parentage), or whites. Not only did they normalize this dating trend, but they neglected to volunteer any possible explanations for not dating members of the "collective black" group. Instead, the dating discourses they produced illustrated how heavily they had invested in whiteness, and as such knew to also produce colorblind explanations to erode the race-based discrepancy.

While structural barriers partially explain the lack of available collective black potential partners, the limited dating that took place with many of the multiracial individuals in my sample deserves further investigation. A critical interpretation of this behavior involves examining the curious (colorblind?) absence of people of color from some respondents' pool of potential partners. As contact increased interactions with racially diverse groups, shifts in who some respondents dated did not similarly shift. This is not to say that one's dating history determines or definitively reflects one's racial ideology as an individual. However, inspecting the group behavior, in this case, multiracial individuals with part white parentage (who either identify as white, part white, or white plus their other races), they recognize the privilege afforded them because of

their even partial whiteness. Consistent with the ways that whites protect their power and privilege as members occupying a particular social group position, many of these multiracial individuals intend to protect the privileges granted to them as "honorary whites" or as people with visibly white physical features. This contrasts in intention but not practice with many of the multiracial respondents with part black ancestry. They partnered mostly with black people.

This pattern of behavior supports scholars' contending that a new racial hierarchy is emerging that is increasingly solidifying a nonblack/black society (Gans 1999; Yancey 2003). By largely obliging the social norm of racial homogeny in romantic relationships, those respondents who partner with racially similar others solidify the racial hierarchy, rather than challenge racial borders in the way that we often think. Additionally, these narratives offer support of colorblindness, to the degree that several respondents negated or neutralized the racial impact on their relationships. Some respondents did not register much of the internal and external borderism that I detected in their discussions.[85] One interpretation of this involves respondents' reluctance to register their own border patrolling behavior or to process the potentially painful reality of the racialized rejection of others (in a potential dating pool). However, some respondents' had reasonable suspicions of potential partners as border patrollers, since the latter had subtle and serious reservations about "border blending" or crossing the color line.

One respondent, Jaunita (Black/Puerto Rican/Creole), rhetorically questioned border patrollers by using music as a metaphor for race: "I would ask (potential partner), 'Can you open your mind to something else?' You know, and then that would be the

[85] Childs (2005) grapples with this dilemma in her work as well, noting the colorblindness prevalent in the respondents' perceptions of their experiences that are racialized.

deciding factor. Can you open your mind to something else, honestly, and go with this new thing. Or are you only heavy metal?" She offered this analogy as a way of showing how people in general stick to the familiar, and that men in particular hesitate to cross color lines or possess any genuine interest in exploring racial differences romantically. She continued, "And I guess then if you couldn't open your mind to listen to different music, you could never open yourself up to what all is included in my family." Again, she used music, literally and figuratively, to illustrate the hesitation that she feels from potential partners who remain unwilling to explore the unfamiliar, to consider different possibilities than the ones prescribed by society.

In my analysis of the interviews, I discovered that many respondents replicate the very border patrolling they describe as an unwanted and often inevitable part of their everyday lives. Like these border patrolling others, respondents acquire similar messages about race, including social pressures to "stick to your own kind." As a result, many of them engaged in border patrolling behavior of their own. Some did so by policing their own identity and the partner choices they made for different reasons.

Benevolent Border Patrolling: "I've Had Crushes On People Outside Of My Race, But I've Never Pursued Anybody"

Many respondents indicated that having limited social access to people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds inhibited their familiarity and comfort with diverse groups. Limited accessibility impeded their ability to date a wide variety of people, regardless of specific racial ideologies or attitudes the respondents possessed. Jessica, a black-identified black/Asian Indian woman offered an example of this type of borderism.

> I've had crushes on people outside of my race, but I've never pursued anybody….I haven't been that attracted to white men that often, not that I can remember. Oh, you know what?" Yeah, there was a guy…Would it count if I'm 5? Because I used to only have crushes on white boys. Now that I remember. Oh yeah. I forgot about that. When I was like 4, I had a crush on an Asian guy and a white guy (both neighbors).

Jessica had to dig deep into her early childhood, to find evidence of interracial interest, in her case in innocent crushes. Despite having a "big crush on another white guy" upon moving to Georgia, Jessica recalled that racial residential segregation (that resulted from "white flight") was an impediment to dating whites (since her neighborhood became populated mostly by blacks). Notably, during that time, people presumed that Jessica was white, causing her to wonder, "Am I white?" Obeying traditional gender and racial rules meant that Jessica did not initiate interest in boys, and began learning at a young age about the "first R" (Van Ausdale and Feagin 2001) through her various crushes.

Another example of this benevolent border patrolling came from Rachel, a white and Native American young woman, who specifically indicated her preference for Native American male romantic partners during our interview, and ambivalence about dating Asian men. In having close proximity but lacking intimate social interactions with many Asians, Rachel lacked interest because of the social distance. Instead, she preferred Native American men who are "really involved" in their culture.

> I think it's kind of selfish because I want to learn more and you know, if he was mystical and things like that (even if he was of a different tribe). Um, I definitely go for Native guys because they're ah, hot. I mean, they're hairless for one thing. And I like their dark skin. Tall, dark, and handsome. And Hispanics are good because they look just like them. We pretty much call them Native anyways. 'Indio'."

Though no racial groups were off-limits, Rachel did admit to not having "a strong attraction towards Asians, but Filipino Asians are *not bad*." In the one serious

relationship she had, Rachel highlighted the couple's conversations about Native American issues. Since they were both "part Native American," Rachel enjoyed these exchanges and considered knowledge of Native American tribes and culture "a plus."

In articulating her preference, Rachel remained relatively open to various possibilities, rather than excluding men of different races because of their group membership. Being pointedly interest in Native American men, Rachel almost overshadowed her own whiteness (at the cost of connecting to and affirming her Native American parentage through her partner choice). In working towards this affirmation of Native American identity, people, and culture, she benevolently border patrolled herself and potential partners. This borderism then would eliminate white-identified (white/Native American) multiracial men from the pool of eligibles.

Maritza expressed similar preferences for men of particular races. She "dated a Filipino in high school" but not seriously enough to "call him 'boyfriend'" and had a *crush* on an Asian guy with whom she "never got into a relationship." Somewhat off-handedly, Maritza noted that the "Asian thing" runs in her family, citing her part Chinese great-grandfather and part Asian father of her son as evidence of this.

Despite establishing a sense of comfort about and familiarity in dating Asians, Maritza provides little explanation for *not* dating one ("I think it was my age"). She resolved this contradiction by inferring that just because "the Asian thing runs in her family," "doesn't mean I *have* to." (Emphasis hers). While this family narrative allows her the possibility of safely dating Asians because "there wouldn't be a negative family reaction or anything like that," her lack of reasons for not going out with one Asian guy suggested that she might be against the possibility, in one way or another (not fearful of

familial opposition or rejection). Notably, Maritza has dated an Asian black man, but her narrative indicated that she saw them as more alike than different, perhaps due to their overlapping blackness. She tentatively suggested that the term "interracial" applied to her relationship to a black Asian multiracial man. She confided, "Oh, that's complicated. If I date someone that was Hispanic, I wouldn't see that to be interracial."

However, she did not consider herself "mixed." Though she identified as a Black Hispanic or Black Panamanian, Maritza clarified, "I look at 'mixed' as more of, like a racial--where you look like you may be black, but you have Asian in you, or you look like, you know, you may be Hispanic, but you have Asian, or Indian, or what- or you may look black but you look a little Indian too…. Something other than African American, like that other person being of you know, another descent, like Asian, or like Hispanic/Spanish…. So that's what I look at as being mixed." Despite also acknowledging that the term Hispanic is racialized, Maritza did not view her own relationships as interracial, unless she partnered with a white man or white person of color (white Hispanics) (Alvarez 1998; Vital-Ortiz 2004).

> If they were white, then yes, I would look at it that way (as an interracial relationship). But if they were a black Hispanic….I still wouldn't look at it as interracial. Like if I was to date someone Puerto Rican and brown-skinned, or whatever, you know, I don't know. I'm not black, so whatever…. My family would look at him like he was everyone, like he was Hispanic. They wouldn't look at him differently. He'd be included. Even if he was a white Hispanic, they *still* wouldn't look at him differently, but I would look at it as being interracial, because of the difference in skin. But my family, as long as you were speaking Spanish, and you were from a Spanish country, you are Spanish. My mom would prefer that I date someone of darker skin or someone that is black/Hispanic.

Because her mother associated mixture with hypersexuality and promiscuity, Maritza was encouraged to date darker skinned men, as well as someone from the South (since "they're more home-oriented"). Consistent with her mother's borderism, Maritza

benevolently border patrolled herself by predominantly partnering with men of particular groups, and negated or ignored the differences between herself and her black partners (in not considering them interracial). Doing so reinforced both the social proximity she felt between blacks and Latinos, and the social distance between those groups and whites.

Other respondents communicated similar but more complex ways of seeing race. For example, Flora, a black/white biracial woman, noted the frequency with which Hispanic men approach her. Their inability to speak English fluently, coupled with her inability to speak Spanish fluently, means, "'I can't do anything for you.' Like 'I can't speak the language. I don't think this is gonna work out.'" Flora had an understandable aversion to pursuing relationships with any of these men (due to language differences), but did find herself dating other (English-speaking) Hispanics. In the former case, she draws a line between herself and Hispanics, while in the latter, she blurs it by noting, "Oddly enough, I have been with Hispanic men, but I didn't see it as interracial."

Her comments contrasted with another black/white biracial female respondent's comments that were more malevolent in their caricaturing of Hispanics as Mexican (Myers 2005), and Mexican men as "baby-making machines."[86] Because Flora found being mistaken as Hispanic "complimentary," she took no offense to Hispanic men approaching her, though she could not envision a "love across language barriers" (my description). Flora's perspective reflected both a practical approach and benevolent border patrolling because of her inability to imagine a successful relationship with a Hispanic man (at least those she interacts with who know no English).

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[86] I interpreted the respondent's comments as malevolent, despite the jocular fashion in which she delivered them, mostly because of her own honest admission of her stereotypical way of thinking. Myers (2005); Houts Picca and Feagin (2006); and Childs (2005) discussed how people often use humor to make stereotypical ideas more palatable to a public audience.

In making this admission, "I guess I just think that people look at Caucasian as the ultimate. That's the only time I could consider it interracial. That's the only time I would think people were looking at us like, 'What is he doing with her?'," Flora exposed the power and privileges of whiteness. Her comments are instructive not only in terms of how she views white men (with suspicion and reverence), but herself as different than them (in terms of race, class, and gender). In contrasting them racially with her, and in thinking that white men (when compared to their black counterparts) were not attracted to her curvaceous body, she border patrolled both her own identity and partner choice.

Having experienced invalidation from white women (discussed earlier) about not being close to the beauty ideal (Zavella 2005; Hunter 2005; Rockquemore 2002), Flora imagined herself off-limits to white men because of the distance she perceives between herself and this ideal.

> You know the other thing is definitely like a physical image, when I think of my physical body, I don't think of white males liking big hips and big butts or anything of that nature and I've gotta lot of hip. I got plenty of it. So I just assume that's not what they're interested in…. I'd be like, "Oh my gosh. I'm probably nothing like all the white girlfriends he's had before now." And then I would start thinking that way about that…. You know, who's attracted to me, because that's what it comes down to, because I'm not a person who would make the first move so if you make the first move and I talk to you and I decide that I like you, then that's fine. We'll go from there. But it doesn't matter if I think you're the finest person in the world, I just cannot…I gotta work on it. I'm still working on it.

While recognizing that her thinking is somewhat stereotypical ("My biological mother, she's a big woman, and she has a white husband now and he loves everything about her, so I know they exist…in reality but in my own little world they don't."), it is also evidence of how she has learned to border patrol herself, by racializing her body as

black[87] or more black than white, and her partner choice, by setting white men on a pedestal as "the ultimate."[88] Doing so makes them unattainable, and relieves any anxieties she has about her body or being stared at in public for looking like an interracial couple (which I argue would be so if she partnered with either black or white men, not solely white men).

Because of her own anticipation of rejection of romantic interest from white men, Flora solidified the idea that crossing the color line is taboo, even when one lives on the color line. Rather than imagine that white men might accommodate mixture, she envisioned their rejection. Thinking this way captures how she imagined white men read her racially, through a dichotomized lens sorting black from white (as opposed to an "honorary white" one). Once she is sorted into the black category, she becomes off-limits, on the basis of race rules. Even for many multiracial people, breaking the racial rules and rethinking the color line proves difficult. Traditional gender role expectations further complicate the matter by dictating that men make the first move.

Growing up in a household with her black father and Asian step-mother, Flora pointed to the absence of her white mother as partial explanation for her reluctance and hesitation to forming her own racially mixed relationships. Her abundant admiration for her father also encouraged her to search for a partner who reminds her of or "is similar to" him. "I tend to think of someone I'd want to be my significant other…strong, you know, like my dad…. And it's just hard for me to think of a white male to be that way."

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[87] One can look to the ways that Saartje Bartman, as the Hottentot Venus, came to be celebrated for certain physical features that persistently get associated with "authentic" black female sexuality: enlarged buttocks, curvy hips and round thighs. The respondent adopted these markers for herself, which then racializes her blackness, making whiteness once again invisible.

[88] Nellie Wong (1983) addressed this issue of white valorization in her poem "When I Was Growing Up." She writes, "When I was growing up and a white man wanted to take me out, I thought I was special, an exotic gardenia, anxious to fit the stereotype…" (Wong 1983:6 in Moraga and Anzaldua 1983).

Flora's narrative serves as a good example of how multiracial people often border their own identity and partner choice. She was not alone in making admissions about how she differentially regarded an "interracial" relationship depending on the partner's race. For instance, Sarah, an Anglo-Indian identified woman, observed that, when partnered with a white or Indian man, she "never thought about it. I don't know. They just seem like relationships. It just seemed like a relationship. And I liked it a lot." This race-neutral stance (colorblindness) illustrated the extent to which Sarah saw her own racial identity as overlapping that of her white or Asian boyfriends. Others may confirm this perspective by viewing the couple (White/Anglo Indian or Asian/Anglo Indian) as consisting of white and/or honorary white members. Being viewed this way masks Sarah's mixture, a situation with which she does not seem concerned.

While some respondents maintained a similar stance of indifference to considering racial differences in their relationships, others insisted that because their preferred racial identity was multiracial, all of their romantic relationships were interracial. This was so for a variety of racial combinations as well, including White/Native American; Black/Native American; and White/Asian respondents. For example, Sa, a black, Blackfoot Indian, and British/Brazilian woman, made the following observation about the "interracial" aspect of her relationship:

> I've never thought of being like an interracial relationship but really…it is because I don't identify myself as just being black. So yeah, I guess you can say *every* single relationship that I've been in has been interracial but on other people's terms, it might not look interracial; it might not be interracial. It's just, "Oh, two black people together."

Still other respondents felt that their "invisibly different" relationships were not "interracial." If others did not notice or could not detect racial differences between the

couple, then the relationships appeared to be monoracial. Even though one respondent (White/Asian) suspected that others viewed his relationship as "visibly different" and thus "interracial," he disagreed. He saw his relationship with a white woman as "not really" interracial.

Grace, a Native American/Black woman offered this:

> There was one guy I was talking to. He was actually Dominican and black, and his father is Dominican and I would consider that more interracial relationship because he really claims his Dominican side more than his black side or- or when I was talking to him. So I considered that an interracial relationship but I don't consider me and him (current boyfriend) interracial unless he told me that he had some thing in him other than Native American. So if he were to come out and say that he had black and Irish in him, then I'd be like, "Oh, yeah, this is interracial."
>
> MM: Okay, so why if you're dating somebody Dominican and black is it interracial, but not since you're Native and Black, if you're dating someone black?
>
> Grace: Um, because I could characterize myself as Native American and Black, and so if he claims Native American and black, it's like we're two same pairs.

When I asked that Grace clarify whether or not she would consider her relationship with her black boyfriend interracial, she said, "I would consider it regular, I would assume… Like if they were black and something else, I would consider it interracial, if they were opposite to me. They just couldn't be Native American and black" (that would not be interracial). Making this distinction enabled Grace to affirm, rather than police, her racial multiplicity. In discussing the nuances of "what counts" (or does not count) as "interracial," she accounted for her own racial identity, as well as that of her partner. In doing so, she countered the border patrolling that some respondents engage in themselves or confront in others.

The experience of being border patrolling inspired this reflection in Leilani:

> I've always even asked myself, "Is this an interracial relationship because I consider myself to be black and he's definitely black but I'm also Hawaiian" so I don't really know. Because I've asked myself that, like, "Would people consider it, or do I even consider it to be in an interracial relationship?" I would have to really-- when I really think about it, I would say no, just because I mean I consider myself to be black just like you do. Well part. It really is a tricky question…. I think he still like, even if it's something that's happened to me and it's especially because I'm multiracial, I think he still understands.

Leilani's expeience corresponds to that of Peg, who also found an empathetic boyfriend who shared racial realities, or at least understood them. That Leilani's boyfriend has multiracial family members facilitated this understanding. "He knows what it's like even though he hasn't experienced, you know, because he's seen it more than a couple of times in his lifetime."

Leilani's observations reminded me of that made by writer Roberto Santiago (1995). In learning about color and race, Santiago turned to an aunt to assist in unraveling the mystery of race as it operates for Puerto Ricans. She offered this advice to him: "'There is no racism between what you call white and black. Nobody even considers the marriages interracial.' She then pointed out the difference in color between my father and mother. 'You never noticed that,' she said, 'because you were not raised with that hang-up.'" (Santiago 1995: 95).

Though some relied on colorblind discourses to negate the impact of race on their relationships, most of the respondents did notice race. They attempted and accounted for the differential ways that race added up in their relationships. Some stumbled over how to label their relationship in satisfactory ways, a point that serves as a reminder of the limited language available to describe "multiracial" "interracial" relationships.

Beneficiary Border Patrolling: "I Like Them Lighter Than Me…Definitely Lighter Than Me."

Unlike benevolent border patrollers, beneficiary border patrollers choose identities and partners that prove socially and/or materially beneficial to the individuals. These choices favored and rewarded whiteness or the approximation thereof. Respondents who engaged in beneficiary border patrolling of both their identities and partner choices articulated a desire to enjoy white privilege or higher social status through these options.

Sa, a multiracial woman with black, Blackfoot Indian, British and Brazilian parentage, articulated more internalized racism in talking about her identity and partner choice. After discussing a man who she dated that was black and part Indian, she noted, "I know our babies will be cute." She also claimed to not have light skin preferences, yet could curiously only identify certain celebrities (i.e., "Wesley Snipes, Omar Epps--that kind of dark skin") as examples of attractive darker skinned men (By "darker" Sa meant "like way darker, like just blatantly, like really dark skin"). Since "they happen to be movie stars," Sa probably will not have an opportunity to date them, as she rightly observed: "So it's like I don't come in contact with, on an everyday basis, like just guys that I think are attractive that are dark-skinned, and that's just the way it happens to work out."

When I asked if she preferred multiracial people because she believed they could have shared racial realities or experiences, Sa indicated more of a preference for "looks."

> I can't say that I'm attracted to multiracial people because I can identify with them. If I was to sit here and tell you that, that would be a lie, because I've never been in situations where I'd be like, "Oh, you would feel my pain about my family history." Because I don't *know* their family history and maybe, and with somebody that has just Indian in their family or something like that, it's kind of

> different than in my situation because I have like actual white people in my family and then even still, just because somebody has nice hair, they could be from Jamaica. They could be from the Islands. It's not just having like a European descent that makes you, like, multiracial. So that's, naw, I can't say that that's the reason why.

Other respondents had also internalized the borderism they faced. Amidst her questioning her sexual and racial identity, Grace reproduced the very border patrolling she faced herself.

> Well, when it comes to women, I'm kind of more attracted to, I don't like big girls. Um, I like Latinas, a few whites, mainly light skin girls. I usually don't mess with dark skin women *at all*. So, Latinas attract me to a big tee. White girls depending. They're almost my next category, and then light skinned girls and then that's it. And as far as guys are concerned, I like them lighter than me… I like them lighter than me. Um, I dated one guy. He was Native American, Indian, Irish, and something else. He was a bunch of stuff. I usually like guys who are Hispanic and black. But if they're not Hispanic, that's cool. But definitely lighter than me.

Grace's comments pointed to and reproduced the racial hierarchy that privileges whiteness, and distances from blackness. Though she expressed resentment with having to confront others' borderism (because she "acts white" and chooses a black and Native American identity), she border patrols as well, except that she does so with both her identity and partner choice. While she never explained why the resistance or reluctance to date "darker than her" (who would in this colorblind era?), she instead normalizes her "preference." Rather than be able to critically reflect on her clearly racialized preferences as ostensibly problematic, she continues, "If they're black, they have to be lighter than me." When I ask her about possible explanations or differences (is this pattern/preference with "girls or guys"?), she offered this in our exchange:

> Grace: I don't know. As far as women, it's almost degrading to say, but it's, women have a more cleaner look.
>
> Interviewer: When they're lighter?

> Grace: Yeaaaah. I don't know but with guys, it's just like, um, they're just more attractive to me. Like I just, I think of kids. I think of my whole life as "future." I would not see myself in the future with a woman. But sexually, yes. But with a guy, it's like, I think, if I were to mate with you and I were to wind up pregnant, would I be satisfied, I mean not satisfied but how would I want my children to look? Do I want them to have a more darker complexion or do I want them to kind of round out to my complexion or lighter? And that's how I kind of think about it. I want them to be either my complexion or lighter. And it's just because I'm not really turned onto dark skinned guys for some reason and I just really don't really have a preference for- it's like all the cute guys- like my cousin, he's really cute to me and he's light skinned. I love men with hair. Oh, you have to have (facial) hair…. I mean, I don't know it's just all the guys I've seen that just kind of have a lighter, almost mixed (look) ethnicity to them, it's just cuter and sexier to me. Something about it. I'm not turned on to dark skinned guys at all.

Given that Grace described her skin color as "brown with red undertones," I was puzzled by her anti-black ideology, yet unsurprised at the same time. When I probed about any exceptions, that problematic "cute for a dark skinned person," Grace made this observation:

> Yeah, I have. There was this one guy I saw on the train this morning. He was really cute, very clean cut. He had a nice style to himself. I'm about style! You have to be dressed a certain way (which is)…not really a whole lot of sneakers, except for my boyfriend who's the exception for some reason…. I really like the guys who wear collared shirts, polos, dress shirts. Those are cute to me. Guys who are willing to wear sandals. If he doesn't really wear sandals, I'm not really turned on. Just because, it just tells me about the type of edge he has. He's more of a black edge or more of a white edge.

The incoherence and contradictions presented in Grace's narrative were characteristic of colorblindness. She made this one man on the train the exception, and in doing so, flexibly accommodated her "preferences" to incorporate him into her schema. Nevertheless, her racial preferences not only reproduce the racial hierarchy, but they go largely unchallenged by others. She provided another example by recounting a recent example of a cute dark skinned guy who she saw on the train:

> He was actually, he had on regular, he had dress pants on, but the way his colors were mixed, he had a soft blue shirt on with like this pinkish-orangish colored tie and these brown shoes…It's just like this, such a funky style and just the way that he carried himself like, "I don't care what anybody thinks. I'm doing me." And it's like, "Oh, gosh. You're turning me on." And it's how he kept his facial hair, and that was really cute to me but I was like, "Oh, he's cute for a dark skinned guy, but I wouldn't date him. I wouldn't be interested." Like I'd probably give him my number to be a friend but not to be a lover or anything.

By internalizing the racial hierarchy and beauty queue (Hunter 2005) that values whiteness, Grace (and others) evaluated potential partners through this lens. She sees skin color as a currency, a quality that people must possess if she is to be attracted to them. Bonilla-Silva (2002) argues that in this pigmentocracy, skin color maintains a value. Lighter skin has more value, or epidermic capital, in a white supremacist society than darker skin. In this context, Grace's perception is understandable, though no less troubling and complex. Other respondents, such as Jamie, shared Grace's sentiments about preferred partner choice, and seemed similarly invested in epidermic capital and the reproduction of racial divides.

With racial contradictions abounding in her life, Jamie witnessed her own family dividing along "racial" lines, with light separating from dark. She noted that some members of her family worked toward marital assimilation[89], by purposefully partnering with whites "so their kids don't come out dark." Given the currency of whiteness in this country, Jamie knows that her family wants her to marry someone white. By actively encouraging this, they presumably hope that she will be able to invest in whiteness by proxy (through partner choice). Given that Jamie's friends mostly are white and light skinned blacks (with two notable dark skinned women as exceptions, in her account), she seemed to be setting up social networks that will enable her to follow through on her

[89] This intention could be read as internalized racism, or as attempts to access white privilege through partner choice.

family's advice about romantic partners. Given existing evidence on people's tendency to gravitate towards likeness and similarity (Korgen 2002; Hunter 2005), one might conclude that in establishing social ties to people who look similar but are racially white (who are also likely to have a largely white social network) facilitates, if not increases, Jamie's access to white (or light skinned) men as potential partners.

Jamie's narrative illustrated the connection between her identity and her partner choice. Conflicted about her black identity, and open about her desire for congruence (to be white if she looked white), her racial self-understanding and contradictory stance on race matters impacts her romantic relationships and partner choice. Her ostensible internalized racism gets expressed through her active pursuit of partners who are not "too dark." She engages in this behavior to ensure and secure some white privilege through this partner choice.

Other examples of beneficiary border patrolling relates to three white/Asian multiracial respondents, Timothy, Theresa and Miki. Despite asserting racially mixed identities, they all offered similar defenses when asked if they ever dated anyone Asian. In Timothy's logic, "dating Asian" (my term) felt uncomfortably close to home, too much of a reminder of his Korean mother. Despite describing Korean women as more morally attractive or virtuous than white women[90], and indicating, "What I find attractive in relationships is a woman who is very modest…. They have to have beliefs and values," Timothy later communicated a kind of "Asian aversion." Though his mother discouraged him from dating "really slutty" (presumably American) women, Timothy developed a different interest and discursively (unsuccessfully) attempted a colorblind explanation.

[90] Espiritu (2001) discusses this distinction by showing how Filipina women differentiate themselves from white American women who they see as sexually immoral and promiscuous.

> My mom, she just doesn't care about it. Like she is supposed to hate certain ethnic groups, but she likes everyone…. I mean, I am probably the one who thinks, "Don't bring that kind of person home," but that's not dictated by my parents or anything…I look at a girl's character. I really don't care about race, but it's just like, I can't be attracted to an Asian girl. It's very hard because it reminds me of my sister a lot. And so it's kind of scary.

Timothy then offered the qualification, "All Asian, straight Asian (versus racially mixed ones), even though my sister is half White, but it's tough." Though he acknowledges his sister's racial mixture, Timothy did not resolve the inconsistency in his logic. If he were uncomfortable dating someone who reminded him of his sister, he might partner outside both of those groups (White and Asian Korean). Instead, he reported dating mostly white women, finding that acceptable, or at least in his imagination not "scary." Because we do not know how "white looking" his sister is, we are without a visual reference to which we could compare his previous girlfriends. That is, Timothy's sister may look white "with Asian eyes" the way he described others' perception of him. In reality, he may be dealing with his own beliefs about ideal and desirable partners, or women whom he should or should not bring home. By framing this discussion mostly in terms of character, morality, and decency, he evaded explicit conversations about race and its impact on his partner choice.

Despite any discomfort he felt about discussing race in relationships, he was able to do so at various other points in our interview. For example, Timothy mentioned:

> I am more accepted because I'm not fully White, you know. Like in my school, I was more accepted by the Black people. I was basically accepted by everyone, because I wasn't only White but also something else. So, it's pretty cool. It's nice because I don't know, it seems like a lot of White people that went to my school were scared of Black people, you know. I don't know why. They are the same kind of people, really nice. You just have to know them. You just have to know the way to break the ice because a lot of Asian people never minded to hang around Black people, but I was able to do that.… I honestly think that nothing about my race molded anything. I think it's just my personality getting along

> with people and everything. It doesn't matter, the racial thing, that Black people like me or don't like me. I think it's all my personality.

The popularity of colorblind narratives sweetly seduces (Bonilla-Silva 2007) Timothy into believing that his identity and partner choices are not informed by race. However, he clearly cares about and is aware of the way that race matters, as it operates in his favor (he is likeable, and embraced by a racially diverse group of peers).

Theresa noted a similarly curious Asian aversion, what Helie Lee (2000:135) described this way, "What spooked me was the incestuous feeling of dating a brother, and the unknown—especially the unknown. Inexperienced, I had bought into the stereotype of small penises and inadequate foreplay" (Lee 2000:135).

> I mostly was interested in the typical American looking guy… I just typically went for guys that had, you know, light colored hair, brown hair, not too dark, um, that was when I was younger. I was never really interested in Asian guys, at all, because I felt like it was like dating my brothers. It was really weird…. It's almost like, um, when I look at, well, that's not to say that I haven't as an adult, because as an adult, I was attracted to this Asian guy but when I was growing up it seemed like when I looked at them, I saw my brother. You know?

Oddly enough, dating white men did not seem awkwardly familiar or incestuous in the way that dating Asian men sounds for her, despite her brothers being both Asian and white. While her dating history makes space for white men at the exclusion of Asian men, her somewhat psychoanalytic discussion and understanding of her choices also illustrated the kind of contradictions that exemplify colorblindness.

> MM: When you said "not too dark," you meant the hair or the skin color?
>
> Theresa: Probably both, you know, and then when I got a little older, like in my late teens, early 20s, I found myself more attracted to people; um, of different races, but when I was younger, I *definitely* was, I think, influenced by the white world that I lived in.

> MM: Hmm. Um, have you ever felt like you were attracted to people who weren't back to you? So where you expressed interest and they didn't reciprocate?
>
> Theresa: But you know what's funny is I never really thought it being about my race. I just always thought about it as they weren't attracted to me. I was, you know, chubby when I was growing up. And I had all these crushes on guys and I had a feeling that it was probably because I was chubby but I never really thought about it having to do with my race because I guess I just, I guess I'd never really just thought *that* much about my race, until I got older, and well except when the kids would call me "Chink" and kids tease me but aside from that, I never really thought about my brownness.

Even though Theresa considers herself brown, she made comments that inferred the racial divide between her brownness and others' blackness remained:

> There has been some black guys that I was attracted to, black guys that were, um, attracted to me but never really either one of us pursued it. There was kind of like an attraction, you could kind of sense something, but you know, you weren't really sure, and so maybe if you weren't sure, you didn't really pursue it.

Although she described her family as very supportive ("Of course, you know, my family is a mixed family so I never felt any hesitation or anything, you know, from my parents"), Theresa remained reluctant about crossing this particular racial divide. Her comment also exposed an inferred familiarity with white men, or whiteness more generally; this familiarity might be the result of Theresa's honorary whiteness (despite referencing herself as "brown"). In this way, she engaged in beneficiary border patrolling.

In ways that parallel both Timothy's and Theresa's narrative, Miki, a white and Japanese respondent, expressed a similar Asian aversion. When asked about her dating history, Miki admitted: "They've all been white. I guess Caucasian…. I've never been interested in an Asian man, guy I mean…. I never really had an attraction. I don't know

what exactly it could be." Similar to other respondents' race-evasive style, Miki claimed to have not considered the "interracial" quality of her relationships, with one exception.

> Well, the only time I've ever thought about it is this relationship, because every other boyfriend knew I was a quarter (Japanese) and they all asked me about it and acted like it was pretty cool. And now this one, it's not like he doesn't think it's a good thing, it's just that he won't really accept it… It's so weird because he's so open to everything else. I don't know what that's all about.

In being border patrolled by her boyfriend, Miki internalized that borderism by not considering her relationship with whites as interracial. She did not seem to recognize the parallels between her lack of attraction to Asian men and her boyfriend's discomfort with and invalidation of her Japanese heritage. Miki is participating in the circuitous process of border patrolling, by being border patrolled and becoming a border patroller. Despite describing her home city and friendship network as diverse, Miki cited a largely white circle of friends as explanation for the lack of diversity in her dating history. Colorblindness accommodates this contradiction, allowing Miki to let her racial ideologies go unchallenged. This way she does not have to reconcile the discrepancy between claiming a multiracial identity, feeling some frustration when that identity is invalidated, and not dating any other group of men besides whites.

To deflect attention away from these racial ideologies, Miki volunteered this updated version of the "some of my best friends are" discourse: "There was a boy once. He was mixed, black and white. And um, he was, I don't think he was really interested. That's the only thing I can really think of, besides…" Because he failed to reciprocate romantic interest, Miki "just left him alone. But my family, they never said *what* I should or shouldn't date. But I don't really know how they feel about it"(Emphasis mine). Again, we see the subtleties and the slippage of colorblind discursive practices. Miki not

only deployed this unnamed boy (a potentially charged racial reference) who she implied, but never specifically said, she had some interest in him. Rather than discuss her own position on the matter, she indicated that her parents never delineated *what*, not *who*, she should or should not date. Finally, Miki neglected to connect her multiracial identity to that of the mixed boy, which reiterates the difference she constructed between the two of them.

Most of the examples of beneficiary border patrolling originated from White/Asian respondents who asserted a multiracial identity, enjoyed honorary whiteness, and neglected to contemplate the "interracial" quality of their relationships. One such respondent indicated that when she dated white or Asian men, she considered neither relationship "interracial." Identifying as multiracial meant that she should technically consider them interracial, but I argue that Soraya situated her whiteness as a central part of her identity. In doing so, and mostly partnering with other whites (who may see her as white, part white, or honorary white), Soraya becomes a beneficiary border patroller. Being able to reveal or conceal her "ethnic Otherness" at her leisure, Soraya fights to maintain the white privilege that she has access to in terms of her identity and partner choice, even when others challenge and contest the singular white identity she most commonly claims. That is, when looks are deceiving, having a white appearance allows such individuals to pass under the racial radar of others relatively undetected as different.

In addition to dodging the appellation of difference (Butler 1997) for the most part, Soraya drew attention to racial and ethnic difference located in others. She recalled at one point in the interview, "I just remembered. I dated this guy who was half

Malaysian." "And half white?," I asked. She confirmed. The two, who met through friends, dated for a couple of months. About this relationship, Soraya said, "I didn't consider that relationship to be an interracial relationship. I don't know why because…You could tell there was something else in him. He identifies as Asian. His mom is Malaysian and his dad is white." Her description here is interesting, given that, even though she sees herself primarily as white and her then boyfriend identifies as Asian, she did not see the relationship as "interracial." This could speak to her perceiving him as "honorary white" or border patrolling his identity to the point of invalidation. Evidence of the former can be found in her observation, "He could easily be written off as white. People think he looks a little Indian and I think he looks that way, too."

Soraya's reading of their relationship as *not* interracial would not constitute invalidation were they both to identify as white.[91] However, as I mentioned above, because they both *look* white, they appear to be a white couple. The exception to this occurs when they are read as Indian, and/or multiracial. In neglecting to discuss this at length suggests that Soraya is comfortable in her world of whiteness, a position which is understandable given the attendant privileges and power attached to this group. Finally, her lack of attention to race privilege counters her attention to his racial/ethnic difference (versus her own). This colorblind discursive strategy allows her to affirm her whiteness, while enjoying any situational benefits to being both (as long as her white privilege remains intact and is not compromised in any significant way) (Bonilla-Silva 2002; Frankenberg 1993).

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[91] About her racial identity, Soraya stated: I've always identified that way. Maybe because I look white, I think other people see me as white and when they hear my name, they ask, "Where are you from?" but also my dad has lived here most of his life and he doesn't really, like, practice like Hindu religion or anything and doesn't have an accent. He's kind of adapted this lifestyle.

Notably, this discursive strategy discussed above, of not marking whiteness, was common among part white respondents. Sometimes, however, these respondents were forced to grapple with the supposed invisibility of whiteness and the potential/actual legibility of their multiraciality. That others registered respondents as multiracial might have impeded respondents' efforts to access white privilege. In opting for white or relying on their mixture to flavor their whiteness[92], these respondents also established white-centric dating patterns (whether they understood it as such or not). Doing so enabled them to benefit from the identities and partners they chose, thus making them beneficiary border patrollers.

One final example of this came from Kim, an Asian American-identified (White/Asian Filipina) woman. Though she did not think that race "makes much difference" in her relationships and paid little attention to how others responded to her and her boyfriend, a White/Latino Mexican man.

> I don't really much think about it [race]. It's not, it's not a major forerunner with me. It doesn't overly affect me. People don't have problems with it. I don't have problems with it….partially because I don't care what other people have to think and partially because of the people I associate myself with generally don't see me as *what* I am but who I am. If there's someone I don't like, someone I feel is, has a problem with who I am, how I feel or what I think, I'll generally walk away from the situation. I just won't associate myself. I feel no need to.

Despite her indifference to race matters, and her claim that she does not "really have a type," Kim contradicted herself:

> I have different things for different genders. Men- physically taller, broader men. I usually like, other than (my current partner), the general feature, blond hair, blue eyes. A sense of humor is nice. For women, I lean toward darker features, Hispanic/Asian/African American. I generally like more lipstick approach.

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[92] For example, Dakota admitted, "I do identify as Korean when it is convenient, I guess…. In social situations, when I am talking to people, I always say that I am half Korean. I guess because it makes things more interesting and I don't feel that I am a boring White girl."

In articulating these preferences, Kim betrayed her earlier stance of minimizing race. By drawing attention to "blond hair, blue eyes," she exposed a preference close to a white ideal. This contrasted with her preference for darker skin women, but both descriptions suggested that Kim did have some awareness of race and the ways that phenotypic features and racial characteristics impact her partner choices and preferences.

Protective Border Patrolling: "When I Date Someone Of The Same Skin Color, People Don't Even Question It."

> There has been some black guys that I was attracted to, black guys that were, um, attracted to me but never really either one of us pursued it. There was kind of like an attraction, you could kind of sense something, but you know, you weren't really sure, and so maybe if you weren't sure, you didn't really pursue it. Theresa (White/Asian woman)

> I think it would be better (to partner with somebody white), because I'm in the South, and a lot of my dad's family is still old thinking….In the South, there's still the whole- they're old, and white bathroom junk, Jim Crow, black guys don't work blah, blah; all the stereotypes are still held on some of his side. (Lexie, a White/Asian woman)

> "If I date someone a lot like me, then no one questions me. They think that we are a (black, not interracial) couple." (Vanessa, an African American-identified woman)

> "I know he wouldn't talk to me because I'm not a white girl." (Sa, Black, Blackfoot Indian, British, and Brazilian)

What emerged from respondents' narratives about their relationship history involved patterns of partner choice indicating an ideal, perhaps framed by a love map (Fisher 1999)[93]. Many engaged in protective border patrolling as a means of preserving, instead

[93] This mental image of eventual ideal romantic partners, the love map operates as a template that serves as a reference point in sorting out our attraction to others. This love map includes a set of qualities one finds attractive in a potential mate and facilitates this process of selection. Culture, family, and other social institutional and individual forces limit and delimit the geographies of love made possible or impossible by this map. Not all paths on this love map remain clear of social constraints, and these impediments can be cultural, classed, gendered, raced, familial, or otherwise. When one's love map gets circumscribed and revised by these forces, we can see the way borders specific to race get policed. This romantic cartographic curtailing of potential partners reflects power asymmetries and socio-cultural endogamous expectations bound up in both fear and familiarity. Reconfiguring others' cartographies of love can narrow choices and run counter to narratives about love's expansive and inclusive qualities. These reconfigurations expose the imposition of family, culture, and society on individuals' mate selection and subjectivities.

of diluting (through more mixture), this heritage. They also desired partners with racial and ethnic empathy. David provided an example of this kind of borderism, discussing how he experienced a shift in ideals. He also related that shift to his own fluid identity.

> With respect to Latina women, it totally parallels my own sense of awareness; I vividly remember, it was the Grammy's one year when Linda Ronstadt sat next to Olivia Newton-John and I literally remember the point at which something shifted inside of me from "blonde, blue eyes, fair skin is beautiful" to "big brown eyes and, you know, olive skin or dark skin is beautiful and so, um,
>
> MM: Did it have to be either/or?
>
> Well, it wasn't so much either/or. It was how, how I would describe my ideal. And that was purely, I assumed at the time, that was purely on a physical level, um; it's not until the past 3-5 years that I experienced a lot of pain about that issue of- because I do remember vividly, being aware that I didn't, um, I didn't want to be with a Panamanian girl or a Latina girl because I didn't find them attractive and Olivia Newton John was attractive.

Throughout his early childhood and adolescence, David had valorized white femininity, learning to associate beauty with white women. Though he did not initially see his attraction to "everybody that looked like Olivia Newton John" as a racialized preference, he later developed that awareness. Developing this critical lens continues to trouble David, since "I'm not attracted to her and I'm becoming aware that a lot of that lack of attraction is because she's white with blue eyes. And that there's something going on with me, and I have yet to figure out where I'm supposed to be." In wanting to protect and preserve his heritage, David confided in feeling a sense of connection "when I hear a woman, you know, speaking Spanish." He described longing to keep that sense of identity intact. When he sees those signifiers of culture in women, "those beautiful eyes and those nice hips," he comes to this realization:

> It's those beautiful eyes and those nice hips that represent a part of me that I'm afraid to lose because, you know, I'm biracial and I'm, I'm very aware of my

> partner will have a huge impact on how much of my cultural identity will develop further down the line if I have children. My sisters both married white, blue-eyed men and I'm aware of that and there's a part of me that doesn't want the white to win, that doesn't want the white to sort of block out the one Panamanian woman who married this guy from Pennsylvania.

Wrestling with his own internal conflict, David also struggled with knowing that his mother wants him "to marry a Panamanian girl." Because he was constantly border patrolled by significant others, David had a lot invested in his partner choice. Such a decision could cement his Panamanian authenticity or compromise it.

> I remember when my cousins "accidentally" on purpose dropped some keys near me and obviously I would pick them up, and when I would pick them up, they were all excited and celebrating because they, the whole thing was a test to see if I bent my legs, bent my legs when I picked them up.
>
> MM: When you were talking earlier about the scotch and the soda-
>
> Same guys.
>
> MM: I was thinking that, I wonder whether, because I though that you were going to say that it was just sort of, more about your masculinity but that interestingly that kind of got attached to your whiteness, rather than just questioning your masculinity.
>
> Right. Right. To me, it's all the same. They linked, when they said, "You gotta be a Gonzalez," I knew that not every Panamanian was named Gonzalez, so to me it turned into, "You're not really going to be Panamanian." "You're going to be a [his last name]." A gringo.

In enduring various types of authenticity testing around his performance of race and gender, David felt that his preference for a Latina related to his wanting someone that seems like home, someone familiar. David acknowledged the structural barriers that impede his ability to encounter many preferred potential partners (Latinas) who have the same (doctoral) level of education that he does. These barriers further impede his search for similarity.

Other reasons existed for respondents to engage in protective border patrolling. A paradox exists when people border patrol their own partner choice to evade border patrolling from others. This cyclical process reflects the kinds of negotiations that take place along the color line, with regard to identity and relationships. As with the protective border patrolling of identity, that of both identity and partner choice also involved a desire to dodge questions and unwanted attention.

Some protectively border patrolled their identities and partner choices to simplify their lives because, as Keisha observed, "It's hard to explain to people so I'd rather not deal with it." Keisha, among others, talked at one point or another during the interview about others perceiving her as and accusing her of "acting white." During high school, Keisha spoke to a white guy but never got romantically serious with him because all of her friends would ask if the two were dating. They would say, she recalls, "He acts black." Keisha was not the only person to face this irony of interracial dating: she was a black-identified woman accused of "acting white" and he was a white-identified man who was accused of "acting black." If they did not symbolically succeed at "looking like" an interracial couple, then they did so by being perceived as "acting" counter to (opposite) their race. Not only do these conceptions and accusations of acting white and black solidify racial categories, they make behaving outside of hegemonic terms nearly impossible (or not without consequence). The policing of these respondents' (and their potential/real partners') behavior impacts not only how they understand themselves racially, but whether or not they are willing to get involved interracially. The decision sometimes involved a consideration of one's loyalties and allegiances, with the choice so often serving as an indication of this to oneself and others.

Vanessa, a black-identified young woman of African American, Native American, and white parentage, explained that she patterns with phenotypically similar men, to fly under the racial radar and avoid "the talks and the stares," or what Wade-Gayles (1997) calls "eye questions." This practice of "skin color coding" (race matching) helped her elide attention since people view her through a lens of homophily and homogamy: "If I date someone a lot like me, then no one questions me. They think that we are a couple." That is, they see Vanessa with a black man and read them as a couple, while reading her with a white man as friends. This inability to read romance interracially could be reflective of people's opposition to interracial intimacy, or their investment in homogamy.

While she acknowledged ambivalent and tentative feelings about dating non-black men, she volunteered her strategy for avoiding others' borderism:

> To try to avoid more problems that's already going on in my family, I think I am more attracted to black guys. But I think it wouldn't be a problem if I dated outside of the race. I just try to keep that not such a big deal…. There is no reason I haven't dated outside of my race. (My current boyfriend) is just a person I like, I was attracted to. We had similar interests and he just happened to be African American.

Given her aversion to unsolicited, potentially antagonistic attention[94], Vanessa's distaste for being border patrolling (to avoid "going through a lot of hassle") does not necessarily correspond to a distaste in border crossing, nor does it not negate the fact that she admitted to rejecting the advances of non-black men. By framing her identity and partner choice in colorblind discursive practices, she tried to conceal the reality that race *is* a criteria for her, expressly because partnering with someone racially (physically/phenotypically) similar to her satisfies her desire to avoid unwanted public

[94] Vanessa mentioned experiencing visual dislocation when with close relatives, and faced constant questioning that required her to reveal her relationship to these relatives to the interrogating strangers.

attention. Her aversion to this racialized surveillance conceals any potential opposition she personally possesses with regard to forming a visibly "interracial" relationship of her own[95]. In avoiding border-patrolling others and choosing blackness for both her own racial identity and partner choice, Vanessa asserted her agency; affirmed her identity; but engaged in protective border patrolled herself.

Like Vanessa, Lisa and Leilani indicated their romantic attraction to and preference for black men, and had some anxieties about dating "interracially." Lisa, a Puerto-Rican identified woman, mentioned having difficulty registering the advances of non-black men[96], while Leilani, like many other protective border-patrolling respondents, grew up with parents who border patrolled her identity and partner choice. Because they saw her as black, they expected her to date black men.

> I wouldn't necessarily say those men that aren't black are unattractive. I just, I guess, I would never think about dating them….For one thing, I feel like when I was younger, my mother instilled in me that I should bring home a black man. And I guess I'm still holding on to that…. I feel that even though she has never expressed it, if I were to bring home a white male, she would have a little bit of a problem. I wouldn't say a problem, but she maybe has concerns about it.

However, Leilani contradicted herself by also saying that finding someone multiracial would be ideal, in the sense of locating a partner with racial empathy[97] and

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[95] One could argue that because of her known multiracial ancestry, she technically is in an interracial relationship. However, because she identifies singularly as black, she does not perceive or experience the relationship as such. With respect to both her identity and perception, she is not in an interracial relationship.

[96] She said, "I actually went out on a date and didn't know it was a date, with a white guy. And it was different. I don't know how to explain it…. He said he wanted to take me, I think, out to eat. And to me, 'out to eat'-- I don't really consider that a date. Maybe that's wrong on my part. So we went out to eat and I figured it was just, we were just, eating. And after that we were driving around and he was like, showing me different areas, like the park, you know, a certain kind of park, and the amusement or attractions or whatever. And then when he took me home, he was like, um, 'So, when am I going to see you again?' And I was like, 'Oh! Okay! So he wants to see me again!'

[97] The way Leilani imagined racial or ethnic empathy operating in her world is along lines of compassion or validation and/or shared perspectives. Given the ease with which people can privately deny the significance and force of race in organizing our lives and experiences, *and* the frequency with which Leilani and others reported being border patrolled in a number of ways, choosing a partner who empathizes

understanding of her (multi)racial reality, or someone who "would know what I go through," or if she is having a bad day, "they already know why."

> For one thing, it's already complicated with me being multiracial. (What's complicated is) just the fact that I wouldn't feel like they understand where I'm coming from. For example, like if I've just had a day from hell because people have just been irritating me all day about my race or anything like that, I just feel like they just wouldn't understand.

While I do not attempt in providing this alternate analysis to disregard or invalidate her explanation, I offer it to show how the rhetorical devices of colorblindness also allow black-identified multiracial people to deploy abstract liberalism as a way of deflecting from their own racial biases and prejudices. The inconsistencies that some of their explanations reveal also support claims that the "collective black" (Bonilla-Silva 2003) or residuals and multiracials (Gans 1999), can also employ strategies of colorblindness when convenient. Relying on these colorblind strategies also dissuades those who deploy colorblindness to critically analyze any hesitation she might feel because of perceived or real racial differences between herself and potential partners. By situating her choice in the realm of comfort (versus conflict), and an avoidance of the kinds of attention she imagines and knows that interracial couples receive[98], she neglected to address how she would negotiate the expressed interest of someone who *does* look different than her, and by extension, racially identifies in a way that contrasts with her own identity.

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with both of those realities seems reasonable, if not imperative. For those multiracial people like Leilani who appear ambiguous, the border patrolling behavior stems from many sources. Having allies particularly close to them served as support and comfort for individuals who feel perpetually under the lens of inspection.

[98] She talked about other family members experiencing this attention from others.

Along similar lines, other respondents searched for similarity in their partner choice and protectively border patrolled others to achieve this ideal. For example, Allison, a "transracially" adopted black/white biracial woman, affirmed her preference for someone of the exact same racial combination as herself. She explained, "For the record, ideally I would love to date a biracial guy…. Because black people want to be black people, and white people want to be white people. It'd be nice. It would be easier….Like I look at my brothers, my 2 brown little brothers, and I'm like, 'You know what? You all are such good men!' You know?" Allison engaged in protective border patrolling because she imagined that 1) the experience of growing up in an interracial family would offer similarities in experiences that would cultivate and nurture understanding in a romantic relationship, and 2) that this shared racial reality would translate into racial empathy in her romantic relationship. In saying that "it would be easier," Allison exposed the race work required of many multiracial people implicitly expected to explain and elaborate on the details of their racial identities and experiences in their everyday lives. In imagining this race work would lessen by partnering with someone racially similar to herself, Allison works to protect her own multiracial identity from invalidation during social interactions (further complicated by her adoption into a white family). Protective border patrolling minimized the identity invalidation that Allison experienced.

Frank, an African American-identified man with African American, Creek, Seminole, German, and French ancestry spoke of his dating behavior:

> Frank: I think in all honesty, I am a little tense about dating outside of my race. Not that I wouldn't do it. I would do it; I've done it before. It's not so bad. I wouldn't exactly be breaking trends because everyone in my family, all the males in my family, have married white women with the exception of one. And their

> relationship is so ridiculously on the rocks, it's not even funny. But I guess I would; I would date a white woman, an Asian woman, I think there are some people my parents would probably have a difficult time with me bringing home but I don't worry about that because one would love her and one would hate her no matter which woman I date…. My father probably would be okay, he might be darn happy if I brought home a white woman or now if you started to get into Asian if I brought an Hispanic woman home, he might not be so happy about that. Or an Asian woman, he'd probably be okay with that. He'd figure it'd be a perfect fit…. Because he thinks of me as a nerd.
>
> MM: Oh I see. So all Asians are nerds?
>
> Frank: All Asians are smart. They are very mathematically inclined.

In being patrolled by his parents and getting exposed to various racial discourses and stereotypical, Orientalizing, and fetishizing ways of thinking about different racial/ethnic groups (and women in particular), Frank explained the varying perceptions that his father had about woman of various races. He continued to explain that his father would resist Frank partnering with a Hispanic woman:

> He (Frank's father) had this idea that they're lower on the totem pole as far as class is concerned and money is very important to him. "Make sure your wife has a job, especially since you're going to be a teacher." Which it took him about 2 years to get over that decision. But my mom and my sister will probably only be happy, specifically my sister, would probably only be happy if I brought home a black woman…. They wouldn't go for a white woman; they wouldn't be able to *stand* that. Every other (family name) did it, with the exception of one…. Well, there's this idea that there are not enough good men out there and so she (sister) was like, for them, I am the testament against that. "There is a good man out there. He's my brother." "He's my son." You know? "Go get him!" Now, I've gone 6 years. No nibbles. So apparently they're not after good men or maybe I'm not a good one….My standards don't run along the lines of race. There are things that turn me off right away, like I can't deal with cursing and smoking and blah, blah, blah.

Frank highlighted other qualities and characteristics, beyond race, that he looks for in potential partners. He also related his parents' divorce as influential on his partner choice in that he witnessed the adverse effects of the divorce on both his mother and sister. In observing their emotional pain, he developed empathy for them at an early age. Frank's

father's emotional and racial betrayal took an emotional toll on his family. Bearing witness to his parents' divorce seemed less difficult that his father "running around with women, particularly white women" and him leaving one day and never coming back. Frank described his father's disappearance as painful, and his father's interest in white women, "like the salt in the wound."

Furthermore, Frank had the perception of a permanency in interracial relationships that other relationships lacked, since several of his black male relatives successfully married white women; he also had critiqued the idea of hypergamy by marrying white.

> There seems to be a bit more steadiness in all honesty, with…my males, and my dad, they marry a white woman, they seem to last longer…. I think in my family there is this notion, "When you marry white, you're marrying up." I don't agree.

As an aside, Frank mentioned that he did not initially notice that this woman he had an interest was white.

> This is kind of funny. I didn't know she was white. I know that sounds weird. She told me she was white. About a week and a half in, it didn't change anything, like wow. She's white! I mean, she looked pretty fair-skinned but, I thought she was a very light skinned black. I mean I had known another very light-skinned black and she made it very clear that she was very black. Lena Horne. I thought, I saw her, thought she was white but she's black…. Because she was a white student in a black school, struggled to be as black as possible, so it didn't really matter.

That is, Frank read her as black because of the social context, and again disregarded race as insignificant.

Throughout our interview, Frank acknowledged his multiracial heritage but maintained a singular black identity. He observed a difference between chosen and imposed identities, noting, "It depends on what you mean by identities. Actually, it depends on who's giving you the identity. If society gives you the identity, the identity

does not change. If you give yourself the identity, the identity does change. Now I spoke on race and I spoke on ethnicity, but I did not speak on identity. You asked me how did I identify I think." He described feeling that asserting a multiracial identity (and more specifically one highlighting his Native American ancestry) would be "tedious…like standing on a balance beam." Instead of endure the task of explaining unfamiliar information to others, he edits his racial biography, and border patrols himself in the process of making his complex heritage more digestible and palatable to others. In defending and protecting the complexities of their racial selves, respondents engaged in protective border patrolling to avoid this type of race work.

Malevolent Border Patrolling: If I'm Gonna Be Racist, I'm Going to Be Racist Toward Everybody." "Lighter Skin, Nice Hair, Nice Eyes… That's Just My Preference."

"It's a preference, not a prejudice."[99]

Despite society's depiction of multiracial people as the hope of the future, members of this population often reify these racial divisions from their precarious position on the fault lines of race. Through malevolent border patrolling, some individuals perpetuate racial stereotypes; reproduce racial divisions in problematic ways; cement their investment in a racial hierarchy that privileges whiteness; and glorify unearned privileges granted to multiracial people of various combinations. Take, for example, Sa, a brown-skinned multiracial woman, who expressed conflicting ideas about her racial preferences in dating. While she imagined that she and white men would have little in common, she also found herself saying,

> "You know what? I'm not messing with black dudes no more. I'm fitting [going] to get a white dude." Like I've said that so many times, and me and my sister

[99] As a black female character in the movie, *Something New*, actress Sanaa Lathan says this in defense of her initial opposition to interracially dating a white man.

> have said that and I don't even know what prompted me to say that…as if white guys are any different than black guys because they can do the same things. They can cheat in the same ways…. I'll make certain comments, and then I'll be like, "I can't believe that I just said that." Like, "that was really racial." But…at least I can admit when I'm being racist or at least, you know what I'm saying, I don't know. And that's one thing like, if I'm gonna be racist, I'm going to be racist toward everybody.

Many of the part black female respondents expressed contradictory positions on their identity and partner choice. Several part black multiracial respondents spoke of being border patrolled specifically by white men, yet described feeling repulsed by the thought of white love. Instead, they identified a preference for men with medium skin tone "who are probably multiracial." Sa admitted to being attracted to them because of their "lighter skin, nice hair, nice eyes, but that's just my preference." In being so forthright about her preference, she catches a "lot of flack for that." She explained:

> People look at me as being like somewhat racist, or somewhat on the whole light skin/dark skin thing and I'm just like, "That's just my preference." Like if a guy wants a girl with a nice body, that's his preference. You can't say that he's racist because he doesn't want to date a fat girl. But I'm racist because I don't want to date a dark skinned guy?! I just don't find that many dark skinned guys that are attractive to me. But if I *did* find a dark skinned guy that was attractive, I wouldn't just be like, "Oh, no. I'm not talking to you because you're dark skinned." I would never do that. So I catch a lot of flack for that. But most of my boyfriends, I've never had a boyfriend that's, per say, dark-skinned. I haven't. And my last boyfriend that I actually had, he was like, he was multiracial you could say. Like he had Indian in his family so he had like high cheekbones and all that going on or whatever, nice hair that was long, so that was like my last relationship.

In mixing metaphors, Sa confused and conflated body size with race, making looksism and sexism seem acceptable. Furthermore, she excused her racialized preferences in partner choice by making the exception the rule, pointing to one ostensible example of her willingness to accommodate darkness. Her narrative betrayed her, sounding more like a "confession of a transgression," rather than evidence in her favor. In reflecting on

an earlier conversation with someone, Sa revealed contradictions that emerged in this admission:

> Someone was asking, "Have you ever dated a white guy?" and you know, "Could you see yourself with a white guy?" and I'm like, as much as I can say, "Yes," like "Yes, I would talk to a white guy and I would have no problem marrying a white guy, I couldn't realistically see myself in a relationship with a white guy."…. I don't think that he would be able to deal with me as a person…. And then what messes me up is just watching a lot of like white sex scenes on television, just discourages me, like I see the white sex scenes on television and I'm like, "Oh my God. White people can't kiss. Like, "Oh my God, white people this or that, or whatever."… I think television like kind of like brainwashed me…. It turns me off on that or whatever.

Unconvinced that a "white boy could really relate to me and the things that I like to do," Sa contradicted her earlier assertion that partnering with someone multiracial would not ensure similarity in family and personal biographies or histories, but solidified her investment in finding a man with medium tone (perhaps an affirmation of her own skin color). Nevertheless, Sa disqualified white men as potential partners by presuming that their interests would not match hers. This is curious given the variety of interests she has and the possibility that people of all races can likewise cultivate a plethora of interests and hobbies as well.

Other part black female respondents reiterated these conflicting positions, lining themselves up in the beauty queue (Hunter 2005), and lamenting the quandary of desiring white privilege but not white men. As a result, they preferred men with lighter, but not white, skin, and averted attention from darker skinned men. Abigail even went so far as to fetishize men with a "flavor difference" (with an accent; non-American but "not African") or who were something more than "vanilla" (Rubin 1987; Sandoval 2002; Somerville 2000); while Grace indicated her preference for this medium tone, as well as "cleaner" looking people (an expression I ultimately interpreted as indicative of

internalized racism since the term seemed to be a reference for whiter/lighter looking people). Jamie initially insisted, "I wouldn't date a white man…. I wouldn't. I don't know. I just can't do it….I just couldn't, knowing about the past." Later, she admitted that, having seen other relatives pass as white and reject darker family members, she remains fearful of intimately experiencing this racial rejection, should she partner and procreate with a white man ("If you're black, and you marry a white man, and y'all have kids and they come out light, and they go marry a white person, and it's gonna get lighter and lighter and lighter, until they return back to being white and then *you* no longer exist. You just--they're not even going to acknowledge you as family.") She also declared, "I can't deal with nobody dark skinned. Dark skin, I can't do it." For Jamie, blackness as the lightness of beauty (her perception of physical attractiveness) is a requisite characteristic for her potential partners to possess in order for her to consider going out with them.

The irony of Jamie's comments seems lost on her. She talks about having a dark skinned best female friend, yet practically balks at the idea of dating a dark skinned black man. While she refuses to date white men, she also refuses to date dark skinned men. Consistent with the literature on homophily (Korgen 2002) and homogeny (Hunter 2005), Jamie seems to be describing potential partners that match her phenotype or physical appearance. While she admittedly holds conflicting views on race, and remains confused over some racial matters, she stood firm in her convictions about acceptable and appropriate romantic partners. Both she and Sa appear anxious to partner with phenotypically similar men to recreate a similar hue in their potential offspring. By doing so, they ultimately affirm their own appearance but more importantly, ensure

continued access to the unearned privileges that they enjoy in the beauty queue and in a society that values their ambiguous appearance. In intentional and unintentional ways, both Jamie and Sa, among other respondents, participate in the possessive investment of whiteness (Lipsitz 1998) through their border patrolling behavior. The preservation of these racial (and gendered) privileges provides explanation for the malevolent border patrolling that multiracial individuals exhibit.

Abigail elaborated on the beauty queue and the gendered racial hierarchy that rewards lightness in women (Hunter 2005; Rockquemore 2002):

> I personally believe that a lot of black men, I mean *a lot* of Black men, because I observed them looking, including my kid's father to all the guys I've dated, that they are strongly, not only black men, I think the whole world of men are attracted to women who are tannish-looking. Not black, but tannish-looking. More like Hawaiian or Latina, you know, not straight hair, but wavy, you know, maybe not pointy nose but a little bit of a curve. It's like a mixture of all of them, the women look like that. It's amazing because I personally feel like there are no men left for us, because all men, a lot of men are with mixed women or women that look like Halle Berry, you know?

While reifying black stereotypes, Abigail drew attention to the ways that black women are desired by men who "wanted to be with you because of that old myth: the blacker the berry, the sweeter the juice, which I really believe is *so* true, we got it going on! Hee hee. But at the same time, when it came to going out and what you wanted to look like when you go out, that was the token (mixed) look to me." That is, she and others wanted the status of a mixed race person, valorized for their lighter skin, and preferred by various groups of men. "I always think the hybrid come out sometimes more prettier so I always use that analogy for myself which makes me *not* dislike and hate the yellow woman, because I've been told that I did. I used to have that problem." When I attempt to validate Abigail's mixture by pointing out that some might consider

her a “hybrid” as well, she agrees. However, she asserts a singular black identity for the most part, and acknowledges but does not exactly embrace this mixture.

Unable to see how both mixed and black women often get fetishized, Abigail neglected the potential for connection or solidarity between these groups of women. Instead, she reinforced the competition and antagonism between women through admissions such as this:

> A friend who’s lighter than me, and older, she gets the guys. “Your old ass is getting this attention. You are older than dirt.” We’ve had plenty of discussions and I always put her down because she is that light skinned thing. A lot of women were told in their homes that they were better than the black girl across the street. I’ve observed it.

Thus, Abigail perceived men’s preferential treatment of lighter skinned women as threatening and devaluing, which is understandable. She pointedly differentiated between lighter and darker skinned women, by explaining, “So you know they were screwing me behind closed doors but their girlfriend or their wives look like you (mixed). (I was) The Jezebel. Yeah, that stuff goes on.” In the front stage, men prefer mixed race or lighter women, while behind closed doors, in the backstage, they can sexually consume black women without contaminating their public image (Collins 2004a, 2004b). “It’s like you’re doing this in the dark; you’re doing this in secret.” Abigail suggested that even if these men might want to go public with their desires, they choose not to because of the social devaluation of black women and the perceived risk involved in exposing their interracial intimacy and/or romantic relationships; this practice not only cements the pigmentocracy (Bonilla-Silva 2003) in this society but also affirms the myth of “marriageable” lighter skin women and “fuckable” darker skin women (Mills 2007),

making some women decent, moral, and desirable in wide ranging ways, while narrowing down black women to objects of sexual desire, again (Collins 2000).[100]

Interestingly, Abigail possesses racial mixture even though she chooses not to claim it in her everyday life. Arguably, this mixture that she simultaneously and contradictorily acknowledged and denied could inform the interpellation of others. This "mestizaje" (Anzaldua 1987) means that others might see her mixture, and exoticize and eroticize her accordingly (Fiol-Matta 2002). Even though she confidently presented herself as attractive, she also implied that she was not deserving of men's attention. The juxtaposition of these contradictory positions, according to Fiol-Matta (2002) queers Abigail's racial identity, in the same way that occurred for Gabriela Mistral. She posited,

> Mistral offered an attractive morality tale: a beautiful object mistaken for an ugly one, a millenarian and singular icon fatally detached from social life, an oddity deserving a curious admixture of pity and admiration. This narrative showed how it was possible both to love and despise the other and to love and despise oneself…. As her self-estimation as ugly coincided with her exaltation of the indigenous person as beautiful, Mistral in the 1920s and 1930s concentrated on the classification of the indigenous body. (Fiol-Matta 2002:11).

Abigail possessed a complex assortment of emotions and a developed sense of awareness of the differential ways that women line up in the beauty queue and are treated by men. Despite this, she contradicted this in discussing her own perceptions of men; she effectively arranges men into hierarchies of her own, forming a beauty queue for them as

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[100] Siobhan Somerville (2000) historized this phenomenon through linkages to the colonialization of black women's bodies. Somerville (2000) discussed how the Hottentot Venus, or Saartje Baartman, "was displayed to European audiences fascinated by her 'steatopygia' (protruding buttocks). Significantly…this tradition of comparative anatomy located the boundaries of race through the sexual and reproductive anatomy of the African female body, ignoring altogether the problematic absence of male bodies from these studies….The racial difference of the African body…was located in its literal excess, a specifically sexual excess that placed her body outside the boundaries of the 'normal' female…. In constructing these oppositions, such characterizations literalized the sexual and racial ideologies of the nineteenth-century 'Cult of True Womanhood,' which explicitly privileged white women's sexual 'purity' while implicitly suggesting African American women's sexual accessibility" (Somerville 2000: 26-7).

well. She admitted, "I've gone out with a lot of light skinned men….I was married once to a half Cherokee/half African American man….His skin was so very white….He had gone to Vietnam twice, and got mistaken for Vietnamese….He looked very Indian, more Asian." She also revealed: "I would not be attracted to white men. If they took off their shirt, I think I'd probably be sick to my stomach, and I have a co-worker who has a multiracial baby. She met this professor at a local university. I said, "How do you get in bed with that?" And she's like, 'It's the same, Abigail. It's the same!' You know?" Abigail admitted to finding some white male television or movie actors attractive, citing that they appear tan on TV versus what she calls "mash white" or pale whiteness (i.e. Colin Farrell, her reference).

Conclusions

I hoped to demonstrate that individuals with multiracial parentage and/or heritage engage in borderism of their own. As Rockquemore posits, "While biracial people increasingly choose between several different racial identities, there are constraints on their choices. In the 2000 Census, multiracial identity was much more frequently reported on the East and West Coasts than in the Midwest and South, indicating a geographic pattern in the degree of fluidity that exists (see Farley 2001; Jones and Smith 2001)" (Rockquemore 2002: 499). This proved to be the case for those respondents who border patrolled themselves for a variety of reasons, including the impact of geographies of race (Frankenberg 1993).

I believe that these findings support Rockquemore's contention that geographical patterns play out in terms of who claims mixture, and who gets to be mixed. When Ann Morning (2000) raises the question, "Who is Multiracial?" she points us to this very

dilemma, solving a problem like mixture. The problem is not so much mixture, but the persistent policing of borders that dislocate mixture, making it appear as a new invention. As generalized and significant others, and multiracial individuals themselves continuing to reify color lines, crossing and blurring them will only persist. In this way, "multiracial" will not survive until the next generation, but instead will reinvent itself in perpetuity. Futilely, this indicates that the current seduction of colorblindness will be maintained, since the erosion of socially constructed categories does not appear to be inevitable because of the presence of multiracial people. In fact, as I illustrated, many multiracial people are reinforcing the racial divide, and cementing the shifting racial hierarchy that accommodates evaporating, dissipating racial mixture.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

> "What many people in the border say is that we assume a multiple repertoire of identities. We have transitional identities in the making. We are developing new cultures. Jokingly, we have talked about imaginary identities that make more sense than the ones we are offered as possibilities" (Fusco 1995: 153-4).

Discussion

In reflecting on my research, I am reminded of the work of Lisa Malkii (1995) and her discussion of displacement, marginality, and liminality. In listening to the narratives of my respondents, I found this theme of displacement, dislocation, and movement central. In "being out of category" (Malkii 1995), individuals with multiracial parentage and heritage negotiate the boundaries of classification during social interactions with generalized and significant others. By extension, these interactions also influence if and how multiracial individuals come to police the very ways that they choose to assert their identities and select potential mates. Feeling exiled from multiple groups or even one's own family of orientation is a disorienting, dislocating experience (Malkii 1995; Wallenstein 2002).

The structural invisibility of multiraciality as a category that is both unclassified/unclassifiable and classified/classifiable creates these exilic conditions for multiracial members of interracial families. Turner (1967:97) posits, "Transitional beings are particularly polluting, since they are neither one thing nor another; or may be both; or neither here nor there; or may even be nowhere (in terms of any recognized cultural topography), and, are at the very least 'betwixt and between' all the recognized fixed points in the space-time of cultural classification." This liminal quality "corresponds quite neatly to the processes studied by Mary Douglas (1966) in *Purity and Danger*"

(Malkii 1995:7). Multiraciality then becomes "liminal in the categorical order" of things (Malkii 1995:11).

Although Malkii focuses on refugees, her discussion parallels that of multiracial people in some ways, when she posits: "There is good reason to expect that the either/or question will never get an either/or answer and that some of those people who have here been called town refugees will continue to straddle both places, calling both 'home,' or, more likely, finding 'home' somewhere in between" (Malkii 1995:196). Just as the "connection between intermarriage and danger was quite concrete" with the association of "marrying the other" one of "betrayal and deception," multiracial people, as the embodiment of dangerous (interracial) combinations, also "stood for and even embodied imagined processes of assimilation and were thus a dangerous category" (Malkii 1995: 202-3).

As Cvetkovich posits, "Here…the question of agency is complex" (Cvetkovich 2003: 101). Mixed race people must decide how to respond to these exilic conditions and the "insistence on the multiplicity of elements" if they desire developing a "multiple identity" (Fusco 1995:141, 153). This requires the recognition that "this experience of disjunction, this experience of rupture, is a quintessential contemporary experience" (Fusco 1995: 156). This decision of dealing with exile[101] also relates how to employ "social erotics" through "emancipatory methods" (Sandoval 2002). This involves challenging the monitoring of border crossing and engaging in liberatory methodologies of the oppressed (Sandoval 2000). That is, multiracial people who challenge border patrolling can transform their lived experiences into emancipation by acknowledging the

[101] See also Wallenstein (2002) for a discussion of exile in America that members of interracial families experience.

oppressive quality of borderism (especially in its malevolent forms). Confronting borderism involves investigating and disrupting the tendency to naturalize racial categories (Somerville 2000). Doing so requires not reinforcing what Dalmage considers "equally impossible" terms, or the "a cultural fiction of racial opposites," in which "white" is the opposite of "black" and vice versa (Somerville 2000:8). Somerville urges an ideological questioning of racial bifurcation and contestation of the socially constructed racial divide.

Sandoval suggests that the borderlands (Anzaldua 1981) or what Paula Gunn Allen (1981) described by saying "'the place we live now is an idea'—and in this place new forms of identity, theory, practice, erotics, love and community become imaginable" (Sandoval 2002:24). The borderlands facilitate movement, or "nomadic travels across worlds of meaning" (Lugones 1987), and differential ways of thinking, or oppositional consciousness. For those who "'live at the shoreline' (Lorde 1977) between sex, gender, race, language, culture, class, and social locations. This shoreline, or 'borderlands,' consciousness and politics generated a method for redefining identity, community, and love" (Sandoval 2002:24-5).

"Life at the border" (Bhabha 1997) does not mean that individuals residing on the interstices live an interstitial life. Being multiracial does not automatically mean one embraces "thinking the interstices" or "thinking the border." Instead, as my research illustrated, sometimes the borderlands inspires border patrolling in the very people heralded as the bridge of the racial divide (Root 1992), the miner's canary (Guinier and Torres 2003), and the hope for a post-race future (Morning 2003). Morning argues that imagining multiracial people as perpetual racial border blenders and mixers sustain the

reinventions of multiraciality and ignores other, more accurate realities. "By obscuring the historic dimensions of American multiraciality—emphasizing its newness but not its oldness—we may run the risk of ignoring lessons that past racial stratification offers for understanding today's outcomes. For one thing, older social norms still make themselves felt in contemporary discussions of mixed-race identity (Davis 1991; Waters 1991; Wilson 1992)" (Morning 2003: 41-42). Drawing attention to the "new faces in a changing America" (Winters and DeBose 2003) distracts from the persistent, nagging problems of old. The dilemma of choice still operates to enable and constraint the expression and assertion of multiraciality. Scholars have celebrated people for claiming a mixed race identity, arguing that doing so subverts the racial divide (Daniel 1992), and undermines "the very basis of racism, its categories" (Spickard, Fong, and Ewalt 1995). Amidst this celebration and subversion, we overlook the ways that multiracial people reinforce and reify, rather than challenge racial categories. Instead of enjoying the potential mosaic of multiracial identity, some stubbornly they cling to rigid racial classification. This contrasts with the perspective of Gomez-Pena (1995:156): "What actually exists is a pluralistic sense of self—multiple repertoires of identity."

In this work, I showed that in a society in which the racial hierarchy ostensibly accommodates the U.S. Census 63 possible racial identity options and combinations by collapsing them into white and black; black and non-black; white, honorary white and, and black; or some shifting combination of these, multiracial people do not always embrace multiraciality. Instead they occasionally opt for singularity. In doing so, they support rather than subvert the racial classification system.

Conclusions

My core findings, that multiracial people encounter what I call "the many faces of borderism" from a variety of sources (generalized and significant others, as well as the self) and for a variety of reasons (benevolent, beneficiary, protective, and/or malevolent) extends the existing literature on identity, "interracial" relationships, mate selection, and theories about "multiracial" identity and the social construction of race.

In building on this existing literature, I was able to demonstrate how strangers border patrolled not only interracial families, but multiracial people as children of these families and as adults forming their own "multiracial" "interracial" families. When benevolent, this border patrolling often affirmed respondents' racial mixture and validated their identities and membership in racially diverse and "different" families. When malevolent, this border patrolling annoyed and invalidated respondents, reminding them of this very difference. Wanting to elide the attention they experienced in their everyday lives, many respondents chose identities and partners that facilitated border blending, which de-emphasized their visibility. Choosing identity and partners strategically (as opposed to coincidentally, as many described) also allowed them to boomerang back into singular racial categories rather than remain on the margins of several categories at once (choosing a white or black identity versus border or protean identity; and choosing a partner who closely resembled them phenotypically). Sometimes, this strategy backfired, such that some respondents still faced constant questioning and racial interrogations from others. Depending on their interpretations of racial discourses and their respond to border patrolling, respondents continued to assert

their preferred racial identities, but sometimes felt pressured to provide personal biographical information or perform race in disciplinary and unfamiliar ways.

When faced with border patrolling from the inside out, respondents similarly had to decipher intent and motivation, detecting differences between benevolent, beneficiary, protective, and malevolent forms of borderism from significant others. Depending on the value they imputed on these individuals, the respondents were often heavily invested and reactive to the borderism, or remain indifferent and relatively unaffected by such behavior. Competing racial paradigms and conflicting racial ideologies often resulted in significant others policing the respondents' identities and partner choices, with the all-too-familiar pattern of white pulling away from black. However, this did not neatly confirm the persistence of a white/black divide, but rather suggested that this polarity remains but gets complicated by multiple color lines and the reality of many racial hierarchies. The presence of these multiple hierarchies became most visible when respondents shared narratives about their own liminality, situational racial and ethnic visibility and ambiguity, and the incongruity that existed between their appearance, preferred identity (by self), and perceived identity (by others). The patterns of partner choice, and the policing of this by significant others, also illustrated the many hierarchies at play, and the nagging imposition to invest in homophily and homogamy by "sticking to your own kind."

Finally, in being socialized accordingly, and patrolled persistently by significant others (and strangers), many respondents had learned to internalize the racial ideologies and hegemonic discourses around them, both of which encouraged border patrolling more than border blending. Sadly, but unsurprisingly then, most respondents border patrolled

themselves. Offering up a variety of reasons for doing so, they produced disclaimers and digestible discourses about their identity and partner choices, seldom acknowledging the constraint involved. That so many respondents easily relied on colorblind rhetorical devices to navigate the racial terrain of the interview and their everyday lives suggests that the intense attention to and celebration of the multiracial population as "something new" was not only premature but falsely optimistic. In some ways then, this research should serve as a cautionary tale. If multiracial individuals experience borderism throughout the life course, to the extent that they face it from family, friends, and eventually themselves, what are the chances that they suddenly abandon their ways of thinking about and seeing race? How will they erode the racial divide if their lives and bodies as "bridges" crumble under border patrolling pressures to choose up sides, in terms of identity and partner choices?

In many ways, then, my findings suggest that a lot of the public anxiety about interracial relationships and the concern about multiracial children resolves itself to the degree that many of these multiracial children chose singular racial identities in their lives. In their adulthood, they begin to make long-term partner choices that also reproduce, rather than blur, racial borders. Witnessing the difficulty of being in their interracial families of orientation, encountering borderism from generalized and significant others, and internalizing racism dissuades many multiracial people from "crossing the color line" (Reddy 1997) themselves. Even when respondents in my sample attempted to blur borders by actively asserting a multiracial identity, they still

encountered borderism. Additionally, when they partnered "across the color line," others sometimes found their interracial relationship illegible.[102]

As Reddy argues,

> This demand that everyone be neatly classified into self-contained, unitary categories both reflects and reinforces ordinary social practices; by and large, people in the United States perceive race as a stable, unproblematic classification…. If one is neither black nor white, but *both* black *and* white, then the boundaries between racial categories are shown to be fluid rather than rigid. Such fluidity threatens the racial status quo and, in a racialist and racist society like our own, undermines the basic assumptions of both blacks and whites—including blacks and whites who object to that racial status quo….
> Most people not only cling to rigid racial classifications, but they are made uneasy by people who don't appear to fit neatly into the category in which they belong in ordinary social usage. (Reddy 1997:76).

Even members of interracial unions sometimes cling to these rigid racial classifications, which in turn get passed on to multiracial children. In this way, Bratter's (2007) skepticism that "multiracial" might not survive to the next generation presents itself as a legitimate possibility, perhaps an inevitable reality as the shifting racial hierarchies accommodate mixture. The result includes multiracial individuals (or the group Gans 1999 called "residuals") who fluidly move between categories, though, as I show, not without encountering border patrolling and racial contestations from various perspectives and a variety of reasons.

The emotional labor that Dalmage discussed in her work provides just one possible dissuasion for multiracial people waffling with indecision about what identity/ies to assert. Dalmage posits:

> Most multiracial people feel responsible for educating borderists. They also acknowledge that doing so can be tiring and stressful, particularly when they are

[102] Martha Quintanales (1983) pointed out the flaws in assuming all white-skinned people identify with the unearned privileges of whiteness, and view racial differences through the lens of the American racial paradigm. Recognizing how white-skinned people from different parts of the world come to see race differently impacts this discussion.

> addressing people who do not want to hear them. Social justice and racial inequality become central concerns when people decide how to respond to borderists. Many multiracial family members spoke of distinguishing between personal attacks based on stereotypical thinking and attacks directed at institutional productions of racist power (Dalmage 2000: 123).

For many of my respondents, doing the emotional labor or race work of managing their racial identities and romantic relationships dissuaded them from making life more difficulty by choosing multiraciality. I think it is important to recognize the distinction between borderism by design and default. Borderism by design intends to police racial borders, and does so on the basis of these shifting but seemingly rigid racial categories. Borderism by default involves viewing this emotional labor as a disincentive, and choosing to police oneself in order to evade or minimize the racial surveillance and scrutiny of others. When the responsibility of racial education is shared, the emotional labor that burdens multiracial people should lessen, thereby also diminishing apprehension about being mixed.

By extension, thinking about the risks and rewards of being visibly multiracial and forming interracial relationships requires us to reconsider love's revolution (Root 2001). In *Interracial Intimacy* (2001), Rachel Moran urged readers to consider the connections between desire, romance, and choice; and public policy. Highlighting how people who cross the color line can intentionally or unintentionally politicize their partner choice, she argues that the racial regulation of interracial intimacy exposes the various arenas of existing or increasing inequality. Moran (2001) elaborates on these public policy implications, showing how low rates of intermarriage can be partially explained by segregated living sanctioned in this society.

Despite claims of color-blindness that enable public policy to consider racial implications at the margins, seldom at the core, Moran creates linkages between "love, intimacy, and racial justice" by exposing how living separate lives inhibits cross-racial contact, impeding not only the potential development of interracial relationships, but friendships as well, and without these opportunities for sustained and meaningful, quality interactions between racially diverse groups of people (versus polite civil inattention that acknowledges others without the benefit of social exchange of information that might facilitate or further knowledge and understanding) declines (Johnson and Burrows 2003: 530).

As Korgen (2002), Yancey (2003), and others have argued, having access to racially different others begins to erode the social and physical barriers that organize our social lives and minimize the changes for cross-racial interaction. Without these opportunities to interact interracially, people have little room to have potentially stereotypically views challenged, form friendships with a heterogeneous group of people, and by extension, participate in interracial relationships if they so desired. This shows how much and how little rates of interracial marriage and dating suggest. On the one hand, the rates show the agency that people possess to make politicized choices about their romantic partners, and that people have a choice that is no longer illegal, but nonetheless not fully unrestrained, given the opposition that many encounter as a member of an interracial couple. On the other hand, the rates hint at the difficulty of capturing intent, such that not all people with no history of interracial dating harbor racist views, or dislike members of different races. In fact, statistics fail to capture such nuances, related to action and inaction with regards to interracial relationships. For example, if one's line

of work places one in a particular geographic location, that individual, who may otherwise be open and amenable to participating in interracial relationships, might find limited options for doing so. Quantitative data collection also fails to illuminate those individuals who do not endorse marriage as an institution, or simply does not choose this arrangement for themselves, so they may be in an interracial relationship but not a marriage.

Furthermore, many contingencies exist that do not reveal the connections between attitudes and behaviors, in a positive way. Generally, researchers attend to inconsistencies in attitudes and behaviors. We focus on society's public endorsement and support for interracial intimacy and private opposition of participating in these relationships themselves. I wonder how often we overlook the "opposite": people's public opposition and private support for interracial intimacy. So often we neglect people's sincere interest in and willingness to be a member of an interracial couple. Instead, we flatten their views to simplify our understanding of their choice, rather than add complexity to their relationship history. That is, we should carefully and cautiously read these choices as informed by potentially rich histories of dating a diverse group of people, or wanting to but being dissuaded by structural impediments.

Do we, then, falsely read same-race partner choice as implicit opposition, or at a minimum, personal aversion to interracial relationships? What proves an accurate sign of support, supportive opposition, or outright opposition? Is symbolic support (that sounds much like the expected politically correct, and socially desirable kind) the same as genuine or sincere support? How does sincere support compare to support by way of action, or actual involvement in one's own interracial romance?

One problem of using interracial marriage to defend the dissolution of otherwise racial public policy involves the extent to which some people who interracial marry see their racially different partner as an "exception" and thus may still harbor racist views, despite engaging in seemingly anti-racist action through their marital partner choice.

It is important to understand border patrolling from the outside in, the outsider within/insider out, and inside out positions as complementary, not mutually exclusive processes. If we understand most forms of border patrolling as oppressive, then it is also important to ameliorate such oppression. As Cherrie Moraga posits, "Without an emotional, heartfelt grappling with the source of our own oppression, without naming the enemy within ourselves and outside of us, no authentic, non-hierarchical connection among oppressed groups can take place" (Moraga 2002: 26). She urges a remembering of the oppression people face, so that "it would be impossible to discount the oppression of others, except by again forgetting how we have been hurt…. And yet, oppressed groups are forgetting all the time…. Because to remember may mean giving up whatever privileges we have managed to squeeze out of this society by virtue of our gender, race, class, or sexuality." (Moraga 2002:47). That is, because borderism as I described in this work intersects and overlaps at the convergence of these positions (the outside in, outsider within, and inside out), everyone, including multiracial people, must question their motivations for policing racial boundaries. Thinking the interstices requires the kind of empathy and sympathy that facilitates a remembering and rethinking of the interstices. This rethinking of the color line (Gallagher 2003a) might move us collectively towards a society where the blurring of racial boundaries is no longer policed

in color-blind ways, but encouraged sincerely and wholeheartedly, not for everyone but for those who desire doing so.

Future Research

The many faces of borderism illustrate the continued significance of race in this society, and the ways that multiracial identity operates as a privilege and a hazard. In future work, I hope to elaborate on issues of visibility and invisibility in relation to identity and partner choice of multiracial people. I also hope to look more closely at the intersections of gender, race, and sexuality, to see how uniquely women encounter and respond to borderism. I am also curious about the kinds of boundary work that multiracial people with non-heteronormative sexualities experience what Steinbugler (2005) called "visual dislocation." I think expanding on her work by including a discussion of multiracial people in heterosexual and same-sex couples is also a part of my research agenda. Finally, given the renewed attention to "transracial" adoption, I am eager to publish work that raises the question, "'Are We All Three?': Transracial Multiracial Interracial Families and Adoption" and explores issues of racial border crossing, family socialization, and adoption policies of "race-matching."

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APPENDICES
APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Tell me about yourself (probe for demographics, including race, gender, age, sexual orientation or identity, etc.).

2. Tell me about how you self-identify racially.

3. Talk about your relationship history (probe for the racial identity of previous and current partners, sexual orientation of partners, and other demographics about romantic partners).

4. Talk about the racial similarities between you and your romantic partners. Talk about the racial differences between you and your romantic partners. Mention how, or if, physical appearance shapes the way people respond to your relationships (probe for information on how the respondent and partner appear physically similar or different and how this potentially impacts the way that society responds to the couple as a couple- i.e. do the two "look like" an interracial couple or not?).

5. Describe how you feel in your romantic relationships. (Probe for details about level of awareness of others, self-confidence, social comfort and ease, etc.).

6. Discuss how others feel about your romantic relationships. (Probe for details about experiences or perception of the level of acceptance versus rejection or intolerance of these relationships). Discuss how important the views of others impact you (probe for which groups of people prove most important and influential in the respondent's life).

7. Talk about any experiences you have had in which your racial identity has been confirmed, accepted, validated, etc.

8. Talk about any experiences you have had in which your racial identity has been contested, challenged, ignored, discredited, dismissed, etc.

9. Talk about any experiences you have had in which your racial identity has been undetectable, unrecognizable, indistinguishable, etc.

10. Talk about any experiences you have had in which your romantic relationships have been validated, contested, or undetectable as interracial relationships.

11. How do you experience your racial identity in your romantic relationships? Does this experience change on the basis of the social situation or partner (or both, or some other factor)?

12. How do you think your experience in an interracial relationship differs from that of your current partner?

13. Do you feel like your experience in an interracial relationship differs from your partner because of differences in your racial identity, or your physical appearance (skin color)?

14. How do you think your gender influences the ways others respond to you in your interracial relationships?

15. Is there anything that we have not discussed that you would like to talk about?

APPENDIX B: APPROVED INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title: Multiracial Interracial Relationships: Exploring the Experiences, Racial Identities, and Romantic Relationships of individuals in Multiracial Interracial Relationships

Principal Investigator: Melinda Mills

I. Introduction/Background/Purpose:

You are being asked to volunteer for a research study that focuses on multiracial interracial relationships involving couples in which at least one person racially self-identifies as mixed race, biracial, multiracial, or transracially adopted, and the other racially self-identifies as monoracial (White, Black, Asian, Native American, or Latino). We are interested in how people in multiracial interracial relationships racially self-identify, experience their racial identity (whether others validate/confirm versus contest/negate the respondent's asserted racial identity), and understand how race shapes or organizes their lives, partner choices, and romantic relationships and experiences. Since much of the information on interracial relationships ignores how these relationships include mixed race individuals, we want to gather information about mixed race people and their romantic partners. This involves obtaining accounts and reflections of experiences in choosing your romantic partners and maintaining an interracial relationship in a racially divisive society. By participating in this 1-3 hour interview, you will contribute important information that may further current understandings of race, interracial relationships, and race relations in this society. We plan to interview 100 people for this study at Georgia State University.

II. Procedures:

This study involves interviewing 200 multiracial people and their current or recent romantic partner. We hope to interview multiracial people who have monoracial partners (people who racially identify themselves as one of the following races: White/Caucasian, Black/African-American, Native American/American Indian, Asian/Pacific Islander, or Latino/Hispanic), but we will also interview multiracial people who have multiracial partners. Everyone who participates in this study must be 18 years of age or older.

This two-part study involves an initial interview and a follow-up interview. All 200 people will be asked to complete the initial interview, while only 50 couples (100 people) will be selected to participate in the follow-up, joint interview. Both interviews will be open-ended and will each take about 1-3 hours. In the joint interview, both members of the multiracial interracial

relationship will be present, along with the interviewer. Thus, you and your partner must both agree to participate in the joint interview for the interview to take place.

Both interviews will be audiotaped and videotaped, and will include open-ended questions about yourself, your racial identity development and awareness, and your experiences as a member of a multiracial interracial relationship. Because we want to learn more about how different groups of people experience and manage their racial identities and romantic relationships, we will ask you personal questions about your race, racial identity, and relationship history and experiences. We will also take a photograph of you to provide us with visible evidence of the physical similarities and differences among the people in the study. We will keep all information you give us confidential. You will get a study number that we will use, so that your name is not attached to any information you give us. We will not share any of the information you provide with anyone outside of the study.

You will primarily have contact with the interviewer who will meet you at any location you both mutually agree upon. The interviewer will set up an interview location that you both agree upon. You will be asked to do an initial interview with us. The interviewer will tell you after this initial qualitative interview if you have been selected for the joint interview. For the joint interview, both you and your partner must agree to participate, since the purpose of the joint interview involves having you both present and willing to participate. You and your partner, along with the interviewer, must agree on an interview location. If you do not wish to participate in the joint interview, you may indicate this to the interviewer.

III. **Risks:**

There are few known risks associated with this study. You may feel uncomfortable answering some of the questions in the interview. We expect that you may experience this discomfort mainly in responding to questions relating how you manage your romantic relationship in a racially divisive and divided society. Questions pertaining to others' reactions and responses to your multiracial interracial relationships may stir up some emotion or unsettle you in some way, but these questions are designed for you to share the positive and negative aspects of your romantic relationships. Acknowledging the positive and negative elements of these relationships and the reactions to these relationships allows us to understand the extent to which society and people encourage or discourage multiracial interracial relationships, such as yours. We suspect that these risks may be balanced, if not outweighed, by the possibility of potential benefits you may experience from participating in this interview.

IV. Benefits:

You may or may not personally benefit from this study. You will, however, be given the opportunity to share your life experiences with an interviewer who willingly listens to and hopes to learn from you. The information and insight you offer us throughout the interview will help us better understand individuals' experiences in multiracial interracial relationships. Talking to an interviewer may provide you with the space to positively consider and reflect on your relationship, whereby encouraging you to appreciate the unique qualities of your relationship. Your participation will potentially make useful and important contributions to our understanding of how people overcome social obstacles to fulfill their own life goals and hopes.

V. Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal:

Participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to refuse to be in this study. If you decide to be in the study and change your mind, you have the right to drop out at any time. You may skip questions or discontinue participation at any time. However, any information already used to the point when you withdraw consent will not be removed. Whatever you decide, you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Additionally, the interviewer also has the right to end the interview, but this will not cause you to lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

VI. Confidentiality:

We will try to keep your personal information private. Your privacy will be kept to the extent allowed by law. We will use your initials, rather than your name, on study records where we can. Your name and other facts that might point to you will not appear when we present this study or publish its results. The findings will be summarized and reported in group-form. You will not be identified personally.

The audio taped qualitative interview will be kept in a locked file cabinet in a locked room. Only study transcribers will have access to the tapes. The tapes will only be used to get an exact report of the interview, or what is referred to as a verbatim report.

Any pictures or videotapes of you will also be kept in a locked file cabinet in a locked room. The audiotapes and videotapes, as well as the pictures, will be kept in a private archive.

VII. Georgia State University Disclaimer:

If you have any question about this study, or believe you have suffered any injury because of participation in the study, you may contact Melinda Mills at 404-413-6534. Your personal physician will make available or arrange for treatment for any physical or psychological injury resulting from this study. If you do not have a personal physician, the interviewer can refer you to public health care resources or services. Georgia State University, however, has not set aside funds to pay for this care or to compensate you if something should occur.

VIII. Contact Persons:

Call Melinda Mills at 404-413-6534 or Dr. Charles Gallagher at 404-413-6524 if you have questions about this study. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this research study, you may contact Susan Vogtner of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), which oversees the protection of human research participants, at 404-413-3513. The office of research compliance can be reached at 404-413-3500.

IX. Copy of Consent Form to Subject:

We will give you a copy of this consent form to keep.

By signing below, you are indicating that you voluntarily agree to the conditions of participation in this form.

If you are willing to volunteer for this research, please sign below.

_____ _____

Participant Date

_____ _____

Principal Investigator Date

Date Consent Form was approved by GSU IRB: 07/19/04

Date Consent Form no longer will be in effect: 06/03/08