The Negotiation of Identities: Narratives of Mixed-Race Individuals in Canada

by

Mélanie Jane Knight

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts Sociology and Equity Studies in Education Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

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Abstract 

This thesis examines how mixed-race individuals shape and negotiate their identities and where they situate themselves along the racial continuum. I share the stories of five individuals of African/Caribbean/Lebanese and French-Canadian descent. This study is distinct in that it examines participants’ negotiation of two White racially dominant groups, the Anglophone majority and Francophone linguistic minority who themselves differ in social and economic status. It was found that participants’ self-identification as individuals of colour was not an indicator of their participation within subordinate groups. Participants chose to situate themselves at different locations on the racial continuum, either participating within Whiteness, Blackness or both. Negotiations within certain locations on the continuum was found to bring benefits, depend to some extent on phenotype, cause tension and contradiction, to be influenced by racism and racial consciousness and to be complicated by language and ethnicity.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Sherene Razack for her dedication, patience and wisdom throughout this entire project. As a woman of colour, I have learned a great deal from her and dedicate my new found interest in doing anti-racist work to her. She has ignited a flame within me that will last for a lifetime.

I would also like to thank Dr. Diane Gérin-Lajoie who not only provided me with academic support but much personal guidance. Her dedication, support and encouragement are greatly appreciated. Un gros merci.

I owe a great deal to the six participants who participated in this study for without them this project would not have been possible. I thank all of you for your time and interest in this project.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents, Vicky and Rocky Knight and my partner Anthony Nkacha Semesi for their patience, help and words of encouragement. I love all of you.
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In Memory of Adelaida Kelti Semesi
Introduction

Indifferent one, keep still. When you stir, you disturb their order. You upset everything. You break the circle of their habits, the circulatory of their exchanges, their knowledge, their desire. Their world. Indifferent one, you mustn't move, or be moved, unless they call you. If they say 'come' then you may go ahead. Barely. Adapting yourself to whatever need they have, or don't have, for the presence of their own image. One step, or two. No more. No exuberance. No turbulence. Otherwise you'll smash everything. The ice, the mirror. Their earth, their mother. And what about your life? You must pretend to receive it from them. You're an indifferent, insignificant little receptacle, subject to their demands alone.

(Irigaray, 1977, p.185)

J'ai le goût de te parler. Mixed-race individuals of French-Canadian ancestry, apart from Métis peoples, are non-existent in academic literature. Our voices have never been heard. We need to speak out, share our knowledge and our experiences. Within this thesis I provide a forum for the voices of six mixed-race individuals, including my own, whose lives, like many others have far too often been misunderstood.

Various academic fields have contributed differently to mixed-race literature. Studies have focused on a range of issues, such as identity formation, myths surrounding mixed-race individuals, the experience of racism and cultural divide, etc. My work examines how participants negotiate race, culture and language and perform their identities along the racial continuum.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with four mixed-race multicultural individuals of Caribbean/African and French-European ancestry and with one individual of French-European and Lebanese heritage. I attempt to better understand their lives and share their experiences of how they self-identify, "strategize", perform and negotiate themselves in society. I specifically examine the negotiation and strategizing of racism, discrimination and their various ethnic heritages with the consideration of three studies, Chen (1999), Tizard &
Pheonix (1993) and Romberg (1996). These negotiations are observed in terms of location and intensity. More specifically I examine where participants negotiate themselves along the racial continuum of Whiteness and Blackness and more specifically what the performance of their identities entails.

A distinctive component of my study is the experience of having to negotiate oneself with two dominant racial groups, that being, the dominant White Anglo majority, and the White Francophone linguistic minority. I contend that the battle between these two groups greatly influences the participants’ self-identification. The history of French-Canadians in Canada is distinct and each community holds its own history and experience with the French culture and language. This provides for a unique experience which is important to consider in the participants’ lives.

I argue that mixed-race individuals’ self-identification as persons of colour may not coincide with where they participate along the racial continuum. Since non-White individuals have little option as to how to self-identify, they often self-identify as people of colour. This choice, however, may be hollow. For example, choosing to self-identify as Black may not have a great deal of content to it since individuals may have never lived in Black communities or learned much of Black cultural life. There is then a gap between the self-identification as Black for instance and reality, that being the participation in White spaces. The reality may be in a sense where mixed-race individuals feel comfort. These spaces of comfort may require them to perform an identity. I contend that the performance of an identity is accomplished through language and examined in how individuals articulate and express themselves. I also contend that a performance can be undertaken to prove one’s allegiance to a group/community. There are other dimensions to the performance and negotiation of identities but I focus on how the study participants articulate themselves.

Having discussed my approach, I feel it is important to examine my bias in doing this project. There are three concerns that need to be addressed before continuing. The first
consists of my bias in analysing the literature in the field. More specifically, my difficulty in examining the work and research that has been done is that, as a researcher I have to attempt to separate myself from the work and examine it “objectively”. Yet, as a mixed-race person I am genuinely interested in what is being said about us, about me. I find that I cannot separate myself from my experiences, as probably most people cannot. Therefore, when entering this discussion I speak not only as a researcher but also as a mixed-race, multicultural individual. Secondly, it is worth noting my involvement as a mixed-race individual in the development of the study. I became greatly involved during the interviews and very often certain questions asked were formulated from my own experiences. Many of the study participants felt comfortable with me since I had an understanding of what they were talking about. It was also apparent that linguistically, my being able to speak both French and English and understand their struggles with language, culture and race, made it more comforting for them and provided for a more engaging discussion. My third concern is with my personal involvement in my study, where I share my own personal story with the reader. Some may assert that participating in one’s own study prevents the researcher from remaining “objective”. Contrarily, I believe that by my participation, the reader can see where I stand on issues and can also see my struggles and joys as a mixed-race person.

The results reveal that the identification as a person of colour is not an indication of the participation within spaces of colour. Several participates who self-identify as individuals of colour choose to participate within Whiteness. Others choose to participate at different locations along the racial continuum. Whiteness, however is experienced in two fold, in that, participants negotiate themselves in White Anglophone and Francophone spaces. Their negotiations and interactions with both Francophones and Anglophones reveals the dominant identity to be White in both spaces. The participants therefore struggle for inclusion in such spaces/groups since they cannot fully meet such criteria. Discourses of power, however, even in White Francophone majority spaces are expressed as being with the Anglo-Europeans.
Linguistically speaking participants' ability to speak French without an "accent" created confusion for French-Canadians and disrupted the category of "Other" and the subordinate position of participants. Results demonstrate that participants with a higher economic status are within white spaces more frequently, and therefore encounter more resistance from the majority group. In addition, particularly in Anglophone spaces, participants experience a push/pull effect in that racially they are undesired, but because of their French linguistic abilities, they are permitted to participate within White spaces they may normally not have access to. Therefore, in White Anglophone spaces participants negotiate themselves through language via their bilingual status. The conscious or unconscious decision to participate within Whiteness or to choose Whiteness as a daily reality is dependent to some extent on phenotype, socialization and understanding of racial issues. It is often experienced with tension, negotiation and contradiction and is to some extent perceived as bringing economic or social benefits. Results also demonstrate that the participation within Blackness or spaces of colour is met with some resistance by participants. The choice of participation in spaces of colour, or the strong identification as individuals of colour, however is found to have been the result of the racism experienced throughout their lives and an increase in racial consciousness.

My research will add to the body of literature that presently exists. It will demonstrate how we articulate ourselves, and how there is contradiction in our articulation. We want to write our history, our experiences. We do not want them written for us. These experiences cannot be generalized to be the experiences of all mixed-race peoples. They are unique, distinct and reveal intricacies and idiosyncrasies that are specific to each person. I cannot, within this limited space, speak of every category, social construction, evaluation, expectation, and social influence society has created or deemed essential to the knowing and functioning of humans. I speak of race, culture, language and identity. I attempt to capture a number of mixed-race, multicultural individuals’ movement, and fluidity in identity formation.
Definition of terms

I feel it is essential to provide a definition of terms that I use often within this thesis which may create confusion. This will help the reader to better understand the perspective or the manner in which I am looking at my work.

Race: Banton (1988) has maintained the term “race” to have been introduced approximately 500 years ago and that it has acquired several meanings during this time. The term widely used in society is meant to symbolize the physical differences between humans. Banton asserts that, “the use of ideas of race to organize evidence about human variation has entered the popular consciousness and influenced relations between groups” (p.16). Banton also describes how science has contributed to the social construction of race since the classification and ordering of plants and organisms in nature was transposed to humans but based on constructed stereotypes of groups which members are perceived to adhere to. I often use the term “race” in quotes, to emphasize that it refers to a social, not a biological construction. This term, as many researchers assert, has been used as a tool to discriminate, classify, alienate and divide groups of individuals based on perceived notions of inferiority and superiority.

Bicultural: This term implies a person who belongs to two cultural heritages.

Multicultural: This term implies a person who belongs to more than two cultures.

Ethnicity/ethnic heritage: I use the term ethnic/ethnicity to refer to cultural attitudes and characteristics, such as the language, history, customs, attitudes, etc that are shared by groups of individuals.

Anglo-Canadians: Although English-Canadians have often been described as a homogenous group with one culture and one past. The reality is that many White immigrant groups from
Northern Europe came to Canada during the early 1900s to settle. However, I imply this term to mean White European individuals who are descendants of British English colonist and "founders" of Canada who inevitably hold the most power in our society.

**People of colour/minorities:** People of colour is the favoured term to refer to visible minorities. However, I do believe we are re-inscribing dominant behaviours since Whites should also be considered as people of colour. Most often they are not included within that label. I will, however, also use the term people of colour to refer to non-White individuals. I use the term "minority" in quotations to signify that minority is a term that holds much meaning and can denote minority values, status, an inferior mind set, and therefore must be understood as also being a term which has been socially constructed.

**Acadians:** Technically speaking Acadians are descendants of French settlers/colonists in Canada who eventually dispersed in all four Atlantic provinces (Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island). When I refer to this term, I primarily speak of Acadians in New Brunswick since they are the largest number of Acadians in the Atlantic provinces.

**Québécois:** This term at one point in history, as is still primarily the case today, refers to White French settlers/colonists who "founded" Canada, and eventually settled in Québec. This term, however, has undergone transformations and now technically includes Anglophones in Québec and other ethno-cultural communities. For the purpose of my work, when I refer to Québécois I intend it to mean the White Francophone majority in Québec.

**Blackness/Identity of colour:** This thesis examines mixed-race identity negotiation along the racial continuum of Whiteness to Blackness. Although the term Blackness is intended as being specific to Black identity/culture, I also use the term identity of colour to include all other identities of colour other than Black.
French-Canadian: Although this term can encompass a range of individuals, I use this term to mean the White individuals with French as their mother tongue who are descendants of French settlers/colonists. Since I specifically define a group of French-Canadians as Québécois, the term French-Canadian is used in most instances, unless specified, to mean all French-Canadians living outside of Québec.

Racial continuum: The discussion/explanation of the racial continuum, primarily requires the introduction of racial classification of individuals who make up the racial continuum. As is noted above within the definition of race, the classification of individuals stems from a particular time in history where humans were subjected to the same classification process as plants and organisms. This classification was based primarily on stereotypes that had been formulated through various methods, primarily by explorers, attempting to discover/uncover the world. Throughout this exploration journeys these researchers began to assess/study populations of colour they came in contact with and categorized their practices, “norms” and beliefs as inferior. The association was then made between appearance and the stereotypes generated by these men/explorers. Therefore, anyone of colour was seen as an inferior being. In contrast to the classification of bodies of colour, White bodies were presented as the “norm” and superior. These classifications/categorization of individuals have shaped a hierarchy within society where Whites are at the top and bodies of colour are positioned downwards, where darker individuals have a lower status within the hierarchy. The classification within the racial hierarchy is determined by skin colour. Within this thesis, I use the term racial continuum interchangeably with racial hierarchy.

Mixed-race/Biracial: Mixed-race refers to individuals who are descendants or have ancestors of two or more racial groups. Many individuals can probably trace their heritages to a mixed ancestry; however, phenotypically these individuals are probably categorizable since the mix occurred many generations ago. Wilson (1984) comments on the definition of mixed-race. She asserts that “mixed-race is meaningless as a category, since all humans are of mixed ancestry: biologically speaking, one may only say that such children are the offspring
of a union between two people located at widely divergent points on a scale of somatic 'racial' characteristics (hair type, skin colour, etc.)(p.43). I ask the question, what is it about the mixed-race individuals I am referring to that separates this group? For one, they have two parents of two different races, parents whose genes have been expressed quite distinctly. The union of such parents is also first generation and so the visibility of this contrast is immediate. The terms mixed-race, biracial and mulatto are used interchangeably herein.
Chapter One: Understanding the Mixed-Race Individual

Mixed-race, multicultural individuals have been studied extensively in academia. Typically the focus has been on racial identity development/formation. Since I place myself within this discussion, my feeling is that our reasons for acting, resisting, coping, and challenging society, although highly debated, are yet still somewhat misunderstood and scarcely represented in a Canadian context. Mixed-race multicultural individuals attempt to negotiate a multitude of categories, labels, relationships, and feelings present in their lives which researchers are only recently fully attempting to understand.

Within this chapter I focus on four main arguments that will give an overall picture of mixed-race discourses and theories. I begin by talking about the mixed-race person's status throughout history and the anxieties felt in response to mixed-race individuals. It is evident from Harris (1993) which I discuss further on, that the regulation of miscegenation was practised for the retention of power, privilege and prestige among Whites. Miscegenation, that is the mixing of individuals who are phenotypically distinct from one another has been occurring for millions of years. It has existed in various countries amongst a number of groups. Its regulation illuminates how and where racial boundaries have been created and who is permitted to cross such boundaries. The second section considers earlier studies focusing on mixed-race individuals, which often pathologized their experiences and existence. Specifically, I discuss seven identity development models which have been created to better understand mixed-race identity formation. These psychological models show mixed-race identity development as progressing through a series of stages leading towards a mixed-race identity that is still somewhat largely viewed as a life outside of the "norm". Within this section I also discuss whether such models are too restrictive when considering the identity formation and negotiation of mixed-race individuals. Two additional models will be examined which take an ecological approach when considering identity formation of mixed-race individuals. The third section will examine more recent studies which are devoted to better understanding the lives of mixed-race individuals. Contemporary theorists, notably Root, and others, improve on earlier studies by exploring how the mixed-race experience is shaped by
racism and other factors. The final section will focus specifically on studies that examine the negotiation of mixed-race identity. While some of the later studies explore how identity is negotiated, theorists mainly focus on negotiations of culture/ethnicity rather than race and rarely examine both.

**Miscegenation**

Miscegenation was and is somewhat still heavily regulated. As Ann Strolo (1991) points out "who bedded and wedded with whom in the colonies of France, England, Holland, and Iberia was never left to chance" (p.57). The regulation of sexual relations, according to Stoler, "was central to the development of particular kinds of colonial settlements and to the allocation of economic activity within them" (p.57). In her article, Stoler discusses the history and legal recognition given to the concubinage of European men with "native women". As she writes, "concubinage was a contemporary term which referred to the cohabitation outside of marriage between European men and Asian women. In fact, it glossed a wide range of arrangements that included sexual access to a non-European women as well as demands on her labour and legal rights to the children she bore"(p.59). By the nineteenth century concubinage, according to Strolo, "was the most prevalent living arrangement for European men" (p.58). It was not only tolerated but encouraged by government and private businesses. It was primarily enforced by restricting the emigration of European women to the colonies, by providing marriage restriction to the men who were employees, and also by providing other incentives for not being married. "Company authorities argued that new employees with families would be a financial burden, risking emergence of a 'European proletariat' and thus a major threat to White prestige" (Knoniek, 1917 & Sumatra Post, 1913 cited in Stroler, 1991, p.62).

According to Saks (1988), miscegenation law, "created an autonomous legal regime of 'blood', which could conflict with the social regime of race" (p.48). He contends that "an entire social science literature of hereditary deviance-a deviance of the blood-upheld the
discipline and punishment of the dangerous miscegenous body in the interest of racial purity” (p.45). Meanwhile, Stoler (1991) further asserts that “colonial politics of exclusion was contingent on constructing categories. Colonial control was predicated on identifying who was ‘White’, who was ‘native’ who were legitimate progeny and who were not” (p.53). Concubinage and the retention of “native” women by European men was socially enforced and an economically desirable system. The offspring of such unions were also being considered with similar interest, that being as property. Socially speaking, the mixed-race children produced from such unions were often undesired, and looked down upon. In some instances these children were used as sexual mistresses and house slaves. Stoler contends that,

the tensions between concubinage as a confirmation and compromise of racial hierarchy was realized in the progeny that it produced, ‘mixed-bloods’, poor ‘Indos’, and abandoned Métis children who straddled the divisions of ruler and ruled and threatened to blur the colonial divide...were economically disadvantaged by their ambiguous status and often grew up to join the ranks of the impoverished Whites (Nieweweuhys, 1959 cited in Stoler, 1991, p.60).

When looking at miscegenation in the United States, unions were historically between White slave masters and their Black slaves. Spikard (1989) asserts that “small numbers of legitimate interracial unions existed alongside a widespread concubinage and forced sex, all under an official ideology that denied any mixing at all” (p.236). The enslavement of human beings was not only practised in the United States, but also existed in Canada on a different scale. Boyko (1995) asserts that “the first Canadian slaves were Native people” (p.149). He notes that the American Revolution brought thousands of loyalists northward. “The British government offered them and war veterans land, assistance, and permission to bring their slaves. The government also offered freedom and land to any slave that fought for the crown” (p.150). According to Boyko, slavery and the slave trade flourished in the 1800s in the United States, but was dwindling in Canada. The different climate in the North did not permit for a good slave industry. The end of slavery in Canada did not ensure a prosperous life for former Black slaves. Boyko notes that, Blacks faced segregation, racism, discrimination, and alienation and were often forced to leave the little bit of land they had
been given. The ones that did remain relied on one another for support and survival. "It became increasingly clear, that most Canadian Blacks saw integration with the dominant White society as the most viable option" (p.153). Miscegenation with groups other than Aboriginal peoples has received little attention in Canada. Canadian studies such as mine provide a distinct experience within this country, something also not reflected in American studies.

The above section shows how the mixed-race person has been seen in colonial periods and the regulation of interracial unions. Within the following section I examine the past literature surrounding mixed-race individuals, particularly within the psychological field.

**Early Considerations of Mixed-Race Individuals**

**Earlier Studies: Psychological Models**

While miscegenation was legally proscribed in colonial and slave regimes, in the 20th century it has come to be viewed as a unique "condition". Very often in psychological literature, for instance, the mixed-race experience/individual is usually considered as being outside the "norm". The mixed-race experience is often inadvertently pathologized when theorists discuss mixed-race identity as progressing through a number of steps to "normality" or when a biracial identity is considered the "healthy" option.

Psychological studies examining identity formation of mixed-race individuals began with monoracial models. They, however, prove to be inadequate for the understanding of mixed-race identity formation. Many of the past beliefs surrounding mixed-race individuals saw them as genetically inferior, sterile and marginal beings. Stonequist (1937) posits the theory of the "marginal man" and asserts that the mixed-race person is forever in flux since he holds a marginal status in several worlds. That theory has since been challenged. Within the following section I will briefly outline seven models that have been used to represent the
development of mixed-race identity and I discuss their possible limitations. I will also describe two ecological models that have been posited as alternatives to the stage models when considering the identity formation of mixed-race individuals.

Poston's (1990) biracial identity development model has five distinct stages. The first stage (personal identity) occurs at a very young age where membership in any particular ethnic group is just becoming salient. The second stage (choice of group categorization) occurs when individuals are pushed to choose an identity, usually of one ethnic group. Poston asserts that this can be a time of crisis or alienation for individuals. The third stage (enmeshment/denial) is characterised as being a time of confusion and guilt for the mixed-race individuals at having to choose an identity that is not fully expressive of their background. Individuals at this level, according to Poston, often experience feelings of guilt, self-hatred, and lack of acceptance from one or more groups. The fourth stage (appreciation) consists of the mixed-race individuals appreciating their multiple identities and broadening their reference group orientation. At this stage, mixed-race individuals may begin to learn about their racial/ethnic heritages and cultures, but still tend to identify with one group. The final stage (integration) is where the individual experiences wholeness and integration. At this stage the mixed-race person tends to recognize and value all of their ethnic heritages.

Kerwin & Ponterotto's (1995) biracial identity development model differs from Poston's in that it takes a lifespan/life stages approach when considering the identity development of biracial individuals. They assert that "the eventual resolution of the steps toward a biracial identity formation is dependent on numerous personal, societal, and environmental factors. The actual resolution is also individual" (p.210). According to these researchers, the first stage of their lifespan model (preschool - up to five years of age) is when the children's racial awareness emerges. In the second stage (entry to school) children begin to use labels and/or descriptive terms to define themselves and their families. Kerwin and Ponterotto report that some children use descriptive terms for their actual skin colour (e.g. coffee and cream). The third stage (pre-adolescence) consists of a heightened awareness of
physical appearance and language(s) spoken which are representative of group membership. Researchers assert that there is an increase in recognition of one's own and others' group membership which is related to factors such as skin colour, physical appearance, language, and culture. The fourth stage (adolescence) is the most difficult stage according to researchers since adolescents negotiate biological/hormonal changes and societal/peer pressures and are often forced to choose a specific racial group. The fifth stage (college/young adulthood) acknowledges that there may be continuing immersion in one culture with a rejection of the other. Researchers assert that “with the development of a more secure personal identity usually accompanying this stage, however, rejection of other’s expectations and an acceptance of one’s biracial and bicultural heritage is increasingly likely to occur” (p.213). The sixth stage (adulthood) sees the development of a biracial identity as a lifelong process. Researchers assert that “there needs to be a continuing integration throughout adulthood of the different facets making up one’s racial identity. With the successful resolution of earlier stages, there will be a continuing exploration and interest in different cultures, including one’s own” (p.213).

Jacobs's (1992) identity development model, meanwhile, consists of three stages that biracial children go through in developing an identity. This study differs from others in that it focusses on children and requires them to examine dolls to determine how they understand race. Jacobs asserts that “increasing cognitive maturity leads to a biracial self-concept” (p.190). This study was originally done with ten children of Black and White parentage; however, it has now been used with more than 100 biracial children. The first stage (pre-colour constancy-play and experimentation with colour) finds that the typical child at this stage accurately identifies his or her own colour and playfully experiments with colour in family identifications and doll preference. The second stage (pre-colour constancy-biracial label and racial ambivalence) finds that the child becomes ambivalent about his or her racial status but begins to have knowledge of the biracial label. During the final stage (biracial identity) the child eventually discovers that racial group membership is not determined by skin colour but by parentage.
Kich (1992) examines how biracial individuals cope with their various heritages, given societal views, legal and cultural history of race, ethnicity and intermarriage. This study explores the lives of 15 biracial adults of White and Japanese heritage. Kich posits a three stages biracial/bicultural identity development model. The first stage (awareness of differentness and dissonance - 3 to 10 years of age) finds that biracial people either are seen to be different or feel themselves to be different from every other group. These experiences result from personal comparisons with others or from being noticed as different by others. The second stage (struggle for acceptance-age eight to late adolescence) occurs in the context of school or community settings. In reaching out from the parental and extended family orbit, children become more aware of how others see them and their families. The third stage (self-acceptance and assertion of an interracial identity- late adolescence through adulthood) finds participants to be self-accepting yet influenced by, the quest for other-acceptance. Kich (1992) contends that the biracial person’s ability to create, congruent self-definitions rather than be determined by other’s definitions and stereotypes may be said to be the major achievement of a biracial and bicultural identity. This ability to define him or herself positively is an important reversal of the social construction of a previous identity as devalued, unacceptable, and anomalous. The stable self-acceptance of a biracial and bicultural self-identity begins to occur generally after high school, and more finally during and after the college or occupational transitions (p.314-15).

(Root, 1990) outlines four general resolutions of a biracial identity. The first resolution (acceptance of the identity society assigns) is described as a passive resolution that is positive but may stem from an oppressive process. Root asserts that “it is possible for it to be a positive resolution if the individual feels they belong to the racial group to which they are assigned. Affiliation, support, and acceptance by the extended family are important to this resolution being positive” (p.199). Root contends that the second resolution (identification

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1 Root (1990) is grouped in this section since I feel this particular study falls into the same category of biracial identity models. I later discuss another study by Root (1999) which takes a different stance on mixed-race identity development. Her later study considers an ecological approach as she defines it and therefore it sets itself apart from these seven other studies.
with both racial groups) may be the most idealistic resolution of biracial status, and available in only certain parts of the country where biracial children exist in larger numbers and mixed marriages are accepted with greater tolerance by the community. “This strategy does not change other people’s behaviour; thus, the biracial person must have constructive strategies for coping with social resistance to their comfort with both groups of their heritage and their claim to privileges of both groups” (p.200). The third resolution, (identification with a single racial group) consists of the individual choosing to identify with a particular racial/ethnic group regardless of the identity assumed by siblings, assigned by society, or matching their racial features. Root notes that this is a positive strategy if the individual does not feel marginal to their proclaimed racial reference group and does not deny the other part of their racial heritage. The fourth stage (identification as a new racial group) consists of the individual moving fluidly between racial groups while viewing themselves apart from these reference groups. They do not feel marginal because they have generated a new reference group.

Limitations of the Models

There are four main arguments which I feel are essential to consider regarding the models discussed above. The first limitation of these models is their prescriptive nature. More specifically, these models pathologize the mixed-race individual by attempting to decipher/determine between who is “normal”, “abnormal”, “healthy” or “unhealthy”. My second concern is the limitation of the stages. For example, certain researchers list confusion as being a stage that mixed-race individuals experience. Researchers most often list this stage during adolescence. What is limiting about these stages is the fact that they are structured in a linear format and do not accommodate for the differences in the development of identity. A third limitation is the failure of theorists to see that identity can be situational and extremely fluid. For example, someone may self-identify as biracial in certain settings and as something else in others. Finally, although these models posit possible ways in which biracial individuals experience their lives, they infer/imply that identifying as multiracial or biracial will enable one
to have a better appreciation of one’s various heritages. I agree that acquiring knowledge regarding one’s multiple racial/ethnic heritages is extremely important. However, I do not believe that having an integration of such heritages is dependent on identifying as biracial or mixed-race. My belief is that these models posit a biracial identity as the “healthy” option for mixed-race individuals. They pathologize in the sense that mixed-race individuals are deemed “abnormal” if they do not choose to self-identify as mixed-race, or incorporate both or several heritages into their lives. Revising her early work Root (1990) in (1999) asserts that “the existing psychological models have not explicitly considered the interactive role of geographic history, gender, class, sexual orientation, or generation on the construction of racial or ethnic identity” (p.67). Her ecological model, which I discuss in the following section marks a change in how most early theorists consider the mixed-race individual.

**Ecological Models**

Additional models have been created which take an ecological approach2 to the understanding of mixed-race identity formation. Johnson’s (1992) study is structured around an ecological framework which examines the racial identity of Black-White biracial children. She asserts of her ecological approach that,

social change is an integral part of the context within which children's identities develop. Social change has had an impact on the ever-increasing numbers of multiracial families. Changes in racial attitudes, affirmative action policies, and greater mobility within the society have served to bring people of varying backgrounds into closer contact with one another through vehicles of thought and social institutions such as school, work, and community (p.38).

Johnson contends that models looking at identity formation must take the children’s personalities, physical features, skin colour, etc into consideration. The model should also

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2The term ecological is specifically used by Johnson (1992) and Root (1999) that entails taking a ‘collectivist approach’ when looking at mixed-race identity formation which has not always been done. They have defined it within their framework; however, their definition may be challenged and considered similar to sociological research/models.
consider family factors such as family background, education, income and occupation, extended family members, and lastly, peer and community factors, such as acceptance, availability, experiences within the community, school, church, clubs, stores, etc.

Root's (1999) model is an extension of Johnson's model and is somewhat broader in terms of categories to consider when looking at identity formation of mixed-race individuals. Root's model considers,

the evolution of ethnic and racial identity development in relationship to other statuses. Whereas race and ethnicity are salient aspects of identity in stratified society (Phinney, 1990), which are historically and geographically defined (Root, 1997; Waters, 1990), they are constructed with other salient aspects of identity, such as gender (Ossana, Helms & Leonard, 1992; Stoler, 1995), class, generation (Padilla, 1995), and sexual orientation (Allman, 1996; Kich, 1996) (p.67).

Her model as she notes,

acknowledges that there are many different ways people of mixed racial heritage may identify themselves. Furthermore these identities may be situational (Stephan, 1992), simultaneous, or changeable throughout the life cycle (Root, 1990). These identities do not necessarily coincide with how other persons may identify them. Thus, the private identity may be different from the public identity assumed or validated by others. However, identity development, validation, and transformation is contextually informed by people in situations within which they interpret their interpretational transactions through political, gendered, and class positions within the region's history of race relations (Root, 1998, p.240).

Eight main categories are considered within this model when examining identity formation of mixed-race individuals. The eight categories are race and ethnicity, gender, class, regional history of race relations, generation, social interactions with community, traits, inherited influences, and identity. Various sub-categories are included under inherited influences such as language at home, parent's identity, names, extended family, etc. Also, under traits, sub-categories such as temperament, social skills and talents are included. The effects of social interactions with the community are to be considered within the home, school, and with friends. In her study, Root (1999) also talks about emotional development
and the experience of trauma. She describes three forms of trauma: direct trauma which consists of rape, war experiences, etc; indirect trauma which is experienced vicariously such as hate crimes; and thirdly, insidious trauma which “tends to be cumulative and its effects are often directed towards a devalued group of people or an individual based on their group membership (e.g. race, gender, and sexual orientation)” (p.71). Root (1992) notes that,

Trauma permanently changes a person. In contrast to a stressful experience, which challenges an individual’s capacity to cope, trauma destroys multiple dimensions of security and exceeds the limits of human capacity to process and integrate horrible experiences into a coherent perception of self and self-in-relationship to others and the world. The disorganization created by this upheaval motivates the individual to attempt to find meaning in the experience so that she or he can reorganize the experience and integrate it into her or his perceptions of self, and self-in-relationship to others and the world (p.260).

Very few studies looking at mixed-race identity formation consider in detail the effects/trauma of racism and discrimination/trauma on one’s sense of identity. Root’s ecological model provides researchers with the opportunity to consider several issues contributing to the formation of mixed-race individuals’ racial and ethnic identity. Root contends that her model considers “many different outcomes of racial identity; that racial construction, although historically rooted, is dynamic; that many persons live with multiple secondary statuses that interact with race and necessarily influence the salience of race and the formation of racial identity” (p.67-69).

**Sociological Studies**

*Later Studies Looking at Sociological Issues*

Sociological studies also share the stages of identity theory which I elaborate on above, but later studies have become more advanced through their attention as to how racism structures the mixed-race experience. These narrative style qualitative studies provide a space where mixed-race, multicultural individuals can express their experiences. The works which
I discuss in the proceeding section enables there to be an in-depth examination of various issues such as: identity formation, group loyalties, linguistic and cultural practices, and issues of privilege among mixed-race individuals. Two of these studies, Hernandez (1995) and Ray (1996), provide experiences within a Canadian context.

Hernandez-Ramdwar (1995) provides an in-depth look at the Canadian-Caribbean experience of seven participants. She attempts to better understand “how mixed-race people of Carribean descent make sense of themselves in the racialized discourse of Canada” (p.39). She posits several questions which she later attempts to answer, such as:

Did the fact that they were from/of the Carribean affect how they shaped an identity? Was a Carribean influence in their family responsible for this? Did the Carribean have any influence in their racial identity formation? Did they see themselves as ‘Carribean-Canadian’ rather than attempting to fit in the racialized group? or did Canada and its [largely White] influences reign as the most significant factor regarding identity?(p.39).

Hernandez dedicates her second chapter to identifying the racial discourses in the Carribean. More specifically, she discusses the significance of the mixed-race person in the Carribean, and also how colour, class, race and caste systems have shaped the country since colonialism. In addition she examines racial discourses in Canada and begins with an historical overview of the “two founding groups” of European French and English settlers that have shaped the history of the country. Hernandez then addresses the issue of the mixed-race individual in a Canadian context and asserts that “in comparison to the Carribean, the salient point argued is that Canada, with the exception of the Métis people, does not have a long history of race mixture such as is found in countries like Trinidad, Guyana or Jamaica” (p.65).

Within the third chapter Hernandez examines racial identity formation as well as the experiences of racism by her study participants. She begins by using Kich’s (1992) identity formation model, readapting his three stage model and incorporating additional categories. The five stages consist of: external influence/parroting - early childhood 2-5, realization of complexity-late childhood 6-9, searching/rebellion/denial - adolescence 10-17, answers/action/
“passing” - late adolescence-early adulthood 18-24, continuing journey/resolution - adulthood 25+. Hernandez asserts that her model differs from Kich’s in that it leaves room “for the reality of the mixed-race person who may never come to a resolution about their mixed-race identity” (p.68). She outlines in great detail what each stage means and provides several examples of the experiences of her study participants that coincide with her stages. Hernandez then elaborates on the various forms of racism experienced by her study participants from White Canadians and from Carribean people. She also discusses the racism experienced in the family, the school system, the media as well as issues of privilege which often surround the mixed-race person. An interesting component of Hernandez’s study is her examination of what it means to be Canadian, an identity synonymous with being White. It is therefore interesting how this White racial/national identity affects mixed-race peoples’ choices since Whiteness is present in their family. Hernandez notes how participants express their mixed-race identity with great diversity and elucidate their experiences differently.

Ray (1996) provides an in-depth look at a mixed-race White and South Asian/Asian population. This study illustrates the five stories and examines how participants negotiate their mixed-race status within the family and society. Ray discusses how racism, race, privilege are understood and are taken up within these families. She notes that being in an interracial marriage does not make one better equipped to understand the mixed-race experience. Ray attempts to understand how race and mixed-race identity are articulated at present in Canada. She asserts that “the irony of mixed-race experiences and the stories that people told me, is that often times we were telling the stories of our parents” (p.150). Ray notes that the parents’ experiences with racism, discrimination and anti-miscegenation sentiments are often very different from those of their children. She also contends that many of the parents fail to understand the mixed-race experience and that many of these families live in silence and denial on the topic of race and racism. Participants within Ray’s study also speak of their White mothers as not being able to grasp their experiences with race. Ray notes that the White mothers were unaware of the privileges of having White skin. The school setting had been a place of conflict for many participants who experienced their first
encounters with racism in this environment. This study is important in that it provides an examination into the families of mixed-race individuals and how they negotiate themselves at home. It also gives an indication of how racism within the family has an impact on individuals later on in life. Even though my study does not specifically focus on the family, it is important to take note of such issues within participants’ lives.

Several non-Canadian sociological studies examine contributing factors to identity development. These various studies choose one or several areas of focus such as parental influence, socioeconomic status, generational influences and examine such issues within mixed-race racial or ethnic identity development. Research on identity formation of mixed-race individuals has focused primarily on factors influencing racial identity formation. Racial identity refers to “a sense of group or collective identity based on one’s perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group” (Helms, 1990, p.3). Studies solely examining factors influencing ethnic identity formation and linguistic and cultural practices of mixed-race individuals are quite scarce. Ethnic identity refers to “a person’s knowledge of belonging to an ethnic group and pride in that group. Thus, it refers both to the perceptual/cognitive processes that connect oneself to others of the same ethnic group, and to the affective or attitudinal processes that join one to others” (Aboud & Doyle, 1993, p.47). Many may claim that one’s racial identity is synonymous to one’s ethnic identity; however, for mixed-race individuals they have the ability to choose. For example, a mixed-race person of Korean and African descent may choose to self-identify as Black but may also choose to solely participate in Korean culture. Ethnic identity formation/participation among mixed-race individuals is a crucial component/part of who they are and can also be as fluid as, or more so, than how they racially self-identify. This choice can represent or demonstrate a great piece of the puzzle to mixed-race identity formation and should not go unacknowledged. These studies will prove essential for my research in that they demonstrate the numerous variables involved in the formation/evolution of one’s identity.
Kilson (2000) examines participants' "memories of racial identity issues as they were growing up and their current perspectives on race in their adult lives" (p. 8). She conducted 50 interviews with various mixes of mixed-race individuals. An interesting component of Kilson's study is the generational perspective which she provides. More specifically, Kilson notes that since her participants were born in the 60s they share a distinct experience as mixed-race individuals due to the legal repercussions in place regarding miscegenation at that time. She asserts that they were born "at a time when Biracial American babies were automatically racially identified with their parent of colour and with their father if both parents were people of colour" (p. 10). Kilson notes the various responses given by participants as to why they self-identify in a particular way. She asserts that some participants choose a monoracial identity in public while others specify heritages because it is occupationally useful. One particular woman she makes note of in her study has always felt compelled to self-identify as Black but feels more comfortable identifying with her White culture since she greatly socializes in White culture. Kilson further notes, "cultural identities and affinities, social situations and personal relationships, cognitive reflections and perceived societal demands variously contribute to changing racial self-identities" (p. 47). Her study also examines how the study participants challenge or "strategize" against the stereotypes which are created within the dominant society. She goes on to say, "in these encounters, the biracial person intentionally behaves in a way that contradicts and calls into question race-based social expectations with respect to language and performance. Such encounters may occur in various settings - in the classroom, in the workplace, and in the department store" (p. 72). For example, she notes how one woman of African and European heritage seeks to excel in school since it is not expected of her because she is Black.

Many participants within her study choose to self-identify with their heritage of colour. Kilson contends that the mixed-race individual choosing to self-identify with their heritage of colour demonstrates the constraints on claiming a biracial identity in the 60s. This
was a consequence of the "one drop rule" being legally enforced in the United States. Kilson recognizes that possible reasons as to why they still choose to self-identify as Black or with their parent of colour could be a result of the time in which they grew up where the "one drop rule" was being strenuously enforced.

Kilson's study is important in that she examines the variations in self-identification of mixed-race individuals and also notes the historical reasons behind this. Although this study does not delve into specific cultural or linguistic influences of the study participants, it demonstrates how identity choices are very much political, social and personal stances taken by the mixed-race individuals. Kilson also captures how fluid these choices can be and notes the rationale behind how mixed-race individuals self-identify.

A study by Saenz, Hwang, Aguirre, & Anderson (1995) examines the ethnic identification patterns of children of Asian and White heritage. Data within this study came from the 1980 U.S. Bureau of the Census in California. The sample size consists of 913 mixed-race children between the ages of 3 and 17. Researchers assert that, "Asian-Americans as a group have experienced high levels of structural assimilation...are increasingly marrying exogamously. These trends have led some observers to question the extent to which ethnicity will survive among Asian-Americans, particularly in the case of the offspring from intermarriages" (p.188). Results from the study indicate that the children who maintain an Asian ethnic identity, which is 37 per cent, tend to have the highest degree of cultural maintenance. This means that they are foreign-born, speak a language other than English at home, have a Chinese background, have fathers who are Asian and are living in areas having large Asian populations. Researchers note that children with an Anglo identity, 53 per cent, tend to be those born in the United States with a foreign-born Asian parent, who speak English in the home, have mothers who are Asian and live in areas with relatively small Asian populations but high degrees of ethnic heterogeneity. Finally, children who choose an

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3 This law asserts that any mixed-race individuals with any amount of "Black blood" will solely be seen as Black or will be forced to self-identify with the parent of colour.
"other" ethnic identity, ten per cent of the sample, tend to be of second or higher generation, have mothers who are Asian, and have well educated Asian parents. This study shows the influences involved in sustaining an ethnic identity. Living in a different country, speaking various languages, etc. are noted as contributors to the claiming of an ethnic identity.

A study by Stephan and Stephan (1989) examines ethnic identity choices of two different groups of mixed-race individuals. In the first part of the study, researchers interviewed 67 Hawaii University students between the ages of 17 to 29. The study was replicated with a sample of 104 participants who are part-Hispanic from Southwestern university. In the first part of the study, the researchers note that 18 per cent list their ethnic identity as Japanese, nine per cent list an ethnic identity with one or more of their other heritages and 73 per cent list a multiple ethnic identity on questionnaires. In the second part of the study, researchers note that 44 per cent of participants list a Hispanic ethnic identity, 12 per cent as one or more of their other heritages and 44 per cent a multiple identity on questionnaires. Intermarriage is found to decrease identification with a single minority group. They assert that the reason for a higher multiple ethnic identity in Hawaii than in New Mexico is the greater availability of choice in Hawaii as intermarriages are quite numerous, in comparison to New Mexico. Researchers also examine the antecedents of ethnic identity of the study participants. In both studies exposure to Japanese or Hispanic customs plays a significant role the claiming/maintenance of an ethnic identity. Religion, physical resemblance, differential status of both "minority" groups and parental heritage are all influences that contribute differently to participants ethnic identity formation.

Hall (1992) examines ethnic identity choices of mixed-race individuals of Black and Japanese heritage. She interviewed 30 mixed-race individuals between the ages of 18 and 32. Hall's objective is to explore "the ethnic identity choices made by these individuals, the factors affecting their choices, and life experiences/attitudes of these mixed individuals" (p.250). Participants are given questionnaires with two parts, a self-administered section and an interviewer-administered one. Results denote that when given the choice between
monoracial or multiracial ways of self-identifying, the study participants tend to choose a biracial/bicultural existence. When they are forced to choose, 18 participants choose to self-identify as Black, ten as Black/Japanese, one as Japanese and one did not categorize himself. Hall speaks of a number of variables such as community make-up and parental influence as contributing to how the participants self-identify. When considering participants knowledge of culture and language, Hall contends that the more respondents know about their Black culture the more likely they are to choose a Black identity. An interesting component which Hall notes is the fact that there is no significant correlation between language proficiency and ethnic identity choice. Although surprising to Hall she asserts that if the mixed-race participants socialize with Japanese individuals who probably do not speak Japanese themselves, language would therefore not be a criterion for Japanese identity. The lack of influence of “Black English” is noted as being confusing for Hall since speaking “Black English” is often a measure of authenticity in Black spaces. The interesting component of this study is that, given the choice, most participants chose a mixed-race identity as opposed to self-identifying with one racial group.

Negotiation of Identity

Negotiations of Race, Culture, Language and Identity

When considering how and why mixed-race individuals self-identify a certain way, it is also important to consider how they negotiate racism, language, privilege, and their mixed-race status. To better understand this, I examine several studies that focus on racial and ethnic negotiation, but not necessarily in a mixed-race population. The following studies consist of my theoretical framework and are somewhat readapted to consider the negotiation of identity in mixed-race groups.

Chen (1999) examines how nine Chinese-American men form “strategic plans” to deal with and negotiate the negative stereotypes that have often been attributed to Asian men.
Chen readapts Hochschild’s (1989) concept of gender strategy, which describes the way that men and women solve problems in their everyday lives using culturally constructed notions of gender. Through this adaptation, Chen examines how hegemonic masculinities in society influence the lives of Chinese-American men and what “plans of action” they take to challenge the stereotypes often attributed to them. He is not only interested in determining how hegemony/domination and the conceptions of masculinity are imposed from society but also how they are taken up/resisted from within. Chen describes four main strategies that are used by his study participants to negotiate themselves, such as: compensation, deflection, denial, and repudiation. He presents his results as individual cases and considers the main strategy which emerges out of the interviews. Chen describes the strategy of compensation as occurring when the person is “aware of the negative stereotypes...and consciously tries to undermine them by confronting par excellence to the hegemonic ideal” (p.592). A strategy of deflection is described as when a person “tries to divert attention from personal short comings associated with negative stereotypes of Chinese-American men” (p.593). Denial is when a person rejects “the existence of negative stereotypes...or claims a kind of racial and gender exceptionalism about them, maintaining that the stereotypes do not apply to him” (p.595). Repudiation when considering gender strategies is described as “rejecting the symbolic or material premises of hegemonic masculinity” (p.597). In this study repudiation can be seen as being the rejection of one culture versus another or one “race” versus another. I contend that these “strategic plans” are by no means stable or stagnant but are fluid, and more than one strategy can be negotiated simultaneously.

Tizard and Phoenix (1995) interviewed 58 mixed-race individuals of Black and White parentage. The researchers attempt to determine whether the mixed-race adolescent study participants self-identify as Black, whether they feel positively, negatively or confused about their mixed-race status. Also they examine the extent to which participants’ racial identity is central in their lives, and the extent to which they feel an affinity to Black cultures, and to Black and White people. Results indicate that less than half of the participants thought of themselves as Black and that many choose a mixed or brown identity. They also note that
having a Black identity is related to holding more politicised views of racism. Living with a Black parent, however, is seen as having no bearing on whether the children see themselves as Black or whether they have a positive racial identity. They also report that, to some extent having a positive identity is associated with attending a multiracial school. An important component of this study is the examination of the experience of racism and the strategies they use to negotiate themselves accordingly. Several strategies are used by the study participants to manage racial threats. The first strategy is defined as mental diffusion where several sub-strategies are included within practice. Researchers assert that participants are “modifying not the actual situation but the way in which one feels about it, in an attempt to reduce its painful impact. Such strategies included ‘not noticing’ the threat, diverting one’s attention from it, deliberately ignoring it, or reinterpreting its meaning by such means as degrading its user, treating it as a joke, or reinterpreting it as positive” (p.108). The second strategy consists of avoiding or escaping from the threatening situation and the third of tackling the situation directly in order to “reduce or remove the threat, whether by verbal or physical attacks, negotiation, using humour to defuse the situation, referring the issue to some authority, combining with others to tackle it” (p.108-9). The fourth strategy involves taking steps to prevent or reduce the effects of the threat. The researchers assert that combining with others or learning karate for self-defence are some examples of strategies which participants use. They further state that “the variant most used by the young people in our sample was enhancing one’s prestige or achievements, so that one cannot be considered “inferior” to White people (p.109). The researchers also discuss the strategies used by parents in order to help their children deal with racism by promoting self-esteem, stressing education and encouraging them to look at racism face-on or to downplay its occurrence. This study is useful as it provides a look at the various strategies utilised by mixed-race adolescents.

A study by Brown (1995) examines the racial self-identification of 119 young adults of African and European heritage between the ages of 18 to 35 years. Brown notes that 64.7% of participants choose the Black category on forms requesting racial group
identification in the absence of external pressures, however, 66.4% indicate that they would identify themselves as interracial. Brown asserts that participants are choosing public and private identities to help preserve their interracial self-perception while conforming to societal pressures to disregard their White roots. For some participants this was an important coping mechanism apparently developed in response to a gradual conditioning process within the family as well as the requirements of the larger social milieu. For others, it was the result of a conscious and frequently sudden decision after their interracial or White self-perception came under fire (p.127).

Brown also notes that many participants choose all three identities, distinctively or amalgamate them at different times. The majority, however, see themselves as interracial. Their experiences with their social environment, such as the messages received with regard to their racial group membership from family and friends, racial status laws, etc., as well as their phenotype all play a significant role in how participants racially see themselves. This study is important in that it demonstrates how the choosing of an identity is situational and quite fluid. This is relevant and important for the work I am doing.

Williams (1992) carries out a study with 43 Amerasians, 29 Euroasians and 14 Afroasians between the ages of 16 and 35. The participants had lived at least six of their adolescent years in Japan. This study’s goals are, to show yet another dimension of the Amerasian existence; to identify the varying issues and challenges brought about by the different cultural and racial backgrounds of Afroasians and Eurasians; to illustrate their common Amerasian cultural upbringing, and identity; and to document the valuable experiences of bicultural haafus, who live and operate in many worlds, as they create their own blended culture, speech forms, and practices (p.280-81).

The Amerasian participants have, according to Williams, developed a third culture for themselves. He notes that, they have constructed a new culture by synthesizing contradictions and meshing dichotomies, as they relate back to the original cultures. On the other hand, their experiences have reflected the struggles of resolving simultaneous loyalty to more than one culture. Raised and socialized in
bilingual homes and in multicultural settings, they have come to embrace Eastern and Western values, beliefs, and behaviours in all aspects of their lives” (p.282-83).

Since the participants’ White and Black fathers had been military soldiers, they had lived part of their lives in Japan in military environments. Williams asserts that the military environment, containing many children of mixed-heritage, provided a sense of community for many of them. Results from the study indicate that both Afroasians and Euroasians had an awareness of racial differences at a young age. Williams also notes that physical appearance plays a role in identity formation for both groups.

The interesting component of this study is the language negotiation which is practised by the study participants. Very few studies examine in-depth not only what the study participants choose as an identity but how they articulate themselves. Williams notes that participants feel that “being bilingual...‘forced’, them to see the world through both Japanese and American eyes, which gave them little or no choice but to embrace both cultural heritages. As a result, many reported having been interpreters ‘all their lives’” (p.292). He also contends that,

all 43 Amerasians stated that their bilingual ability influenced their self-perception and group identity. Being bilingual, along with being biracial, meant having to deal with a multitude of issues. Knowing, understanding, speaking, and thinking in two and three languages (including ethnic English and various Japanese dialects) meant living and operating within those worlds as in-group members. However, due to their physical distinction, social distance, and ability to speak the other language, the Japanese, Euro-Americans, and African-Americans often categorized Amerasians as outsiders or ‘stagehands’, even though they were insiders with a front row seat to the main stage of their parents’ worlds (p.294).

Williams’ article resonates with my work in that my study participants are also from two distinct groups, who share different languages, and the negotiation of their identities cannot help but be influenced by their languages. His study is important in that it is one of the very few that examines race, language, culture and the feelings of mixed-race individuals
regarding the negotiation of all of these factors. Williams quotes Fanon (1967) as saying "to speak a language is to take on a world, a culture" (p.295). Williams goes on to say, Amerasians took on many worlds: the Japanese-speaking world of their mothers, the English-speaking world of their fathers, and the marriage of the two (or more) languages in which they created their 'half-and-half' world. As a system of symbols with socially governed guidelines, bilingual code switching allowed Amerasians to related to their parent groups, to express their sense of self, and to formulate a group solidarity and belongingness to their very own multiethnic group. Through their languages, they thought, spoke and lived in multiple consciousness (p.295).

Another interesting component of Williams' article is his inclusion of the participants' stories and comments, expressed in English and Japanese. However, Williams often translates some Japanese words and at other times he does not. There is no mention of why this is done but it would have been interesting to find out. It is important to me because I also express certain parts of my participants' experiences in French and I chose not to translate for specific reasons, which I discuss later.

Williams' final comments are made in reference to Afroasians and Eurasians and the differences in identity development. He notes that "although larger social and political forces affected the lives of the respondents with structural limitations and barriers, individual experiences were so diverse that each Amerasian person responded differently to these forces and environments during different periods of their lives" (p.299). Williams also discusses social differences between Euroasians and Afroasians which are linked to history, race relations and parental country of origin. More specifically, the history of African-Americans in America affects the Afroasians in a different manner since Blacks hold a lower status than Asians in America. Even though they are children of two "minority" parents, in America, they are subjected to the one drop rule where they are still considered as Black. Eurasian babies are seen as "war babies" casualties of the war, according to Williams, and experience condescending treatment from European Americans and Japanese-Americans.
In keeping with the examination of the negotiation of identity, my intention within the following section is simply to show possible links between uniracial experiences with language, culture and ethnic identity formation and mixed-race populations. Even though they focus primarily on monoracial individuals/groups they nevertheless provide a bicultural or multicultural perspective. More specifically, many individuals of colour have to negotiate their native cultures/heritages with that of the dominant society, as is the case with mixed-race individuals. The following are works that serve as additional resources for my own research.

Romberg (1996) provides a tripartite conceptualization of bicultural, shifting, merging and hybridic practices. She describes Puerto Ricans on the US mainland as being cultural chameleons. She asserts that the individuals within her study juggle both cultures from one moment to the next. She also discusses reasons why the Puerto Rican community in her study have a special status in America. Since Puerto Ricans are members of the United States Commonwealth, which distinguishes them from other Latin American and mainland minority groups, they are able to, and most often do, maintain cultural ties with the island. According to Romberg, due to the close proximity of the island to the mainland, the circulation of people and goods has created a “revolving door”. The distinctions between “homeland”, “diaspora”, or “marginal” and “mainstream” are not easily distinguishable when looking at this population. Romberg asserts that there is resistance from Puerto Ricans to become “Americanos”. She elaborates on three main strategies which this population utilises to negotiate the various aspects of their racial, cultural, linguistic and religious heritages. Romberg specifically focuses on how the religious practices/religious vernacular have been influenced by Puerto Rican and American religious practices/beliefs. Through her ethnographic study in a Latino neighbourhood she discovers/learns that a way of coping with problems is through the combining of local and Puerto Rican religious practices. She talks about how this particular population will either buy special candles and incense and often wear a protective amulet that has been blessed by a priest, also called a “santerola”. She asserts that there is often resistance/stereotypes to non-American religious practices but that most participants combine and merge various forms of religious knowledges to manage their lives. The third strategy
which Romberg discusses is that of a hybrid practice. She speaks of this hybridic practices between Spanish and English languages forming something called “Spinglish”. This study demonstrates how a particular community has carved a space for themselves by borrowing from their various cultures.

Anderson (1999), examines couples of British and Greek heritage and specifically focuses on the children in such families. Several issues which the children negotiate are addressed within this study such as: language, coping with parental influences, geographic location, extended family members, among many other issues. He discusses the notion of “cultural fluidity” where there is a “movement and displacement of myths, languages, music, imagery, cuisine, decor, costume, furnishings” within such families (p. 14). Through in-depth interviews, Anderson examines the discourse to discern how children react to their situation. He asserts for one child that “he affirms himself conceptually as a cultural hybrid, and practically as a cultural and linguistic broker in that he is able to trade and negotiate the currencies of respective languages as they enhance his social capital in different contexts” (p. 17). Anderson gives another example of a girl and her experience with different languages, further saying “her experience of different languages in the home forces her to negotiate a relationship with each parent in a different language. This is not unusual in bi-cultural and bilingual families” (p. 18). Another interesting perspective within this article is the focus on the home space. Anderson asserts that the “biculural family home is made up not only of culturally different pasts and histories, but also of potentially competing and conflicted ones. Moreover, they are pasts and histories brought to the fore by the very process of displacement itself” (p. 22). These families “provide an intriguing context in which children learn to belong and not belong, construct and de-construct their identities, through the embodiment and trading of personal perceptions of cultural sameness and difference” (p. 24). This article examines external sources of pressure that demand compliance and devotion to one culture versus the other for these children. However, one component the study cannot and does not address is race. Since both parents within such families are White, issues of passing and racial discrimination are non-existent.
Articles that examine ethnic identity formation of individuals from exogamous marriages with one Francophone parent are quite scarce. Heller & Lévy (1992) examine Franco-Ontarian women and their experiences in exogamous relationships with Anglophone partners. This work provides a glimpse of the experiences of the children within these families. The couples are of the same “race”, that is they are White but of different ethnic heritages. The researchers note that these mixed marriages do not necessarily assimilate into the dominant English majority. They also assert this to be true of the children within these families. However, even when the children mainly function or live in an English majority setting there is still a struggle experienced to maintain or retain their French heritage. Heller and Lévy also note that the women recognize that the value of the French language and French culture has increased over their adult lives and therefore they are beginning, or continuing to a greater extent, to take pride in their French heritage.

LaFromboise, Coleman and Gerton (1993) explore how individuals navigate between two cultures. Their study is intended/presented in terms of a model of a second culture acquisition, such as, that experienced by immigrants. I will briefly list the six dimensions of the study found to help individuals negotiate between their two cultures. The six dimensions consist of having a knowledge of cultural beliefs and values such as history, and rituals, having a positive attitude towards the goal of bicultural competence and towards both groups, having a belief that one can live in a satisfying way within more than one group, having the ability to communicate effectively in each culture, having a range of situational appropriate behaviours and roles for each cultural group, and having sufficient social support providing a source of practical information.

After having described the various studies which examine/consider the contributors to racial and ethnic identity formation of various groups of individuals with varying results, I must attempt to situate my work within this literature. I believe my work will provide an in-depth look at how mixed-race individuals negotiate themselves through their languages. Also, since the mixed-race individuals I am examining are in a distinct position in that they
negotiate two types of Whiteness, that being the Anglo majority and the French linguistic minority, this will provide a different focus within mixed-race literature. My intention is also to focus on not only the claiming of an identity but examine the performance of identity and how it structures the lives of the participants. The studies discussed in the preceding section, however, provide valuable/essential information/elements on the effects of racial consciousness, 'minority' language rights, choice and strategies in self-identification, etc which will prove useful in this study.

**French-Canadians and Historical Contexts**

Two studies discussed above provide important findings when considering the formation and negotiation of identity. To summarize Romberg (1996) and Williams (1992) discuss/consider the historical contexts of their populations and acknowledge that the social status of racial groups is important to consider. Romberg (1996) notes how Puerto Rico's unique geographic location near America contributes to Puerto Rican's distinct identity since they have the ability to retain some connection to their native land and can therefore combine/shift cultural practices. Williams (1992) examines the identity formation of Black/Japanese and White/Japanese mixed-race individuals. He contends that since the Black and White soldiers who served in Japan hold different social statuses in America, Blacks having a lower social status, that the children of such unions have different experiences.

To take this thesis in the direction of the above scholars requires a brief history of French-Canadians acknowledging the existence of the various distinct Francophone communities to prevent the homogenizing of this group. It is also important to note the linguistic battles and historical Anglophone dominance over French-Canadians, as well as the hierarchies that exist within French-Canadian groups which may be structured by race, language but also by specific histories. These distinct histories/statuses of the various French-Canadian communities may affect the identity choices of my study participants just as they did in Romberg (1996) and Williams (1992).
To begin it is important to note the origins of French-Canadians and the arrival of French settlers/colonists. Gupta (1983) examines the history of Québec, Québec inhabitants, the clergy, government and the British conquest. She asserts that "it is commonly held that Canada's two charter groups were composed of people from France and England. Both countries took an interest in the new world with France making its first official contact with it through Jacques Cartier who sailed into the Bay of Gaspé in 1534" (p.37). After the British conquest in 1760, Francophones in Québec even under British rule managed to survive and prosper in Francophone communities. Survival was extremely difficult since English Canada's wish was for ethnic minorities to be assimilated. On the other hand, the history of Acadia is somewhat different from that of Québec but also reveals a history of hardship. L'Acadie became such after a few groups of French settlers began to settle in different parts of the Atlantic provinces. During the years following British rule, Acadians were forced to take an oath of allegiance to the monarchy and there were also attempts to convert the Acadians to the Anglican religion (Landry and Allard, 1994). Acadians refused to take an oath because that would have obliged them to take up arms against the French and Aboriginals. The Acadians became known as the "French neutrals because of their stance relative to the conflict between France and England" (p.182). The following event from 1755 to 1763 "le grand dérangement", I have personally heard from my grandmother, family members and from fables at school. During these eight years, 13,000 Acadians were deported because they were believed to be threats to the British government. The economic hardship that Acadians suffered is evident to this day.

Having briefly noted the historical background of two important Francophone populations in Canada, it is also important to acknowledge their make-up and the various other Francophone communities that exist in the country. According to the 1996 census of Statistics Canada based on French as the mother tongue, Canada now has a total French population close to seven million where approximately six million are in Québec, 300,000 are in the Atlantic provinces, a half a million are in Ontario, 175,000 are in the Western provinces and 1,500 are living in the territories. Although French-Canadians have the tendency to be
seen as one group, it is extremely difficult to make generalization since many of the various communities, discussed above, have their own histories, French cultures and struggles within them. Many Francophone communities have had to redefine themselves due to various circumstances, such as industrialization, globalization, immigration and the Révolution tranquille in Québec in the sixties.

Throughout history the dispersal of Francophones has created pockets of French-Canadian communities which have evolved as self-reliant communities. This evolvement has generated shifts in Francophone identities. Harvey (1995) examines the history of the so-called break up of French-Canadians. He asserts that between 1867 and 1960 a traditional conception of the French-Canadian came to be known, where the French language and the Catholic faith were the two principal elements that integrated French-Canadians and were elaborated upon by historians. Drastic changes in Québec began during the 1960s Quiet Revolution. It was around that time that Québec had somewhat of a strong political leadership and was surging from under the British rule to assert its presence. At this time French-Canadians living in Québec became known as Québécois. Harvey maintains that after 1960, due to strong political backing, the Québécois slowly began to move away from Canada and focused on building their community of people. He elaborates on three kinds of identities that have emerged among French-Canadians in the past 30 years.

1. The Québécois versus the French-Canadian identity which, for a long time and to a large extent today was meant to distinguish Francophones in Québec from other French-Canadians.

2. The second kind of identity surfacing within recent years is more of a shift of the Québécois identity. Harvey asserts that this label/identity is undergoing somewhat of a shift due to globalization, industrialization and immigration. The label Québécois is now seen as technically including the Anglophones and ‘minority’ communities living in Québec. This label/identity, according to Harvey, is quite fragile and subject to change depending on the
success of assimilation methods of immigrants and the containing of the Anglophone minority.

3. The third form of identity is one of further subdivision or distinction for French-Canadians living outside of Québec. More specifically, French-Canadians living outside of Québec self-identify based on where they were born or have lived in for most of their lives. For example, Franco-Ontarians, Franco-Manitobans, etc have made this distinction.

Considering the distinct identities that have emerged among French-Canadians, I must also address the two distinct realities of living in a Francophone majority versus minority setting. I contend that living within a majority setting such as in Québec, greatly alters one’s experience since one’s everyday life can be practised with one’s native language. Francophones outside of Québec live in a minority setting and struggle to retain their rights since they have populations that vary in size. If communities are too small these individuals will have to utilise services that are most often given in English. These various communities; however, have survived and thrived considering the fact that they are surrounded by an Anglophone majority as well as other ethnic communities who are vying for resources. The struggles of such communities apart from Acadians have surfaced fairly recently in history.

Having acknowledged that two distinct positions of living in a majority or minority setting, I must also consider how this has affected/influenced relations between French-Canadians. Québec has often been seen as the Mecca of la francophonie and a template for which all French-Canadians measure themselves and their French language against. However, the reality of French-Canadians living as a linguistic minority is different from that of Québec. The participation in dominant spaces, with the dominant language can create the loss of one’s “minority” native language. Phenomena such as assimilation (Castonguay, 1994), loss of and variations of the “standard” French language are possible factors when living in a minority setting. (Mougeon & Heller, 1986; Welch, 1991). I contend that hierarchies within French-Canadian communities have been marked/regulated in one sense, through the French language. In a minority setting, due to historical events/circumstances and the eminent
presence of the Anglo majority, the French language spoken in such communities has undergone transformations and has often been deemed "improper" or "bad" French. The in-fighting, exclusion and denigration within Francophone communities as to the type of French that is spoken has generated the notion of an idealistic superior French language. The controversy which surrounds Acadians in New Brunswick and Franco-Ontarians as to the question of what type of French should be spoken and taught in schools is based on an idealistic superior French language (Landry and Allard, 1994; Heller, 1986). To discriminate based on language, there must first be the notion of an idealized language which is branded as a superior language. Lippi-Green (1997) goes on to say, "a standard language ideology, which proposes that an idealized nation-state has one perfect, homogeneous language, becomes the means by which discourse is seized, and provides rationalization for limiting access to discourse" (p.65).

The previous sections acknowledge the distinctiveness of French-Canadian groups in Canada, their linguistic struggles, and in-group disputes and battles with the Anglophone majority. Exempt from my discussion are the numerous French communities of colour that have immigrated to Canada, from Haiti and other French countries in the world. Although they too may self-identify as French-Canadian or Acadian or Québécois, their experience within such communities is at another level within the White Francophone communities themselves. For French communities of colour, race becomes the predetermining factor of their experience. The history of Francophones and the French language in our Canadian nation definitely affects how the study participants see themselves, and how much of their French heritage they incorporate into their lives and is therefore imperative to consider. The degree of cultural acceptance/acknowledgement or pride in their French-Canadian heritage is not only dependent on personal value but the value of such heritages in our society which may be deemed desirable or undesirable in Western society's standards. It is also important to note how mixed-race individuals of colour with a Francophone parent negotiate these two White groups. Studies looking at non-immigrant Francophones of colour, like mine, are scares in academia. The following section briefly considers the Métis as being practically the
only research done with non-immigrant individuals of colour with one Francophone parent.

As was stated earlier very few studies have looked at the experiences of mixed-race individuals with a Francophone parent apart from the Canadian Métis. “The term, métis, an old French adjective meaning ‘mixed’, began, by the late 1700s, to refer to a population of French-Indian descent which was noticed as culturally and socially distinct from its parent communities on either side” (Brown, 1993, p.20). People of English-Aboriginal mix, according to Brown, came to be known as half-breed, much as other mixed-race individuals. The Métis in Canada have fought for legal recognition in our country, have a distinct history, status and identity. The following are a few works that elaborate on the Métis experience (Boisvert & Turnbull, 1985; Peters, Rosenberg, & Halseth, 1991; Dyck, 1980). My work will reveal similarities between the two populations in terms of rate of assimilation, loss of language, community migration, loss of native cultures to the mainstream culture, etc.
Chapter Two: Researching the Performance of Mixed-Race Identity

In the first chapter I discuss how the mixed-race experience has been theorized. I also suggest that the understanding of mixed-race identity formation as occurring in stages is useful. However, it is also critically important to explore how identity is negotiated. Both Romberg (1996) and Chen (1999) provide valid approaches to this. In this chapter I outline how I propose to analyse the narratives of my study participants. In particular, in keeping with my emphasis on identity formation, I examine, through the narrative of mixed-race individuals, how they negotiate racism, privilege, culture and language, and how they perform their mixed-race status within the racial continuum of Whiteness and Blackness. Linguistically, I attempt to understand not only the retention and practice of their languages but also how they articulate their experiences. I approach this project from a qualitative analytical perspective.

Identity

Identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a "production", which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation (Hall, 1990, p.222).

Hall’s notion of identities as never complete strengthens my argument that it is difficult to capture exactly why mixed-race individuals choose particular identities and why they negotiate themselves in particular ways. An important point to elaborate on is the distinction between cultural identity/ethnic identity and racial identity. More specifically, cultural identity has the ability of being fluid and even changing whereas racial identity is often determined by skin colour. Hall writes/speaks of cultural identity as coming from a particular place and time, from a history and a culture which is specific. He asserts, “what we say is always ‘in context’, positioned” (p.222). He defines cultural identity in terms of two positions, primarily in terms of “one shared culture, a sort of collective ‘one true self’, hiding
inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed ‘selves’, which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common. This first position is sometimes the overriding sentiment within groups which holds them together” (p.223). This bond or belief in a shared history or ancestry can also be quite exclusionary for those who share it to a different extent. Hall asserts that “we cannot speak for very long, with any exactness, about ‘one experience, one identity’, without acknowledging its other side - the ruptures and discontinuities” (p.225).

The second position Hall defines the process of forming cultural identity as a matter of “becoming” as well as “being” (p.225). He asserts that, “cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything which is historical, fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continuous ‘play’ of history, culture and power...identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past” (p.225).

For mixed-race people, Hall’s observation that cultural identity is usually defined as a shared history and ancestry suggests a problem since individuals of colour are not categorized based on how they have been socialized but what they look like. There is a salient point here to elaborate on: the importance of racial matching in a racist society. We are all, in a sense, defined/categorised by our skin colour. Mixed-race individuals who are sometimes “phenotypically uncategorizable”, give rise to confusion in that the dominant group cannot neatly classify such individuals. However, they are still seen as belonging only to the group they “match” best phenotypically and not where they have possibly been socialized.

Root (1998) asserts that,

If one carries a visible status such as race, its socially constructed meaning results in a labelling process. Visible identities, whether they connote positive meaning or stigmatised status, affect the opportunities we encounter (Goffman, 1963)...when these identities carry stigmatic statuses, the process by which they are incorporated into a positive aspect of self requires ego, strength, resilience, and a repertoire of coping (p.142).
Root also states that "racial classification systems are determined by those in power, those subjects disenfranchised by this system often unwillingly internalize it" (p. 143). When considering both ethnic/cultural versus racial identity Weinreich (1986) cited in Root (1999) notes that, 

Ethnicity requires internal recognition and affiliation with the ethnic reference group. Mutual agreement between participants and group regarding group membership is based upon behavioural practices, rituals, customs, and values....ethniciy is centrally defined by the previous variables and not defined phenotypically, ethnic ambiguity is reduced through using racialized bodies as signifiers of ethnic group membership. Whereas the enactment of ethnicity is dynamic over time and generation, race is repeatedly enacted within the constrictor of laws of hypodescent and, until recently, laws of hypodescent (p.143).

As researchers looking at mixed-race identity formation, we need to consider ethnic identity as well as other salient identities within individuals' lives, since racial identity may only be one component of the puzzle. In attempting to understand identity as a process, as Hall advises, it is also useful to consider identity as a performance. Carlson (1996) contends that, 

The recognition that all social behaviour is to a certain extent 'performed' and that different social relationships can be seen as 'roles' is of course hardly a recent idea, and in certain periods of theatre history, such as the Renaissance and the Baroque, this 'theatrical' quality of regular social life appeared as a motif or a central subject in countless plays. It was not really until the twentieth century, however, that an exploration of the actual personal and social implications of this way of viewing human activity appeared, directed not toward the creation of an artistic product, but toward the analysis and understanding of social behaviour (p.34).

Several theorists in various disciplines have taken up the concept of performance within their domain. Goffman (1959) cited in Carlson (1996), defines performance as “all activities of an individual which occurs during a period marked by [his or her] continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers” (p.37). Cortazzi (1993) also elaborates on Goffman's theory and defines performance as “a
Ibrahim (2000), meanwhile, utilises “ethnography of performance” to describe how Francophone African youth express/perform their identities. He delineates the performed identity as the “third space” where Franco-African youth articulate/perform their identities, in a sense, merging the past and present. He notes that the Franco-African youth attempt to merge their African cultures with their present Canadian experiences. These Black kids are also seen as being greatly influenced by American hip-hop culture. This merge of old and new has become a new identity for them. Through language, both native, Black hip hop English, their native languages and “standard English”, they define a space for themselves. Ibrahim demonstrates how their new identities are performed through language, in what they say and how they speak. Ethnography of performance as an approach, according to Ibrahim, relies on the idea that social beings perform their identities in the mode of speech they put forth: “The mode of speech is more complex than just a verbal utterance. It includes as well what Roland Barthes (1983) calls ‘complex semiological languages’, the languages that do not have verbal utterances: the body, garments, etc” (p.16). Since my method of collecting data consisted solely of semi-structured interviews, my focus on performance will be on the articulation of the participants’ identity formation/negotiation.

When considering identity formation/negotiation and performance, one must consider the space in which identities are negotiated. This study focuses on the negotiation of identity within the racial continuum, where Whiteness and Blackness are at both extremes. Important questions to ask are: how do individuals who are mixed-race participate within Whiteness or Blackness/spaces of colour? What is Blackness and Whiteness? How do we define these constructs? When primarily considering Blackness, historically, we can begin with slavery in

I use to term Blackness in some instances to specifically refer to the participation within Black culture. However, since self-identification does not necessarily have to be as Black but can be as an identity of colour, in some instances I refer to spaces of colour.
the United States, where millions of mainly Africans were displaced and arrived in America. One can contend that these slaves, although devoid of material possession, carried with them parts of their languages, cultures and heritages. African-Americans over the centuries have drawn from their African heritage and created their own evolving culture. Gay & Baber (1987) state that "the means employed most often to embody and articulate the dynamics of Black life is a phenomena called "styling and profiling". That is, expressing the Afro-American cultural psyche, substance, performance ethos, and expressive aesthetic in active and participatory speech, music, poetry, folklore, art, literature, religion, dance and daily living" (p.4). Another component of Black performance is speech, something on which I particularly focus on within my thesis. Gay & Baber contend that Black talk holds a special/specific significance in Black communities, and assert that, "Black speech is a process of connecting that is pragmatic and artistic, individual and communal, functional and aesthetic, entertaining and educating" (p.7). hooks (1995) describes the concept of performance as being either one of two things. "Performance can easily become an act of complicity, in the other, it can serve as critical intervention, as a rite of resistance" (p.211). She asserts that,

Throughout African-American history, performance has been crucial in the struggle for liberation, precisely because it has not required the material resources demanded by other artforms. The voice as instrument could be used by everyone, in any location...the spoken word, transformed into a performed act, remains a democratic cultural terrain. When and where institutional structures were not available for individual Black folks, we used, and still use, street corners, barbershops, beauty parlous, basketball courts and a host of other locations in order to be in on the live act. All performance practice has, for African-Americans, been central to the process of decolonisation in White supremacist capitalist patriarchy. From times of slavery to the present day, the act of claiming voice, of asserting both one's right to speak as well as saying what one wants to say, has been a challenge to those forms of domestic colonisation that seek to over-determine the speech of those who are exploited and/or oppressed. Performance was important because it created a cultural context where one could transgress the boundaries of accepted speech, both in relationship to the dominant White culture, and the decorum of African-American cultural mores (p.211-212).
In conclusion hooks notes that,

Whenever we choose performance as a site to build communities of resistance we must be able to shift paradigms and styles of performance in a manner that centralises the decolonization of Black minds and imaginations, even if we include everyone else in that process. The politicisation of historical memory in performance practice, the recognition of diverse Black experience and Diaspora connections between Black folks globally, all contribute to sustaining the spirit of radicalism in contemporary Black performance...African-American performance has always been a space where folks come together and experience the fusion of pleasure and critical pedagogies, a space that aims to subvert and challenge White supremacy as a system of institutionalised domination, along with class elitism, and more lately, sexism (p.119-20).

The performance of Blackness can therefore be projected through language, in the altering of the standard English language, and can be considered a sign of resistance. Having discussed the performance of Blackness, I must also discuss the significance and performance of Whiteness. Within the following section I examine Harris's (1993) article “Whiteness and Property”. In it she examines discourses surrounding miscegenation, Whiteness, property, passing and privilege in the United States. Her article demonstrates how “Whiteness initially constructed as a form of racial identity, evolved into a form of property, historically and presently acknowledged and protected in American law” (p.1709). She also examines “the origins of Whiteness as property in the parallel systems of domination of Black and Native American peoples out of which were created racially contingent forms of property and property rights” (p.1709). Harris asserts that “it was a given...that being White automatically ensured higher economic returns in the short term, as well as greater economic, political, and social security in the long run. Becoming White meant gaining access to a whole set of public and private privileges...and increased the possibility of controlling critical aspects of one’s life rather than being the object of others’ domination” (p.1713). Whites have come to rely on this system to sustain privilege, power and authority. “The set of assumptions, privileges, and benefits that accompany the status of being White have become a valuable asset that Whites sought to protect and that those who passed sought to attain - by fraud if necessary. Whites have come to expect and rely on these benefits, and over time these expectations have been
affirmed, legitimated, and protected by law” (p.1713). Harris examines the relationship between slavery, race and property and asserts that both White and Black racial identity are solidified within these systems. “The ideological and rhetorical move from ‘slave’ and ‘free’ to ‘Black’ and ‘White’ as polar constructs marked an important step in the social construction of race” (p.1718). She further contends that “the institution of slavery, lying at the very core of economic relations, was bound up with the idea of property. Through slavery, race and economic domination were fused” (p.1718). A dichotomy has been established between Whiteness and Blackness and what the two symbolize.

Because Whites could not be enslaved or held as slaves, the racial line between White and Black was extremely critical; it became a line of protection and demarcation from the potential threat of commodification, and it determined the allocation of the benefits and burdens of this form of property. White identity and Whiteness were sources of privilege and protection, their absence meant being the object of property. Slavery as a system of property facilitated the merger of White identity and property. Because the system of slavery was contingent on and conflated with racial identity, it became crucial to be “White”, to be identified as White, to have the property of being White. Whiteness was the characteristic, the attribute, the property of free human beings (p.1721).

The performance of Whiteness is accomplished through the articulation of White “norms” and can be seen as a site of desirability since it is marked a being a superior status. The negotiation of identity, but more so the negotiation of our cultures, and languages are performances. We perform our identities consciously and unconsciously through what we say and how we say it, in a sense, in how we articulate ourselves. I examine the notion of the performance of identities within the narratives of my study participants. The performance of identities can be challenged by social phenomena such as racism, discrimination and privilege. Racism deeply structures the performance of identity, cutting off certain choices and opening up others.
Theorizing Racism

Theorizing racism is essential in order to better understand the inner workings of institutional racism, nationalistic discourses surrounding the denial and sustaining of racism, the everyday experiences that go unnoticed in dominant society that are there to sustain power relations between the dominant and subordinate groups. The following section examines racism and the construction of the “Other” in relation to the dominant group within Essed’s (1991) book “Understanding Everyday Racism: An Interdisciplinary Approach”.

Part of my thesis is devoted to the issue of racism and its negotiation and so I felt it important to understand this concept on the many different levels on which it exists in society. Essed’s (1991) study looks at the experiences of everyday racism of Black women living in the United States and the Netherlands. She asserts that “the purpose of the analysis was to identify…macro and micro dimensions of everyday racism, racist events, use of knowledge and heuristics of comprehension” (p.69). Essed’s study provides an interior look at the workings of racism and how the Black women in the study experienced and dealt with racism. Her work also provides insight into the dominant groups’ denial or blatant recognition of the existence of racism. Essed describes in great detail how the practice of racism and discrimination is sustained in the two countries and also looks at the differences and similarities between them.

She contends that racism is, “inherent in culture and social order…and is more than structure and ideology. As a process it is routinely created and reinforced through everyday practices” (p.2) and is also defined in terms of “cognitions, actions and procedures that contribute to the development and perpetuation of a system which Whites dominate Blacks” (p.39). She goes on to say that everyday racism is a “multidimensional phenomena and that it is reproduced through multiple relations and situations” (p.56). She maintains that, Accounts of racism are more than just personal stories: Racism is a social problem, and, therefore, such accounts represent social experiences. Accounts of racism should be seen not only as descriptions, opinions, images
or attitudes about race relations but also as ‘systems of knowledge’ and ‘systems of values’ in their own right used for the discovery and organization of reality (Jaspars & Fraser, 1984 cited in Essed, 1991, p.54).

She states that “experiences include not only witnessed events but also reported events. Experiences are inseparable from the concept of memory” (Pivcevic, 1986 cited in Essed, 1991, p.58). She goes on to say that “experiences involve the retrieval from memory of situationally relevant knowledge and its application in interpreting new events” (p.58). Essed also distinguishes between the various types of experiences with everyday racism such as personal, vicarious, mediated and cognitive experiences.

**Understanding Everyday Racism**

She describes how knowledge of racism is acquired through communication, personal experiences, family, friends, media, education, literature, etc. When considering the understanding of racism from a subordinate position, Essed notes, Knowledge of racism is not static. It is consistently adapted and modified to include new information. New experiences are tested and interpreted in terms of earlier acquired notions of racism and add to or (partly) replace parts of previous representations of racism...through prolonged practice in dealing with racism, people become experts. This means that their general knowledge of racism becomes organized in more and more complex ways, while their interpretive strategies become more elaborate and effective (p.74).

She also talks about difference in the two countries in the understanding of racism by Whites. She asserts that in the Netherlands denial of a colonial history prevents racism from surfacing as a legitimate form of oppression. The understanding of racism in the United States is different, according to Essed, in that Blacks were never meant to assimilate to the Euro-White culture but remain segregated and so they experience racism differently in the United States from an early age. Blacks are seen as being inferior and the system sets them apart and denies them their rights. From her description, I contend that similarities can be found between the Netherlands and Canada with regard to the understanding/perpetuating of racism by the dominant group.
The Black women in both countries describe the process of racism in terms of three concepts; “marginalization which is a process in which a sense of “otherness is perpetuated...where colour differentiation, non-recognition, nonacceptance are experienced; problematization, which is experienced through the questioning of the presence of Blacks and the disapproving of different cultural styles; through containment which is the feeling of suppression and contained in paternalistic relations in the Netherlands” (p.112-114). The United States seems to rationalize racism with the argument that Blacks are “oversensitive and paranoid” (p.115). Essed (1991) contends that several constructive strategies are used by Black women in the United States to deal with racism, such as, having an understanding of the history of Black resistance in the United States, creating power within the system, keeping and developing Black culture and investing energy and money in Black institutions. On the other hand, she notes that women in the Netherlands use defensive strategies in dealing with racism, by gaining insight into racism, being watchful, and not trusting Whites.

**The Structure of Everyday Racism**

Essed elaborates on several components that structure everyday racism within these countries. She notes exclusionary mechanisms that keep the dominant culture central. One mechanism of exclusion is passive tolerance “a process based on the presupposition that cultural influences from ‘the other’ must remain marginal” (p.280). Other mechanisms of exclusion consist of “White in-group preference in the distribution of resources, economic exploitation, etc” (p.280). In addition the tolerance which is experienced by the Black women in the Netherlands is, according to Essed, by definition “repressive because people assume that basic norms and values of the dominant group must be accepted” (p.280). The oppression of Blacks “is legitimized by the denigration of their culture in dominant ideology” (p.281). Essed also contends that the dominant group seems to “marginalise oppositional views and portrays anti-racist perceptions as too emotional or otherwise pathological” (p.282).
Other similarities in their experiences include the manner in which resistance to Blacks is expressed which, according to Essed (1991), is typically done through nonverbal communication. As a consequence of Eurocentrism Black women and always had to "account for being different" (p. 191) and contends that,

Willingly or not, become familiar with dominant culture through constant exposure in everyday interactions, through the media, or through school textbooks. They learn how Whites think, learn to distinguish between (sub) cultures and how they behave. They learn how Whites think about Blacks. They develop, in DuBois's words, a 'double consciousness' (DuBois, 1969)...knowledge of the dominant culture enables Black women to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable practices (p. 194).

Although my work is not centrally focused on racism and does not delve into the underpinnings of racism in our country, I did visit this concept in the interviews and so I feel it is important to consider Essed's study to demonstrate the depth of this construct. My work will touch on elements of what Essed has done and her analysis will prove essential within this study. Another important phenomena that is not directly examined in this study but is worth considering since it is intrinsic to the discussion of the negotiation of identity is the issue of "passing". For centuries "passing" symbolized one who could racially "pass" for White, and in a sense, participate in the dominant group without being detected. This phenomena is not only linked to the desired participation in White society but is also the result of the undesirability of belonging to a subordinate racial group. This undesirability of participating within a subordinate group may come at a high cost. Gatewood (1990) cited in Cunningham (1997), goes on to say that, "passing was fraught with high social costs, such as separation from family, loneliness, and most important of all, the constant threat of exposure" (p. 379). In most instances, passing implies the passing into White society because this group is highest in the racial hierarchy and holds the most benefit and privilege. Cunningham explains in her study that her participants are often conflicted about the option of passing for White. She contends that the "reason for passing was primarily economic; one simply had a better chance to succeed in the dominant culture. Yet it can be projected that, psychologically, this was a drastic step" (p. 379).
This is also true in today's society. My research will examine the phenomena of "passing", and if experienced, how it is negotiated. "Passing" racially is but one hurdle to overcome. I believe individuals desire to "pass" in a particular group also holds them to conform to group behaviours and "norms". In addition, "passing" racially is linked to the construction of idealistic categories within racial hierarchies. The following section briefly examines the construction of White, and Black categories.

Construction of Categories

My research demonstrates how the categories of Whiteness, Blackness are constructed and how both the dominant group and the "Other" contribute to establishing racial boundaries. More specifically my work attempts to demonstrate this construction within Francophone and Anglophone Canadian society and also attempts to briefly show how the study participants play a role in destroying or contributing to the constructions of racial categories. Essed (1991) discusses how both the United States and Netherlands's cultures contribute to the dominance of European White values and establish who is "Other" versus "non-Other". "Hidden under the surface of diversity", Essed (1991) claims that,

Blacks must accept that the norms and values of the Euro-American tradition are superior and that adaptation is the only way to progress in society...inherent in Euro-American culture, that human progress demands increasing control over 'nature', that 'reason' is a value superior to 'emotion', and that so-called non-western peoples must be subjected to western dominance to 'free' themselves from the constraints of 'nature' (p.189)

She also contends that the objectification of the "Other" is sustained through practices of culturalized racism. "Objectification symbolizes that 'the other' is not seen as a legitimate part of the situation" (p. 189). She articulates that the Black women in her study are seen as outsiders, especially in the Netherlands. Questions such as, where do you come from? and when are you going back? are frequently asked. This conveys the idea that Black women do not belong. Essed asserts that,

Obviously the primary categorization is racial: They look 'different' because they are Black. Furthermore, all other forms of racism presuppose
exaggeration of difference. However, salience of difference implies that there is a norm or standard compared to which the 'other' is different. This standard is culturally defined. More specifically, Whites question the presence of Black women when their situation script does not include Black women. For instance, it may well be that the Black cleaners hired by the university are not objectified in the same way as the few Black professors employed in the same institution (p. 190).

The various phenomena listed above will all be examined within this study in relation to identity formation and negotiation. The following section discusses my methodology and research design.

Methodology - Research Design

Qualitative Research

My work has been structured around a qualitative methodology as I feel this method to be the most appropriate for the type of work that I am doing. I felt that the questions being asked of the mixed-race participants would yield more detailed responses using such a method. I briefly describe the methodology and my research design. (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) describe qualitative research as being,

Multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studies use and collection of a variety of empirical materials - case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts - that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals' lives (p. 2).

As with most research, the researcher begins with a problem or an inquiry of some sort. This inquiry is usually accompanied by a question or questions that may possibly lead to answers regarding the problem. The choice of a methodology, that is the use of qualitative versus quantitative analysis is dependent on these initial questions. Once an interest has been
established, the initial questions being asked by the researcher will probably predict the type of method utilised. Denzin & Lincoln (1994) contend that “the use of multiple methods, or triangulation, reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question...the combination of multiple methods, empirical materials perspectives and observers in a single study is best understood, then, as a strategy that adds rigour, breadth, and depth to an investigation” (Flick cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.2).

Since mixed-race studies in Canada are quite scarce, I have had little previous work to rely upon. That being said, when I began the work, my intention was to uncover as much information as possible about this population. A qualitative methodology felt most appropriate since I could draw upon several approaches, methods and techniques. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) assert that,

Qualitative research does not have a distinct set of methods that are entirely its own. Qualitative researchers use semiotics, narrative, content discourse, archival, and phonemic analysis, even statistics. They also draw upon and utilize the approaches, methods and techniques of ethno methodology, phenomenology, hermeneutics, feminism, rhizomatics, deconstructionism, ethnographies, interviews, psychoanalysis, cultural studies, survey research, and participant observation, among others. All of these research practices can provide important insights and knowledge. No specific method or practice can be privileged over any other, and none can be eliminated out of hand (Nelson, 1992 cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.3).

When doing qualitative research, there is a structure/framework that is typically made up of three components: theory, method and analysis. Within this general structure, Denzin and Lincoln (1994) elaborate on five fundamental phases to the research process. The first phase involves considering the influences and background of the researcher and the ethic and politics of the research. The second phase consists of an examination of the theoretical paradigms and perspectives, such as positivism, feminism/feminist generating stories; ethnic models, Marxist models, etc. Phase three involves an examination of research strategies, clinical research, grounded theory, case study, etc. Within their fourth phase, they discuss the various methods of collecting and analysing data such as interviewing, observing, reviewing
documents and records, etc. Finally, the fifth phase, interpretation and presentation, consists of policy analysis, applied research, evaluation traditions, etc.

Root (1992), meanwhile, in her article “Back to the Drawing Board: Methodological Issues in Research on Multiracial People”, asserts that research examining mixed-race individuals should be conducted with small samples since work in this area is fairly new. She also contends that qualitative research provides more flexibility for the understanding of the experiences of mixed-race people. She goes on to say that “a particular strength of this methodology is that it is flexible and is more likely to allow for the development and testing of some theories” (p.186). This method also provides flexibility in interviewing style, allowing for a semi-structured or open form/style of interview, and also allows for a broader analysis of the results. This method of research also allows for various interpretations of results, encouraging debates and discussion of the issues. When considering the issue from the participants’ perspective, I believe that having the participants describe their own experiences and views of being mixed-race and multicultural is more explicit and enriching for the reader as well as possibly cathartic for the participant. In a sense, giving voice to the participants, I believe may, as feminists have asserted (Cossman, 1999), empower them to fight for their status and for the right to choose how they wish to label, and negotiate themselves. It may also empower them to fight against racism, racial and linguistic discrimination, and other forms of discrimination.

I endeavoured to create a space where mixed-race, multicultural individuals felt safe enough to express and delve into their experiences. In order to gain a better understanding of mixed-race multicultural individuals’ life experiences, I attempted to mentally integrate myself into their environments, their surroundings, and listen to their stories. My intention was to be perceived as a person who was empathetic and understanding toward their experiences, good and bad. I too am a mixed-race and multicultural individual and therefore have an understanding of their experiences. This project is not only a labour of love, but research that I feel is greatly overdue in the mixed-race, multicultural debate in Canada.
I should also briefly discuss the type of research that I will be speaking of. As discussed above Canadian data on this issue is sparse. Much of the research has focused on American culture and history. Canadian research lags in how the mixed-race, multicultural person has lived in this country. Although the work done in the States is invaluable, and will be addressed, it still provides a different perspective and examines our lives in a different light than what may be experienced in Canada. The history of racism and discrimination, although eminently present in Canada, surfaces in different forms. The history of Canada, although a colonial history, is understood and rationalized differently. This understanding of our specific history undoubtably shapes how we understand ourselves and how others understand us.

Criteria for Inclusion

My only restrictions for the kind of participants I wanted to include in the study was that they be 18 years of age or older. I preferred to include participants that were over 18 for several reasons. One of these reasons was that having participants over 18 would give me the opportunity to speak to individuals who possibly had greater life experiences than a child or an adolescent. Also, having adults as participants would allow me to better see the transformations, shifts and changes in how they have self-identified over time. Finally, adult participants would possibly better communicate various occurrences in their lives. Although an interview with a child or an adolescent may reveal valuable/spontaneous responses, such responses would have been of a different nature than those of an adult.

To be included in the study participants also had to have one parent of African/Carribean ancestry and one parent of French ancestry. More specifically, the criteria for the participants consisted of having one parent of French heritage who was born or immigrated to Canada. Parental French heritage was not limited to being French-Canadian, people from either France or colonized countries with French as their principal language were acceptable. The parent did not necessarily have to self-identify as Francophone but preferably had to have French as their native language. I preferred to have the parent of colour be of
African or Carribean ancestry/heritage again born or immigrated to Canada at some point in their lives. The parent of colour did not have to identify as African or Carribean but as long as English was one of the principal languages in their country of origin. Either parent could have been of either background. If the Francophone parent was of colour, I wanted the Anglophone parent to be of Anglophone European British/Irish descent. With regard to French-Canadians, since most such descendants are White, the possibility of interviewing French-Canadians of colour was rare, unless they had immigrated to a predominantly French community and self-identified as such. The set-up of my criteria made it inevitable that French-Canadians would be White.

I conducted six semi-structured interviews with mixed-race multicultural individuals. More specifically, I interviewed three individuals of African and French-Canadian heritage, two individuals of Caribbean and French-Canadian heritage and one of Lebanese and French-Canadian heritage. The participants ranged in age between 24 and 51 and also ranged in socioeconomic status, from middle to upper class. Other variations consisted of the make-up of their families. Some participants had been raised in single parent homes by either the White parent or parent of colour, others had been adopted, and some were raised in two parent families. Several participants had siblings, either step-siblings or mixed-race siblings. Other participants were only children. The results section only includes five of the six interviews because one interview was incomplete and could not be included in the study.

In terms of the geographic location of the participants, two were born in Eastern Canada and had Acadian White mothers while the remaining four were born in the province of Québec, and also had mothers who were Québécoise. However, most participants have moved across Canada throughout their lives and have not necessarily settled in their home provinces. Some have lived abroad for a period of time, but have re-settled in Canada.

The individuals interviewed could either self-identify as Francophone, bilingual or Anglophone, and were not expected to have been part of a Francophone community. My
purpose was not to judge what such individuals had decided was best for them. The individuals interviewed were free to self-identify as Black, mixed-race, biracial, mulatto, White or other. Again, they were not expected to have participated in activities within communities of colour. The purpose of my research was not to judge but learn about the participants. Out of the six participants, five were female and one male.

I gave the study participants the opportunity to do the interview either in French or English. With one exception, all chose to do the interview in English. The preference to do the interview in English may have been partly my influence. I found that depending on how I approached the participants, they responded accordingly. For example, if I called a participant and the answering machine message was only in English I would leave the message in English, simply because I did not want to assume that the person felt comfortable speaking French. I noticed that when they called me back or when I finally reached them the conversation was in English. However, I later found that most of the participant were also comfortable in French. Certain participants did tell me up front that they felt more comfortable in English since they had done most of their schooling in English. The one interview that I did in French, has not been included, not because of language issues but simply because the interview was incomplete. I had great difficulty reaching this participant for a second interview.

Various methods were used to locate mixed-race multicultural individuals, such as, placing flyers around OISE/University and Toronto Campus, asking for volunteers to participate in the study. The most effective method which in a sense put me in contact with all seven participants was through a snowball method. More specifically, through friends and colleagues, I was able to advertise for participants, and contact interested individuals by telephone to explain the details of the study soon followed. If the individuals agreed to participate, a convenient date and time for an interview was jointly agreed upon.

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*For a more detailed description of the snowball method please see (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981).*
Methods of Collecting the Data

Two semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant. The interviews were very flexible in terms of format, questions and direction. More specifically, the format consisted of having a set of themes and general questions pertaining to racial and ethnic identity formation, race, racism, discrimination, culture, language, family, privilege, relationships, etc. This format enabled me to interview the participants freely while not having to follow strict guidelines or a prescribed length. This method also enabled me to have some flexibility and personal input into the direction the interview would take while simultaneously allowing the participant to freely discuss and explore experiences within their lives. Furthermore, this format not only allowed me to further question/investigate an important or interesting issue that a participant had brought up, but also allow me to generate discussion with the participants as well as pick up on their responses to further the interview. Again, this method allowed me to be more relaxed and at ease with the participants, and enabled me to be viewed not only as an interviewer but as someone who was genuinely interested and compassionate about their experiences.

I audio-taped two interviews with each participant. The first was approximately one and a half hours long and the second was approximately thirty minutes. The two interviews were done at separate times to enable me to assess the first interview and generate additional questions, if needed, for the second interview. The interviews were conducted at a time and place convenient to the participants. The participants were not compensated in any way, and had prior opportunity to decline to participate. I also conducted one follow-up interview by e-mail where I e-mailed the participant questions and he replied by e-mail.

Ethical Concerns

Because I was dealing with potentially sensitive issues, I followed a number of ethical practices before pursuing my research. Before beginning the interviews, the University of
Toronto ethics committee reviewed and approved my project. In addition, all of the necessary steps were taken to ensure the protection of the participants as well as the researcher. More specifically, consent forms and summaries of the study were given to each participant informing them of my intentions and what would be required of them. Both forms provided my contact information as well as that of my thesis supervisor. I also advised participants on how the information received would be handled during and after the study was complete. In addition, each participant was informed of his or her right to withdraw at anytime from the study, that their anonymity would be ensured.

Narratives

Structure of Narratives

Data within my research consisted of stories, accounts, attitudes, beliefs, views and narratives from mixed-race individuals. Narrative research, according to Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zibler (1998) refers to,

the study that uses or analyses narrative materials. The data can be collected as a story (a life story provided in an interview or a literary work) or in a different manner...it can be the object of the research or a means for the study of another question. It may be used for comparison among groups, to learn about a social phenomenon or historical period, to explore a personality (p.2).

The authors assert that narratives should not be taken at face value or as complete and accurate representations of reality. “Stories are usually constructed around a core of facts or life events, yet allow a wide periphery for the freedom of individuality and creativity in selection, addition to, emphasis on, and interpretation of these ‘remembered facts’” (p.8). Richardson (1990), contends that narratives display “the goals and intentions of human actors; it makes individuals, cultures, societies, and historical epochs comprehensible as wholes; it humanizes time; and it allows us to contemplate the effects of our actions, and to alter the directions of our lives” (p.117). In her article “Narrative and Sociology”, Richardson goes
on to say that "narrative is the primary way through which humans organize their experiences into temporally meaningful episodes" (p. 118). She considers five ways in which narratives can be structured. Although, I will not specifically focus on the structure of the narratives, I do want to show the different shapes narratives can take. Richardson describes, in detail, how the narrative provides powerful access to the human experience in five major ways. She categorizes the first form narratives can take as articulations of "how actors go about their rounds and accomplish their tasks" (p. 125). The second form consists of autobiographical narrative, that is "how people articulate how the past is related to the present" (p. 125). Richardson also maintains that "people organize their personal biographies and understand them through the stories they create to explain and justify their life experiences" (p. 126). A third way in which narratives provide access to the human experience relies on one's ability to empathize with the life stories of others. Therefore, one is "making sense of others' actions and motivations from the point of view of the others, from their biographical perspective" (p. 127). Richardson defines this fourth shape/form of narrative as being when one participates "in the narratives of that culture" and in a sense has "a general understanding of the stock of meanings and their relationships to each other" (p. 127). Finally, the fifth form narratives can take is that of a "collective story which views the collective story as displaying an individual's story by narratizing the experiences of the social category to which the individual belongs" (p. 127). The narratives within this thesis are a mixture of all five forms. At times we see certain excerpts encompassing all five and at times only taking on individual one's.

"Minorizing" the Majority Language

When reading their experiences, one can see bits of French text within their stories. I purposely did not want to translate all that was uttered/shared in any other language than the "standard" English or "standard" French languages. My intention was/is to let the language speak for itself. When considering the narratives of this particular group of mixed-race individuals, how something is said, whether in French or in English has significance.
Another reason I decided not to translate is to resist the dominance of the English language. My purpose is to share our lives as we see/create/work within them. The altering or translating of the text, in my view, perpetuates many forms of oppression. More specifically, altering the interviews perpetuates the notion that we can only function in the dominant English language, and that we must adhere and cater to the English majority in order to reach a mass audience. Any alteration is also an injustice and a sign of disrespect to the participants’ views and experiences. The language surrounding mixed-race individuals in academia and within society is wrapped in Western discourse. How we articulate ourselves in Western society can be quite stifling for individuals who choose/desire to step outside of convention and ‘normalcy’. Mixed-race multicultural experiences no doubt challenge racial, cultural and nationalistic discourses. The illusion of creating or having created a new discourse surrounding mixed-race experiences is misleading. Researchers studying the mixed-race experience attempt to create a different/separate discourse for the mixed-race multicultural individual, a discourse that is supposedly non-existent in our society. This discourse, however, is still created within Western society and so we still have to be careful when working within it since it too holds much power. For instance, in my case, I felt it important to not only challenge discourse in terms of representation/articulation of mixed-race individuals but also challenge the power that is inherent in the English language. I wanted to better understand how we articulate ourselves in society and whether our goals and objectives as mixed-race individuals distinctly sets us apart from Western discourses or if we simply articulate ourselves differently within dominant discourses. I attempt to step outside of “norms” established in our society of either writing in English or French by mixing both. That being said, my act is a “minorizing” of the English language, however, the “minorizing” of “standard” English or French was not done by all participants perhaps demonstrating that we too attempt to function and survive in the dominant societies’ views.

Within the following section I briefly elaborate on how I believe the articulation of the participants I interviewed resists, in some sense, dominant views/forces by “minorizing majority languages”. Brathwaite (2000) asserts that during the European colonial period,
the conquering peoples - the Spaniards, the English, the French, and the Dutch - insisted that the language of public discourse and conversation, of obedience, command and conception should be English, French, Spanish, or Dutch...although people continued to speak English...that English was, nonetheless, still being influenced by the underground language, the submerged language that the slaves had brought. And that underground language was itself constantly transforming itself into new forms. It was moving from a purely African form to a form which was African but which was adapted to the new environment and adapted to the cultural imperative of the European languages (p.311).

Deleuze and Guattari (1990) contend that “a minor literature doesn’t come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language. But the first characteristic of minor literature in any case is that in it language is affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization” (p.59). These authors give the example of what Blacks in America are able to do with the English language. The second characteristic of minor literature, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is that everything in a minor literature is political. They go on to say that “minor literature is completely different: its cramped space forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics. The individual concern thus becomes all the more necessary, indispensable, magnified because a whole other story is vibrating within it” (p.59). The third characteristic of minor literature is that “in it everything takes on a collective value” (p.60). Deleuze and Guattari assert that,

because collective or national consciousness is ‘often inactive in external life and always in the process of break-down’, literature finds itself positively charged with the role and function of collective, and even revolutionary, enunciation. It is literature that produces an active solidarity in spite of skepticism; and if the writer is in the margins or completely outside his or her fragile community, this situation allows the writer all the more the possibility to express another possible community and to forge the means for another consciousness and another sensibility (p.60).

When I speak of majority languages I primarily speak of the English language which holds much power in history, in our society, and all over the world. Kachru (2000) contends that “the power of English, then, resides in the domains of its use, the roles its users can play and - attitudinally - above all, how others view its importance” (p.317). He goes on to say
that "the English language is a tool of power, domination, and elite identity, and communication across continents" (p.318). The English language itself, although it holds power over "minority" languages, it too is subject to scrutiny. Just as "minority" groups believe in idealized authentic forms of their languages, the English language is also subject to idealization. For individuals where English is not their native language, the "minorizing" of this majority language can develop in many ways.

For example, hooks (1994) talks about the English language and the dominance which it encapsulates. She asserts that "standard English is not the speech of exile. It is the language of conquest and domination in the United States, it is the mask which hides the loss of so many other tongues, all those sounds of diverse, native communities we will never hear, the speech of the Gullah, Yiddish, and so many other unremembered tongues" (p.168). She also speaks of Black slaves needing English, the oppressor's language, to communicate with one another since many spoke different native languages. However, the "minorizing" of the English was accomplished by these Black slaves and is now seen as being a form of resistance on the part of the slaves. They were carving their own space within the oppressor language. She discusses how the Black slaves created their own language through song, and poetry and carved a space for themselves. "Often the English used in the song reflected the broken, ruptured world of the slave...for in the incorrect usage of words, in the incorrect placement of words, was a spirit of rebellion that claimed language as a site of resistance" (p.170). "The power of this speech", that is the "minorized" language according to hooks, "is not simply that it enables resistance to White supremacy, but that it also forges a space for alternative cultural production and alternative epistemologies - different ways of thinking and knowing what were crucial to creating a counter-hegemonic worldview" (p.171). hooks (1994) also discusses how she encourages her students to use their first language when doing projects so as to not feel as if they are losing that part of themselves within higher education spaces. She alludes to the fact that many of the White students often feel uncomfortable when they do not understand certain languages spoken by other students. hooks goes on to say "such a space provides not only the opportunity to listen without 'mastery', without owning or possessing
speech through interpretation, but also the experience of hearing non-English words” (172). According to hooks, by “minorizing” the English language, we “take the oppressor’s language and turn it against itself. We make our words a counter-hegemonic speech, liberating ourselves in language” (p. 175).

When considering the French language, we must acknowledge that this language is a “minority” language to the English language and has held such a position for centuries in our Canadian society. In addition, when considering the position of the French language in this society we must first acknowledge that living in a majority or minority setting influences one’s experience with the language. Living in Québec, for instance, in a majority Francophone setting is quite different from living in a minority setting. In a majority setting, such as Québec the need to constantly challenge the English language may not be a daily reality since services and programs exist entirely in French. However, in a majority setting there may exist the notion of a dominant French language where the majority is in agreement as to how, for instance the French language should be taught and spoken. Individuals living in a majority Francophone, setting where French is not their native language, may also be subject to speaking the idealized form of the French language. Their renderings of the French language which may deviate from the idealized form, may in a sense challenge dominant views of a “standard” French language.

As was discussed in the first chapter, Francophones living outside Québec may have to challenge the dominance of the English language at every occurrence and fight to be recognized and have equal rights. In addition, there exist various groups and communities of Francophones with their own histories and French dialects. In the article, “How to Tame a wild tongue”, Anzaldúa spoke of the various types of Spanish dialects spoken by different groups. For example, she asserts, “Chicano Spanish is considered by the purists and by most Latinos deficient, a mutilation of Spanish. But Chicano Spanish is a broader tongue which developed naturally...Chicano Spanish is not incorrect, it is a living language” (p.204). Francophones living in a minority setting may inadvertently develop a French language that
is reflective of their history and struggle of living with an Anglophone majority. These French languages/dialects, challenge dominant views of a ‘standard’ French language and “minorize” the idealized French language. Within the narratives of my study participants, certain expressions or French words from individuals living in a minority setting have deliberately not been corrected. Indirectly the participants “minorize” the French language, since it too has undergone transformation in its history. Anzaldúa (1987) speaks of a people who have been displaced, who are neither Spanish nor Anglo and so strive to create a space for themselves through language.

What recourse is left to them but to create their own language? A language which they can connect their identity to, one capable of communicating the realities and values true to themselves - a language with terms that are neither español ni inglés, but both. We speak a patois, a forked tongue, a variation of two languages. Chicano Spanish sprang out of the Chicanos’ need to identify ourselves as a distinct people. We needed a language with which we could communicate with ourselves, a secret language (p.204-5).

For this reason, speaking outside of the margins/within the margins for the study participants is difficult. To carve/define or express themselves in opposition to the “standard” English language is one task but to do this in/with the French language requires more negotiation.

Structure of Results and Discussion

It is important to note that the stories and experiences shared by the study participants are, in a sense, manipulated on my part. I am reshaping, restructuring their ‘natural state’, to build an argument. However I briefly want to make note of the fact that the labelling of these stories/life experiences as being indicative of the person’s complete lives is misleading and inaccurate. We must remember that these stories and experiences were obtained under special circumstances and are only glimpses into the lives of the study participants. Lieblich and coworkers (1998) give two reasons why life stories/experiences provided in interviews are only instances in one’s life.
The life story develops and changes through time. When a particular story is recorded and transcribed, we get a ‘text’ that is like a single, frozen, still photograph of the dynamically changing identity. We read the story as a text, and interpret it as a static product, as if it reflects the ‘inner’, existing identity, which is, in fact, constantly in flux. Moreover, each produced story is affected by the context within which it is narrated: the aim of the interview...the nature of the ‘audience’...the relationship formed between the teller and the listener...the mood of the narrator, and so forth (p.8).

Upon completion of the interviews, the reconfigured stories are somehow organized in such a way that the researcher can begin to answer specific questions that are of interest. The organization of narratives can be structured in various ways which facilitate the analysis of the narrative afterwards. All five participants understood themselves differently; therefore, it was most appropriate for me to set up the result/narrative section by looking at each participant individually and sharing how they have negotiated their mixed heritages. Frankenberg (1997) elaborates on her methodology and talks about how she interviewed three White women under a “life history” approach. She in a sense displays/elaborates on each interview individually which demonstrates the idiosyncrasies of our lives/experiences. This approach enables the stories and lives to be examined as a whole in order to gain a greater understanding of the study participants’ lives/experiences. She talks of the difficulties in bringing up sensitive issues since “race is usually not an issue by means of which White women order their accounts of their lives” (p.34). Frankenberg also talks about the interpretation of her results and how other researchers, other individuals may interpret her findings differently. She asserts that this flexibility in interpretation is uncontrollable but is also invited on her part. She maintains that “I hope that...I have left room for disagreement and alternate reading” (p.30). She expresses how she welcomes different interpretations and readings of her findings. I also would invite alternative discussions/interpretations or understandings of the narratives from the readers. This makes for good debate and strengthens my argument that identity, and life experiences can be understood, and interpreted differently. Narratives can generate pleasurable misreadings (Vizenor, 1993). Alternative interpretations are often silenced, and so I challenge this notion and encourage there to be different understandings of what I am attempting to portray. Although the stories are
presented individually, the interviews and the narratives are structured around predetermined themes. I specifically focused on racism, for one, and felt it was important to consider the type of racism, or discrimination experienced: racial and linguistic discrimination, cultural racism, stereotypes of racial groups, etc, as well as overt, covert, physical, and/or mental abuse. I also focussed on racial and ethnic identity formation, culture and language. All of these phenomena are considered during children, adolescence and as adults and also in terms of context: where, when and how the situation are understood and negotiated.

My research design primarily considers the negotiation of identity and the various components that contribute/hinder the formation of various identities. I specifically consider the pervasiveness of racism and how it affects the identities of the participants. I also examine the performance of identity but more so the performance of either Whiteness or identities of colour regardless of phenotype. I also contend that the performance of identity is fluid, subject to contradiction and negotiated via various strategies which this research design considers. The following three chapters share the stories of five mixed-race individuals including my own.

**Research Questions**

How have these mixed-race individuals form/negotiate their identities?
How do these mixed-race individuals articulate and negotiate racism?
Where on the racial continuum do these participants situate themselves and why?
How is the choice of racial, cultural or linguistic identity regulated and why?
Chapter Three: My Story/Ma journée

We haven’t been taught, nor allowed, to express multiplicity. To do that is to speak improperly. Of course, we might - we were supposed to? - exhibit one ‘truth’ while sensing, with-holding, muffling another.

(Irigaray, 1977, p.186)

Stretching out never ceasing to unfold ourselves, we have so many voices to invent in order to express all of us everywhere, even in our gaps, that all the time there will not be enough. Stretching upward, reaching higher, you pull yourself away from the limitless realm of your body. Don’t make yourself erect, you’ll leave us. The sky isn’t up there; it’s between us.

(Irigaray, 1977, p.187-88)

I decided to include myself in this project, since I felt that my experience would add to the experiences and collection of stories that I have gathered. My experience, my story is articulated a little differently than those of the other participants. I felt like taking a chance and incorporating songs, and poems which were given to me by family friends and colleagues.

Denzin & Lincoln (1994) contend that the researcher within qualitative research is somewhat of a bricoleur. They go on to say,

A bricoleur understands that research is an interactive process shaped by his or her personal history, biography, gender, social class, race and ethnicity, and those of the people in the setting. The bricoleur knows that science is power, for all research findings have political implications. There is no value-free science. The bricoleur also knows that researchers all tell stories about the worlds they have studied. Thus the narratives, or stories, scientists tell are accounts crouched and framed within specific storytelling traditions, often defined as paradigms (e.g. positivism, postpositivism, constructivism) (p.3).

My story can be seen as a mini autobiography. Smith & Watson (1998) state that the “status of autobiography has changed dramatically in the interviewing decades, both within
and outside academy. Women’s autobiography is now a privilege site of thinking about issues of writing at the intersection of feminist, post-colonial and post-modern critical theories” (p.5). This journey is not scripted with any predictability. This 15 pages glimpse of my life has no specific format or direction. In a sense I purposely jumped to show discontinuity, fragmentation which are all terms which I embrace and negotiate myself within.

To begin.........

Why are you staring? Can’t you hear what I am doing?
I don’t wish to have you smell me, stare at me, touch me Move back.
This journey / discussion I endeavour to take you on
by my side / through my eyes / guiding your thoughts
will give you a glimpse of my life Can I breathe with you?
Measure yourself, calculate the rhymes and notes as you see fit door number 3, 2 or 1,
possibly none, ALL don’t guess just breathe
My journey will not create understanding but sharing. My hands are open I see you, can you hear me? This bricolage of narrative, poetry and songs, is a rendering of a day in my life, through my soul. As a day can reveal fruitful experiences that are un/controllable, un/desirable, predictive, innovative, imaginary, and creative, the life of mixed-race multicultural individual is an extended version of a day.

Sitting in the residence dining hall, talking about life, getting acquainted with people, it was suddenly my turn to talk. I mentioned that my mother tongue was French. Viewing the disbelief I uttered some words to appease my audience. The following comment was “it looks funny on a brown face”. At the time the comment slipped by me but I later came back to it only to have millions of questions. Why was it funny? Was it my accent? Was it the fact that my skin was brown? Was my pronunciation incorrect? Another incident which also struck a nerve was when I identified myself as being Francophone and this person replied “well how can you be Francophone if your father is English”. Why was my identification not accepted?
Why was it that because my father was English I could not be a Francophone? All of these questions lie within me and have shaped my journey in the world of race, culture, language, and identity.

Once upon a time........

I can’t imagine. My parents were probably the only interracial couple around. What did they overcome together? I look at pictures, I force myself to see what others might see. I look at wedding pictures, I see their two hands holding a candle, cutting cake, touching slightly. It’s astonishing the contrast in their hands.

YES I see colour but I also see my mom’s pink nail polish, my dad’s smooth hands. I see how they have aged, gracefully I might say.

My dad’s hands in the picture have no arthritis, he has his ring, which he no longer wears because of the arthritis - I see my mom’s hands, youthful looking, free of blemish. She loves to garden, work outside, and therefore her hands take a beating, but that’s my mom. Yes I see colour but I see so much more, I see beauty, why can’t others?

The early years

Having been born of a White Francophone mother and a Black Jamaican father, my story is convoluted and riddled with joy and sadness. It is difficult to put into words how my situation has shaped my life. I remember and still have good times with my family and friends but I also recall the times where I wished I was left alone. The year was 1971 and the place was a small Francophone town in New Brunswick. That was the year my parents were married. Five years later I was born, a small light brown baby with dark black hair. My parents were the only interracial couple that I knew existed. My mother had been raised in a small Acadian village and my father was raised on a farm in Jamaica. Their union, from
what I was told, was accepted and welcomed in the community they ended up settling in. I was raised in a Francophone environment and what I mean by that is that I spoke French with both of my parents. I went to a French school until highschool and was surrounded by Francophone friends. The colour of my skin, lighter than my father’s, was always questioned. I never really questioned why I spoke French and not English, since my father also spoke French. I really only questioned why I was Black and not White as my mother was. My English last name, although followed by my French first name, was always a source of confusion for many. My surroundings at the time focused only on my skin colour, since my language fit in with them.

Raw racism

As a child racism was pretty consistent. It was almost a daily thing but not really anything physical, mostly mental, psychological, humm humm. I remember fearing every day that certain kids would erupt and say something. It was like walking on egg shells. I didn’t want to look at someone the wrong way or say something that might make them turn on me. Inside I kept telling myself be careful. Although I had perhaps a handful of close good, good friends who would never turn on me, the rest were like land mines ready to explode at any time. I remember this one kid who would be sweet as pie when he wanted and when he would lose a game to me in gym class would bring me down by calling me the N word. It came to the point that I had to tell my mother.

As a child I quickly learned what all of this meant. Even though at that age I had never been told what the word meant, deep down I knew. I knew what it meant from people’s reaction, I knew what it meant from the power they took on and felt from saying it. I internalized those cues. I should probably say that my childhood was by no means overshadowed by these occurrences. I managed to do things as a child that most children don’t get to do. However, there are experiences about my childhood that I am not ready to share. The pain and shame
still lies within. I don’t fear it or let it destroy my inner soul but I’m not ready to share myself in that sense just yet.

I’ve come to realize, as probably many other people who have been subjected to such traumatic occurrences, that these events have shaped who I am today. As bizarre as this may seem I would not erase any of these moments from my past or daily life. These occurrences display the reality of many, they also remind me of the type of society we live in and what I cannot take for granted. I remember the one’s before me who had much less than I and so I cannot and would not erase any of those experiences or deny them to simplify my life.

I think my home was the center of my being,

I felt secure reassured comfortable to try new things, to be angry, to be sad and to be happy, hummmmm. Anger in children is sometimes not respected. I think my parents knew I was struggling with my colour but, let me vent, let me hate things about myself, although they always countered it with positives.

My feeling is that racism now, at this point in my life, surfaces differently than what I experienced as a child. Children tend to say what they think, aloud, and tend to repeat a great deal of what they have learned from their parents. Racism now, for me, is more covert. It’s actually more difficult to deal with than overt forms of racism since I’m never sure how to confront it or whether my victimization will be validated by others. This form of racism is more debilitating, more conspicuous. More and more, within my daily activities I notice what is meant by racism being ingrained in the fabric of our society. More and more I see how it is perpetuated without the dominant group even knowing. The small comments that are said, the language that remains in daily conversations, discussions are all contaminated with a racist supremacist undertone. I cannot, however, as of yet, challenge such spaces, I experience a fear and a paralysis at the thought of challenging such spaces. I feel comfort in knowing that I am not the only person of colour who fears or avoids these confrontations. These spaces bring back the defenceless child within. Slowly I speak out, slowly I begin to question, not so much to education THEM, but to educate myself and attempt to understand the world that
surrounds me. For those of you who have the privilege of not having to think of such matters, you may be saying WHAT IS SHE TALKING ABOUT. Read on.............

Exotification - 2001

Can I touch your hair? A girls asks at a party. She breaths down my neck. My inner thoughts: Not this again, what it is about my hair that gives you the need to reach out and invade my space. I see monkeys picking tics out of their hair, isn't that the most private, affectionate, trusting relationship that exists among them. Isn't this a ritual that is done out of respect and enables them to bond with one another. I feel strange having you look at my hair, feeling it's texture, getting too close enough to smell it. I am being examined, inspected, awed at, seen as an “abnormal” being. This space is reserved for people with whom I feel close to that I trust, and that I know will not abuse this knowledge that I share with them. This ritualistic behaviour I look forward to I utter: okkkkkkaayyyyy

What do you do with it? what does she mean by that?

I do as she does, I brush, I comb, I fluff, I style, I spray, I pull, I tuck behind the ear. Should I be doing something different? Rambling, Rambling.

All of this, why couldn't I just say no.

THIS SPACE IS PRIVATE.
My sixpâtes - my life as a part Acadian part Jamaican (Canadian - I guess) women is complex. I invite to see where I situated myself at one point in my life, where I am now, and dream with me of where I may be.

Vient voir l'Acadie
Vient voir le pays, le pays qui m'enchant
Je te le dit, je te le crit, je te le chante

Anzaldúa (1987) talks about being fully immersed into her culture and that it wasn't until highschool that she actually “saw” Whites. For me Whiteness was my culture, my Acadian culture. Unlike Anzaldúa I never understood why I could not be Acadian. I took comfort in this culture, my Acadian grandparents were very proud of me.

L’Acadie, my French-Canadian culture was my life, my comfort, my soul. It wasn’t until I got older that I realized that I was not seen as being Acadian. Anzaldúa maintains that, unlike other women of colour who grew up White and then returned to their roots, she was immersed in her culture from the beginning. I was immersed in White culture, but I believed that as I moved passed their colour they could move pass mine. Why don’t you want me, I kept thinking to myself. I speak like you, I like the same things you do, can I not play your game? can I not participate?

I didn’t want to go but I had to, the pain I had endured for years was no longer bearable. At the age of 15 I made the decision to sell my soul to the devil, so to say. I asked my parents if I could go to an English school. No longer would I have to bear the humiliation, no longer would I have to bear my name being dismantled, disfigured and defecated on. No longer would I have to have my body verbally mutilated, no longer would I have my body inspected,
examined and autopsied. No longer would I have to suffer in silence. Can I be free one day, I would whisper to myself in my darkest moments. I wanted to leave the language, leave the history, leave the people, erase my past, start anew with a new identity. I refused to sign my name with an accent. It was no longer me. "Not me sold out my people but they me" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p.21). Damn them, how can they do this to me. I lied, I lied to my parents and said "ohhhhh this will give me a better chance when I go to university". They said yes, and never asked why. My first day at the English school was the first day of my new life. No one knew me, no one cared who I was, no one even asked what I was. Those French Frogs, ohhhhh yeah there's so stupid, thinking, chase me out of my own home, I'll show you. I never saw my close friends after that. A group of ten people who basically were my suit of armour so to speak, protected, defended and shielded me as much as they could from the enemy. They saved my life. I never saw them again. I don’t know where they are or what they are doing. I lost part of my soul that first day at the English school. I kept one friend, Pascale, my lifeline to my French culture.

"Grand-maman c’est quoi ça veut dire l’étoile sur le drapeau Acadien? Ben c’est le drapeau de la France pi l’étoelle ça veut dire quand les Acadiens priaient à l’Évangeline”. J’adore ma grand-mère la seule grand-mère que j’ai jamais connu. Don’t leave me, you are the light within my soul. I cherish the ground she walks on. Her struggles, her passion, her STRENGTH inspires my life. She makes me laugh, her sense of humor, her way of looking at the world, her gazziliions of questions about people’s heritages, cultures and traditions fascinate me.

she stands by the piano, dance at her age - 90 - can’t be
you watch her uncle at the piano, spoons, accordion
heeeeeeeeee, en wayyyyye mon oncle heeeeeeeeeee
genou en l’air, pied sur terre genou en l’air, pied sur terre
genou en l’air, pied sur terre genou en l’air, pied sur terre
genou en l’air, pied sur terre genou en
I miss the laughter, don’t leave me. Slowly, slowly I feel like I am losing you.

I feel it leaving me.

One day when I was talking to my mother she said, why don’t you put the accent on your name anymore. I was speechless, hummmm, well, they (English people) never remember to put it so I stop doing it. Later on, I remember thinking you’re losing your mother, the person that you cherish the most in your entire life. You are ashamed of your mother. The devil’s womb is inviting, it lures you into its soul and makes you lose all sense of yourself. I relinquished my soul, my power, my voice.

NO MORE I screamed,

I don’t have to hide anymore. I don’t have to pretend to be something I’m not. I don’t have to act Black because you think I am. I don’t have to correct my name for you because you feel I should. I don’t have to laugh when you call me Mélanie Nuit. I don’t have to take your shit. “I want the freedom to carve and chisel my own face, to staunch the bleeding with aches, to fashion my own gods out of my entrails. And if going home is denied to me then I will have to stand and claim my space, making a new culture, une culture Mestiza, with my own lumber, my own bricks and mortar and my own feminist architecture” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p.22).

As a child and for much of my adolescence my Blackness was shamed. Although I had conflicting opinions about it, the negativity in society versus the positivity within my family, I internalized a bit of both.

I sincerely thought that....
A) I did not have the right to care about the things that mattered to me
B) I had to customize myself to the dominant society
C) I had to cater to their wishes while neglecting mine
D) Not having someone around to do my hair was my problem and that I should stop complaining about it
E) Race was only a topic for "minorities" if there are no "minorities" in class than why include race as discussion
F) My weight, body image, physical features, hair texture, lip colouration, body colouration were "abnormal"
   In some instances I revolt in others I hide myself and negotiate myself accordingly

When I speak of negotiation I mean performing myself by altering how I would normally behave/act or altering what I would normally like so as to not feel excluded.

   Love Love Love connection

It was not until middle to late adolescence that I began to love myself. I mean to love all of the different aspects of myself. I’ve often heard that when mixed-race individuals have the opportunity to “mingle” with their heritages that they will begin to cherish both sides of themselves. This was not the case for me. Racially, my town was no more diverse when I suddenly began to love myself. I can’t even put into words how it came about, but it did. I began to love myself, day by day. It is sometimes assumed that once mixed-race individuals love themselves that everyone around them does to. The racism did not stop, the discriminatory, derogatory comments did not end, but I began to love myself. A few additional friends that I had made at the English school were of Asian, part Aboriginal, and German descent. They loved their heritages in some sense, and we shared them openly together. I began to resist attacks against Francophones, I began to speak out for the group that had caused so much pain in my life. When friends would come over to my house, I could not hide anymore. My mother has a very strong accent, how could they not know? I have
always spoken to my mother in French, how could they not know? Would they reject me, right then and there? Things began to make sense, slowly I began to love myself.

My non-White friends make fun of my today when I say that heavy metal was the type of music I listened to as a teen, it was cool and that’s what my friends were into. I secretly began to love R&B but never revealed to them my interest in such things.

I began to love myself, that’s why I’m doing what I am doing now. I began to love myself. I realized that as a human being I have a right to have my feelings validated I have a right to share myself in the way I want to share myself I have the right to be the odd one out I have the right to be included in discussions I have the right to have my story and my ancestors story shared

I stop here.

How do you say..........

For the longest time, and to this day, language is a source of tension. My life as a Francophone has been riddled with conflict. This is to say, I’ve experienced more resistance in every sense of the word when I take on that role, so to speak. To explain this statement, when I speak french, many Francophones have told me that I don’t have an accent and go further as to ask where could I possibly have learned to speak so well. On the other hand, the regional Acadian French that surrounded me growing up, I utter on occasion. My language in such circumstances in questioned and is often subjected to ridicule, criticism and continuous corrections. These behaviors or practices incurred on me have created a sense of fear within me. I no longer feel comfortable speaking my regional language everywhere. I speak it with certain people in certain spaces were I feel safe, far from ridicule. When I speak French my inner voice tells me to be careful, to pronounce words “properly”, I verify the
grammar in my head before uttering a word. It’s exhausting, it’s frustrating, I fear ridicule, I fear rejection that would be based on the way I speak. Being corrected, reduces one to feelings of being unintelligent, uneducated, comme la chienne a Jacques as my mother would say.

**Correct me, why do you feel the need to?**  
Are my sentence structures incorrect? Is my vocabulary vulgar? **Can you not understand what I am saying?**

I haven’t really moved passed fearing but slowly, I’m starting to question and observe who corrects, why they correct, who ridicules, and who feels shame. The other component that comes into play when I speak French is the fact that I am Black and speak as a “French-Canadian” as some have stated. This has always been a source of friction in my life. The fact, that I am not considered a “true” or “real” Francophone frustrates me and the alienation and rejection I have experienced has pushed me away from the language, culture and people. If I’m not accepted as a member of this culture than why support the cause to cherish the language and culture? These thoughts permeate my mind sometimes. It’s difficult to negotiate that within my life.

After having said this about my French culture and language you may think that speaking English or participating in English society is easier. For me personally, it hasn’t been easier. Similarly to when I speak French, when I speak English I’ve been told that I don’t have an accent. However, when I speak in English, I still tend to search for words. There are certain expressions that I feel I cannot convey accurately in English. My experience in English society has been one primarily shaped by my “race”, the colour of my skin. However, in the Anglo-dominant society, language is somehow not seen as being part of one’s culture. Among most Francophones, the French language is not seen simply as a tool for the possible advancement of a career but of a culture. My experience in English Canada has been one of being a desired commodity for the time being. My abilities, my cultures are seen as possibly
being able to profit a company or the government. My culture is seen as an asset, not a right to have and share. For example, when I work in a setting where my languages are considered assets for a company I am heavily recruited and well treated for having such skills. However, when I choose to speak a different language among co-workers or within the work setting, this is frowned upon. I am very quickly told where my assets are valued and what purpose they should serve.

White English society tends to think of culture as a commodity that is used when desired and is not a part of ourselves. Many English people offend me when they speak of French-Canadians and it’s at that point where I realize that it’s not that easy to let go.

One thing that has been made abundantly clear in English Canada as well as in French-Canada is that being Canadian/French-Canadian = being White. Regardless of how “well” I speak, my skin colour has always indicated to people that I am an immigrant or a visitor. A great example of what I am talking about are the new “I am Canadian” beer commercials. The first commercial displays to the world a tall blue eyed White male spouting that we are a multicultural and bilingual country. Implied in the multicultural component is that non-White people have immigrated to Canada at some point in their lives and have enriched our society. The second commercial again, displays an Irish-Canadian claiming that we are an open and tolerant society. Inherent in this commercial is the display of the “true Canadian”.

Jamaican spoken as white washed

My father’s relatives were not a very large part of our existence. Distance, money and lack of communication prevented us from keeping in close touch with them. One day in my uncle’s home, in the spare bedroom that we were sleeping in, I noticed something on the wall that changed my life, putting me on a different path. The existence of a mixed-race person is not as clear cut as those who would like it to be. We do not necessarily adopt both cultures or “worlds equally”, and we sometimes have more than two worlds to negotiate. I noticed
a crucifix on the wall, a Black crucifix. "Ohhhh they must have this wrong", I thought to myself, "Jesus is White". How dare they change his colour. That vision remained with me, on the plane, and in the car on the way home. Could it be that my entire existence in my community was a fabrication. My parents weren’t really religious. My mother and I went to Catholic church but that routine slowly stopped as I got older. My uncle on my mother’s side is a priest and so religion, as I thought, was taken very seriously in the family. I kept thinking to myself, can Jesus be Black? what if I asked my uncle, what would he say? My colour, the one thing that I could not camouflage, hide or deny grew on me. To make a short story even shorter, as my father would say, religion is no longer a large part of my life. The limitations that it imposes on me negate the progress that I have made in carving a place for myself. I do not want to be ruled, I want to share myself with you. My existence as a person of colour has made me aware of how colonizers, of French and English European descent have imposed for centuries their beliefs and norms on many. I stop here.

I never knew my Jamaican grandparents, they died when I was young. My father has given me vivid memories of the life he had in Jamaica. “We were poor but happy”, he would say, “we were poor but the richest family in Camperdown. We had trees, fruits, animals, goats, cows, sheep. We had corn, joy and laughter. Do you know that Christmas for us was not a one day event, you rejoice in what you have and you eat and drink even with your enemy. The only time that you rejoice with all, for days on end. We would go from house to house, food on every table, you eat, Dance, Dance ahhhhhhhh what a time. We prepared for days, and would not sleep for days. Ahhhhhh what a time”. I long to know more about my Jamaican culture.

Roco can she speak Patoi, NO ohhhhhhhhhhhh
Do you like Haqui and Salt fish honey: Not really I don’t like fish ohhhhhhhhhh
White washed - look at her she think she better
what denomination are you? We’re Catholic ohhhhhhhhhhhhhh
(I don’t even want to get into religion right now - I’m messed up about that)
Do you go to church every Sunday? avoid avoid avoid
(I don’t even want to get into religion right now - I’m messed up about that)

Do you go to school on a sleigh?
Where the hell did that come from?
Do you live in an Igloo?
We have a house - what’s wrong with an igloo?
I’m not the only one who has to step outside of myself - I know I have been assimilated in White Anglo-Canadian/European life. I do feel shame, uphill, yes it is, every day.
How have Canadians been constructed?
Alienation: Yes who doesn’t at some point in their life
Reggae - yeahhhhhhh Beany Man, Patra
Why is my Black body, yes Black body confined to be what they want me to be?
the rope is too tight, I can’t move, ahhhhhhhh I see blood, the chains are cutting through my flesh
LET GO, HOW HAVE YOU CONSTRUCTED ME
HOW HAVE YOU CONSTRUCTED MY Black BODY
HOW HAVE YOU CONSTRUCTED MY LANGUAGE
HOW HAVE YOU CONSTRUCTED ME

Dangerous - Constructions STAY WITHIN

Someone once asked me if my future aspirations consisted of continuing doing anti-racist work and why. We were discussing our childhood experiences in dealing with racism and discrimination. He asked whether my interest in anti-racist work was related to the traumatic experiences in my past and whether I felt a need to work in areas related to race. I responded NO.

Please explain
My life has primarily been shaped by my colour and what I mean by that is my experiences in this country have been shaped by the fact that I am dark skinned. Some may say that we are all in a sense marked by our skin colour but the reality for “minorities” is quite different from that of the racial majority. My struggles as a child and as an adult are not the root of why I choose to do what I do now. I would say that race, and my experiences associated with it have been the defining factor in my life. My passion for the work that I am doing not did not stem out of negative experiences but from positive ones.

“True” negotiations

A defining moment in my life was changing schools. Although this may seem as a simple benign shift in someone’s life, it meant more to me. At that time, I had difficulty, I was learning to negotiate whiteness. What I mean by that is that up to that point my life was basically lived according to others and so when I began to see that I also mattered, I realized that my environment was not what I wanted. The difficulty with mixed-race situations or families is that Whiteness in society is sometimes experienced differently than Whiteness in the family, or at least we convince ourselves that it is. My struggle came with denying that part of myself, my White French-culture, but not wanting to leave my mother and her family behind. The endless questions as to why such a decision was made were buffered by my parents. I’ve often been told that interracial parents, with one White parent, remind people of colour of many historical occurrences and many other negative feelings. For me, I have always loved my mother but when I started English school, I wanted to leave my French-Canadian past behind. What most don’t realize is that negotiating Whiteness is also done from within. The difficulty is in recognizing whether behaviours/comments/feelings are benign or racist/privileged. The difficulty is that we can sometimes be blinded by the fact that we are related. I feared losing family, I fear rejection from them, I feared them thinking that I think they were racist. Dominance from within is often rationalized differently.

Well she’s 80 years old what can you expect
Well they always say things like that they're just joking
Well they're different they love me so they can't be racist
Well they're not generalizing, there are only one or two in those groups

We often do not, or cannot, recognize the malignant nature of these relationships and how they breed privilege and power. Upon confrontation it is often possible that our experiences are not valid, as they may not be in society. It is also possible that there will be a rationalization of behaviours or comments, which may also be the case in society. There is often the illusion that all is well in inter-racial families since both parents have somewhat moved passed colour and had a child together. Yet underlying behaviours of dominance, power and privilege may still be present.

I began to negotiate myself better from within and it, in a sense, prepared me for the outside. The mixed-race person may not have a choice but to separate themselves from that part of their life and it is often accompanied by a cost. By staying within such families, negotiation is a must. The family setting prepares you in this sense by denying, acknowledging and making you aware of your surroundings. That is to say, what you experience at home you may very well experience in society. I learned skills that enabled me to negotiate myself in my situation. I consciously and unconsciously make negotiations based on my colour, cultures and languages among many other things on a daily basis.

I’ve always self-identified as being Black, primarily because others have only seen me as such. I’m not sure I had an option back then, although I did self-identify as a Francophone, so in a sense my self-identification was as mixed-race.

Who cares about your life????????????
What does my story reveal?

Fill you in? I don’t even know myself where to begin
It is very difficult for me to analyse my story and that is not my intention - my intention was to share my experiences and let YOU, the reader, decide for yourself what you want to make of my story/experiences.

Well okay let me see what I can do with this.

I do negotiate myself on a daily basis, both racially and linguistically. To me it's life, I tend to lose sight of it until someone reminds me. My life encompasses everything all at once and the pieces all at once. On the continuum, I see myself trapped in Whiteness. As I move up in class status, my experience in the dominant society changes. They see me differently and I understand them differently. I speak of this later in another interview. I sincerely feel as if I am negotiating Whiteness with caution. Since adolescence I sensed the need to speak out and not be silenced. Having said that, it's difficult. I have great shame, I feel shame for being assimilated. I feel shame for supposedly not speaking "correctly". I crave to speak as I want, I crave to speak with freedom. Not so in the field I am going into, among the people I will be socializing with. Correct, correct, correctness - my jaw aches at the correctness that I am subjected to. I feel the tide/the gigantic wave of dominant overwhelming forces. I don't struggle with who I am, I struggle to be accepted as I want to be. I believe this is felt by many, not just by mixed-race individuals. I struggle within my White family, I swallow, I swallow, but I know where I stand. I know my colour is what defines me in this country. The good news is I feel no shame for being exposed, I feel no shame anymore. I struggle to negotiate but I feel no shame.

Enough about me - What about the others? The following two chapters reveal the stories/experiences of five mixed-race individuals who also have shaped their lives on a continuum and negotiate their various heritages on a daily basis.

Put your hands together for Lyanne, Karen, Ann, Martin and Chantale (haaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!)
Chapter Four: Participating Within and Negotiating Whiteness

Within this Chapter I examine where participants situate themselves along a racial continuum and how they negotiate their mixed-race status. The continuum is structured as having two distinct poles of Whiteness and Blackness/spaces of colour. The negotiations within the continuum are not solely contingent on race, although race does limit one’s movement towards the poles, especially towards Whiteness. The negotiation is dependent on phenotypical features, race, gender, sexual orientation, language, class, family upbringing and various other social identities. Participants situate themselves in different places on the continuum depending on where they feel most comfortable and on whether social or economic benefits will be acquired from participating in a particular category. The first two stories illustrate the participation within Whiteness and the third somewhere further along the continuum.

Whiteness is a social system with intricate workings that evolves and transforms itself. According to Wander and coworkers (1999), Whiteness “operates as a tremendous social force mobilizing how people act and interact, not only in the United States, but around the world, in the ways they think of themselves and others” (p.23). The reproduction of Whiteness, they assert, “is seen in the history of law, in the extension and denial of credit, in the quality of health care and in life expectancy, in the quality of education, and in job opportunities that, in the United States, continue to favour Whites over non-Whites” (p.20).

In her article, “White enculturation and bourgeois ideology”, Dreama Moon, goes a step further and not only considers what Whiteness is, but how one gets to be and remain White. She adapts Frankenberg’s (1993) concept of the “evasion of Whiteness” and Rich’s (1979) concept of “white solipsism” as being two contradictory, but interrelated ideological discourses that frame Whiteness. The evasion of Whiteness is defined as Whites experiencing a “disconnection with issues of race and, indeed, do not “see” that issues of race, racism, racial formation, or the power relations surrounding race as related to their lives. On the other hand, “white solipsism” configures the world as a White space wherein “Whiteness” is
perceived as a normative and universal condition” (p.178). Her article discusses how Whiteness is constructed but also how it is sustained on many levels. She talks about White womenhood and how “any White women, regardless of class position, can aspire to become a ‘good’ (White) girl” through the acquisition of racialized notion of bourgeois respectability based on racial loyalty” (p.182). She goes on to say that “empowerment for White women is accomplished by aligning themselves with White hegemony and supremacy, a strategy many White women willingly deploy” (p.182). Moon notes that bourgeois decorum also works to reproduce and sustain Whiteness. She considers hooks (1994) who suggests that the appearance of being a ‘good’ White girl requires the “public presentation of a united (White) front wherein White solidarity and supremacy are discursively reproduced through bourgeois communication practices” (p.183). Moon contends that the euphemizing of White racism is another way that Whiteness is sustained. She maintains that “euphemisms are commonly utilised in everyday White discourse around racialized issues such as affirmative action, welfare reform, family values, reverse discrimination, and immigration” (p.187). For instance, she gives the example of Whites often articulating that African-Americans attend “separate” as opposed to “segregated” schools which has a negative connotation. Keating (1995) cited in Moon (1999) also comments on the relationship between Whiteness and White people and asserts that although there is difficulty in keeping these two constructs separate, we cannot assume that all White people are carriers of Whiteness. Moon somewhat disagrees and asserts that although “it is important not to conflate these terms, it is politically unwise to pretend that White people somehow are not implicated in the everyday production and reproduction of Whiteness” (p.179). These authors acknowledge that Whiteness is a system/construct sustained in various ways, through racial loyalty, the presentation of a united front, and the euphemisms utilised to mask oppression. I examine directly how participants articulate their participation within Whiteness and indirectly how Whiteness is sustained.

The performing of Whiteness, as discussed in the second chapter in Harris (1993), is linked to how the category of Whiteness has been constructed and how one adopts the behaviours or values/norms given to this category. In knowing that Whiteness has been
constructed as being a space of privilege, power, high social status, property, therefore the performing/choosing of Whiteness will be articulated as such.

I describe the experiences of two individuals who participate within Whiteness and I contend that this participation brings economic or social benefits, is dependent to some extent on phenotype and involves tension, contradiction and negotiations. Specifically, Lyanne’s story reveals how she articulates the types of knowledges she values and considers superior and how she attempts to mould herself to fit within the “norms” of society. In the second story Karen chooses Whiteness by asserting a racial neutrality and in her lack of racial consciousness. Finally, the third story reveals how Ann uses her linguistic competencies of French and English to negotiate herself in White spaces. Although participants may not be permitted to self-identify as White, they can consciously or unconsciously participate within Whiteness and adopt White discourses. My argument is that one need not claim a White identity to participate within Whiteness, and that ethnicity can serve as a tool when negotiating oneself in White spaces. Since I take a life history approach to presenting the stories, they are not structured similarly. Each story reflects unique components as to how they participate/perform, and negotiate their mixed-race status within Whiteness.

**Lyanne’s Story**

Lyanne is a 24 year old part Lebanese, part Polish, part French-Canadian woman who was born and raised in the eastern townships in Québec. Lyanne described herself as having White skin with distinct Lebanese features. Lyanne did her elementary education in French where most of the children surrounding her were Québécois. She later attended an Anglophone international boarding school (high school) in Québec and had classmates from various ethnic and racial backgrounds. Many children attending this high school were from wealthy prominent families. After high school, Lyanne left Québec to pursue an undergraduate degree at an Anglophone university in Ontario and is now pursuing a law degree in Ontario. She endeavours to pursue an additional law degree in the province of
Quebec, since Québec's legal system is different from the rest of Canada. I am uncertain whether Lyanne wants to remain in Québec or to work elsewhere in the world.

To describe her family background, Lyanne's Polish grandparents immigrated to Canada at a fairly young age. Lyanne noted that within her mother's family, Polish and English were spoken within the home. Lyanne's Lebanese grandparents were an interracial couple. Her Lebanese grandfather was born in Lebanon and immigrated to Canada and her grandmother on her father's side was born in Québec and is Québécoise. She was adopted by a Lebanese family at a young age and was raised within that culture. Within Lyanne's father's family, Arabic, English and French are spoken in the home. To provide a little background, on Lyanne's parents, her mother was born and raised in Ontario. She obtained her Bachelors degree in Montréal, where she met Lyanne's father. Lyanne's father was born in the eastern townships in Québec, and is part Lebanese and part French-Canadian. He graduated with both a law degree and a Master's Degree at the same university. Lyanne's parents have been married for thirty years and still live in the same area. They both work in predominantly Francophone spaces. Lyanne asserts that within her own family they mostly speak English and occasionally speak French, however, both parents are fluent in French.

In terms of relationships, Lyanne is presently in a relationship with an Caucasian man who is part Italian, part French-Canadian. She asserted that if she did have children she would want them to attend a French school to learn French. She feels that her Lebanese heritage would be more difficult to pass on to her children since her ties to the Lebanese community are not that strong.

Lyanne's parents have always encouraged her to "fit in" with the dominant group, either with the Québécois when living in a Francophone majority setting or with the Anglo majority when living outside of Québec. Within her small community Lyanne asserts that her parents had definite ties to the Anglophone community as opposed to the Francophone community. Since they were seen as outsiders, they found refuge with the few Anglophone
speaking families. Her parents, however, acknowledging that they lived in a majority Francophone setting, wanted her to learn French and so sent her to an elementary French school.

My parents wanted me to learn French. They really wanted me to sort of fit in. I was sent to French school very young, so I speak French without an accent, or so I’ve been told...my dad always felt very strongly that we lived in Québec and I should learn French...My father did not want me to become a Québec Anglophone who barely knows French and who’d eventually leave the province. He didn’t, he wanted me to have the choice pretty much of staying or leaving.

Lyanne experienced a great deal of resistance from the Québécois and still feels somewhat alienated from that community.

When you live in a French-Canadian town, as soon as your name isn’t the “norm”, as soon as you know you’re not sort of someone who’s last name is Clark and who grew up in S their whole life and speaks fluent French, you’re automatically sort of seen as an outsider...in Québec, everyone has like the same last name, you’re a Turcotte or a Tremblay or whatever, you’re not a Clarke. As soon as you’re a Clarke you’re something else and that’s a really big deal.

When I specifically asked why she felt she was excluded by the Québécois, she replied,

I think they (the Québécois) draw the line that I speak English fluently, and the fact that I have a different last name which is a very big deal and that I look a bit different...I really fell more at ease in the Anglophone community
She was excluded because her name revealed her to be an outsider and also because of her ability to speak English without an “accent”. Learning the French language, however, did not generate more acceptance from the Québécois but enabled her to participate to some extent in that community. This is a strategy, not unique to mixed-race individuals but, nonetheless one of attempting to “fit in” and of having the ability to negotiate oneself.

During high school, Lyanne attended a private Anglophone school in Québec which is primarily made up of children of prestigious wealthy families. Lyanne expressed how the White kids were favoured over the other children, and would get scholastic recognition on greater occasions than any of the other children.

When I was in high school I was often passed up for scholarships, for recognition for certain things. It was sort of the, the wealthy White, upper crust group that was more recognized than the rest of us were. And when I say the rest of us, I mean the Asian students, the other ethnic minority students...I almost left my high school in grade twelve to go to another school because I had never been on scholarship at all while I had been there, while about 35% to 40% of the school benefits from various academic and scholarship aid at some level and most of those kids are White and they’re from relatively well off families and the reason that they get scholarships is because they fit the criteria that the, I guess the scholarship committee feels is acceptable.

Her experiences as a child revealed to her who had privilege and power and what one had to be to attain it. Lyanne recognized that being White meant having the benefits of being chosen for scholarships and bursaries. She quickly understood that phenotype, in particular skin colour could bring privilege. The wealthy families within this school were predominantly Anglophone. Again, Lyanne understood early on who possessed more power even within both dominant racial group of Francophones and Anglophones.
I remember definitively it was in grade 11 and it was after an awards ceremony and all these kids who were like way, ranked way under me academically were getting all these awards, for these stupid things and getting scholarships for various things and there was, you know, a write up in the local newspaper about various scholarship winners and you know you're looking at a bunch of White faces. It was pretty obvious what the main criteria was here and who was judging who was going to get what

Within this predominantly Anglophone school setting, Lyanne’s Lebanese features, such as her prominent nose and hair, prevented her from “passing” as White and her last name revealed her status, or lack thereof. “A name tells us something, and because of that a name can be a dangerous thing. A name is a message to others; it is what we want the world to think...as Harold Issacs points out, names seem to be the simplest, most literal, and most obvious of all symbols of identity” (Gracia 2000, p.38).

MK: Even though you look, even though you look more White in that (predominantly Anglophone) circle you were still seen as foreign?

L: Yes

MK: Okay, and they were still discriminating based on?

L: Based on, based on my family name, I would say would be a big one; my appearance, and the fact that I didn’t have like a legacy attached to my name like some of the other kids did.

Indirectly we see how Whiteness, power, and privilege is sustained, especially in Anglo spaces. As Moon (1999) argues Whiteness is sustained, through racial loyalty and the presenting of a racial front. Scholarships were being awarded mainly to White students
regardless of scholastic achievement. Lyanne quickly recognized as a child in Québec, what individuals had power and how she, as a “minority” was perceived by both White Francophones and White Anglophones. Essed (1991) notes that the basic agendas in the United States and the Netherlands of keeping Whites in superior positions is done through the perpetuation of exclusion and subordination. She notes that underestimation is linked to the historical idea of White intellectual superiority as being the most persistent features of Euro-American ideologies on race. “When Whites began to relate colour to intelligence... Blackness began to mean mental inferiority” (Trost, 1975 cited in Essed, 1991, p.232). She goes on to say that very often the Black women within her study were overtly and covertly told in a range of situations that they did not belong in high positions and should not have high expectations because they were most likely going to fail. These myths of intellectual inferiority are taken for granted and hardly even questioned in society. Lyanne made it evident that she and many “minority” students’ achievements went unrecognized and they were often excluded from obtaining financial rewards.

After highschool Lyanne decided to leave Québec to go to university in Ontario, and consciously chose an Anglophone university. She felt that an English university would provide her with a better future. When I asked where she ever thought of attending a Francophone university she replied,

L: I never really thought about a Francophone university,

MK: Why not?

L: My original intention was actually to go to the States. I had big dreams of going to Harvard or Yale or Princeton and financially speaking it just wasn’t feasible. I knew that I wanted to do more education, I wanted to get more than just a basic B.A. and I was going to run out of money really, really fast so B (a particular university) was, you know, it has the highest admission
average in Canada. It was relatively close to home, so I figured that’s my best route.

MK: Why not a French Francophone university?

L: You know what perception was very important for me. The French universities are not as well perceived as the English ones...it was never even a thought to do my undergraduate at a French school.

“The story of social hierarchy has been one where the language of social power reinforces that power by muting other language” (Espinoza, 1994, p.19). For French-Canadians the discourse surrounding power, success, wealth is wrapped in the notion that one must speak English in order to obtain privilege, wealth/success. In an article by Shome (1999) he examines Whiteness from a post-colonial framework and discusses how Whiteness/anglocentricity has structured, contained, and circumscribed his identity in post-colonial India and neo-colonial United States. Shome discusses how colonial rule and Anglo cultural forces in India “were no longer external to the cultural space but had infiltrated and influenced the social matrix of the country” (p.112). Shome also discusses the impact of British education and how the exposure “carried with it social snobbery and elitism that was class marked and institutionalized in significant ways” (p.112) and the politics of skin colour.

He notes that, the discourses of power, in India are wrapped in the English language and that one has to know English adequately to get a socially acceptable job. He notes, “it is certainly not a coincidence that most of the highest paid jobs in India continue to be held by those with a Western education” (p.116). Shome contends that children are often sent to English schools and that parents and teachers are all caught up in a “neocolonial desire to ‘Westernize’ and “modernize” their sons and daughters and to bring about a generation of ‘progress’, enacted an ideological violence whose structures they had inherited from history” (p.116). The English language functions as “a ‘gatekeeping’ social signifier...knowing good
‘English’ is often accompanied by a social snobbery, because knowing English equates with being ‘modern’ and ‘Westernized’” (p.116). Shome (1999) believes, as he quotes Frantz Fanon (1967), “to speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization” (p.116).

When considering the position of the French-Canadian in both minority and majority settings, the history is of being dominated and having a subordinate position to the Anglophone majority. The history of Anglo domination and superiority over Francophones has somewhat influenced participants in what they believe is a superior. For Lyanne, her upbringing enabled her to learn French and have the ability to negotiate herself in a Francophone majority setting. However, later on she recognized that power, within these two White racial groups was superior in Anglo settings and so chose to participate within such a setting.

L.: whether you like it or not you kinda have to, you have to learn to be a part of the majority and at the same time you kinda have to, go be your, not say be yourself but you still have to sort of maintain your own identity within your small family

Nakayama and Krizek (1999) discuss six strategies that they consider as perpetuating discourses of Whiteness, one being articulating the tying of the White category to power. The researchers note how a White participant in their study felt that the White label/identity meant being a part of the majority. They assert that this social position emphasizes a privileged social position which is grounded in Whites’ racial identity. Lyanne’s does not see White French-Canadians as having as much power as the Anglo majority. However, she expressed how one has to learn to be a part of the majority. Depending on her location, whether in Québec or outside of the province, Lyanne negotiates herself to fit into the majority society. In both instances, that majority society is a White society.
For Lyanne the possession of formal education and having a high class status was seen as being superior and she expressed this when she spoke of her relationship with her Polish relatives. She noted that as a child she saw very little of them since they lived far away. When I asked whether it would be important for her to have a connection with her Polish relatives she replied that she never really thought about it and did not feel the need. Her Polish relatives are farmers, working class individuals who have little formal education.

Wander and coworkers (1999) contend that the notion of Whiteness as privilege has been constructed as such and symbolizes more than having White skin. The authors note the fact that poor Whites, often portrayed in the south as “White trash” do not depict the privilege and power that we associate with Whiteness. The category encapsulates more than colour, although having White skin does predetermine whether one has the ability to even participate within spaces of power. Lyanne asserted,

L.: I usually tell people that I’m part French-Canadian, part Lebanese. You know it’s funny because I’m half Polish and I usually don’t say that I’m Polish because I don’t have very strong ties to that community

MK: would it be important for you to know more about your Polish side?

L.: You know what, honestly I guess because I’ve never really thought about it and never really emphasized it I guess no...I have one uncle that works for the ministry of transportation and the two others that are farmers. My mother was the one that went away, who got her masters degree, who got a really, really good job, who married quite well in the sense that she married a professor, and who sort of lived the better life and that’s not denigrating my uncles. But I don’t really feel very tightly, or very strongly tied to them because they’re not a part of the same environment that I’m a part of. None of them went to university, one didn’t finish high school, they didn’t, it’s just I don’t feel a very strong link with them...whereas on my father’s side of the
family not only is it the ethnic link, but I mean for example all my aunts and uncles went to university. For my grandparents, that was very, very important that all their children have at least, get at least the basic degree at university. My grandmother's very proud of that fact, she tells everyone she sees. All my children went to university.

I situate Lyanne's story as participating within Whiteness by how she articulates the types of knowledges she desires, that being the Western Anglo knowledges that supercede or are seen as superior to others.

Lyanne mentioned that she felt more comfortable in White Anglo settings. An article by Twine (1997) examines the experiences of mixed-race girls who have been socialized in White suburban environments. She notes that certain girls who self-identify as White or feel comfort in White spaces “have learned to feel comfort in racially exclusive milieus that exclude most people of African descent” (p.230). When this topic surfaced within the interview, Lyanne asserted that she is mainly surrounded by Whites. When asked whether she had a connection with other mixed-race individuals or just individuals of colour, she replied,

L.: Not really...I guess that has a lot to do with you know where I grew up and how I grew up. In terms of here at school, I wouldn't say that I, I do. I'm trying to think even, like the fact that I have to think about it I guess is indicative. Most of my friends are White...one ethnic group kind of thing. We have a few ethnic minorities for example in my sorority, which is where a lot of my friends are.

It is interesting to note how Lyanne believes she is perceived by her friends.

L.: They (her friends) definitely know I'm part Lebanese and you know they definitely see me as being part, as being part of that. But I think when it
reaches this point especially in this day and age too, I feel very Canadian too and I don’t think that when people see me they necessarily focus on the Lebanese part. You know they can tell that I’m a certain ethnic group, people usually guess that I’m either Italian or Jewish for some reason, but you know I’m, I’m sort of accepted and see as having certain ethnic quality, but you know, it’s not really made a big deal of I guess you could say.

She articulates that being ethnic is being non-Canadian. Her Lebanese status is neutralized in White spaces and she feels accepted as a Canadian. Indirectly the Canadian identity is posited as being synonymous with being White. Lyanne also spoke to me about her relationship with Lebanese men and feels as if she does not have a connection with them.

L.: this is actually a comment that’s shared by a lot of Lebanese young women, is that Lebanese men are very, very traditional. They are, have a lot of very archaic beliefs in my opinion when it comes to women...and I will say very honestly that I don’t really like Lebanese men. I find a lot of them very condescending and they’re very controlling and I have a certain number of Lebanese girlfriends that specifically don’t date Lebanese men because they’ve been raised here, they’ve been raised in a society where women are equals and they do not like being treated as second rate citizens, which is what they feel a lot of Lebanese guys is the way that they treat women...and it’s, it’s sad to say and it’s too bad, but that’s unfortunately, even the ones who are second, third generation like I am, because of the way that they were raised, they have that sort of, it’s sort of entrenched in them you know that this is how women are supposed to behave and this is how they are suppose to act and you know, which isn’t the kind of life that I want to have.
It is interesting the note that Lyanne sees Lebanese men as controlling and condescending, however, does not mention White mens’ position in society and their dominance and status as the ‘norm’.

Learning to be a part of the dominant Anglo society for Lyanne has been encouraged since she was young. Twine (1997) notes that certain girls express Whiteness as being a class position versus a racial position. She mentions of one of her participants “she had been culturally trained by her parents to privilege her identity as a consumer, not as a member of a racial group” (p.226). Lyanne wants more of a connection with her Lebanese family but only up to a certain point. She felt that she would probably never be considered ‘fully’ Lebanese since she does not speak Arabic or really look Lebanese. Lyanne asserted that her father shared part of his Lebanese heritage on more of a sub-conscious level.

L.: I remember him (her father) telling people in public that he is Anglophone to French Canadian people... I mean I would definitely say that he does, he’s a true Canadian in that he’s, you know, he’s ethnically mixed. He keeps; he maintains a certain amount of that Lebanese culture in him, it’s less deliberate than it is sub-conscious, he never went out of his way when we were growing up to teach us about Lebanese culture or to have it in our lives

When I asked Lyanne how her parents saw her she replied,

L.: my parents both sort of acknowledge that I’m ethnically mixed. It’s not really overt; it’s more subconscious or subliminal, but at the same time they feel it’s important that I am part of, sort of the greater community. They don’t really emphasis it as very much, you know not to say that my parents wanted me to be assimilated but you know I’ve gone to very traditionally White, or Anglophone or WASP or whatever you would call it schools, which despite being ethnically mixed had a certain you know White upper class flavour to
it. I went to (an undergraduate school) which is definitely a very, very WASPY school, so, I think they basically just wanted me to fit in as much as possible and sometimes when you emphasize difference a lot that’s not as possible as much

MK: What’s not as possible?

L: To sort of fit in as well, or to almost, I hate using the word assimilation, but I guess that’s what it is. It’s harder to sort of become a part of the majority group when you have that ethnic identity being more emphasized. My dad didn’t really emphasize it (his Lebanese culture). He didn’t really make a big point of being a part of that community or putting in extra effort so that I was a part of it.

MK: How do you interpret that now, like why?

L: I think it was, you know what I think part of it was that my dad really, my dad really wanted me to fit in as a kid. I don’t know if that’s because he had issues with that growing up, he’s never told me that you know. I would think that he would have just because he did look different as a child and he did have a different last name. But with me, he just I guess wanted me to fit in and wanted me not to have to worry about being discriminated against and just kind of going with the flow and be, you know, being fitting in with the norm.

Within Lyanne’s participation in Whiteness she does attempt to negotiate her Lebanese heritage but only up to a certain point.
L: I didn’t grow up with the same amount of Lebanese people in my life that my dad did for example, the ties that I have to it are not as great. I don’t really have a huge circle of Lebanese people in my life. When they come along then that’s great and I do have a certain number of Lebanese friends, like there’s a couple of girls in my sorority for example who are Lebanese and we hang out quite a bit.

Lyanne’s ability to negotiate herself in various spaces is primarily done through her disclosure of herself. Lyanne’s self-identification as being part-Lebanese, part French-Canadian has somewhat evolved, according to her. When she lived in Québec, within a Francophone majority she felt the need to specify her ‘Lebaneseness’ because of her distinct features. Regardless of her ability to speak French, she was not permitted to choose anything else.

L: When I was in Québec, because everyone’s French-Canadian, I would just say I was part Lebanese, because you know that’s, that’s the part that makes you look different, when people asked what I was it was because they saw there was something different in me, and it wasn’t the French-Canadian part they were looking for...when I left Québec and went to Ontario as an undergraduate that’s when I started saying I was part French-Canadian too because I wasn’t in a community full of French-Canadians, there was no assumptions at that level.

Outside of Québec, Lyanne discloses her Lebanese and French-Canadian heritage since no one assumes she is not French-Canadian. Her ability to speak French in a minority setting such as Ontario is definitely seen as an asset and so claiming a Francophone identity in this space is less threatening and somewhat desired by the Anglo majority. Her formation of an identity has always been in relation to her race, that is she has always been seen as non-White by both White Anglophone and White Francophones. Claiming a Lebanese identity in
White spaces makes her seem less threatening since they know she recognizes that she is not one of them. However, I also believe that by claiming a French-Canadian identity in a majority Anglophone space Lyanne is seen as a commodity and is desired for her marketing abilities. Knowledge of the French language in a minority Francophone setting is a privilege in that Lyanne has the ability to enter spaces that she may normally not have access to. Although she sees herself as part French-Canadian, language is more of an asset and a tool than an identity.

To summarize, Lyanne chooses Whiteness and performs it through her articulation of her views about dominant ‘norms’. Even though Lyanne self-identifies with an identity of colour, she has been somewhat socialized otherwise by valuing dominant norms and consciously choosing to participate within them. This, however, is a strategy which I do not claim to be negative. Lyanne has developed a way of moulding herself to her surroundings and understands this fact. Chen (1999) recognizes this as repudiation where either the rejection or complete acceptance of hegemonic dominant discourses are practised. Lyanne elevates dominant “norms” and discourses and somewhat deems them to be superior of subordinate discourses. I assert that although Lyanne attempts to merge and shift parts of her Lebanese heritage, she only does so minimally. She repudiates by choosing Whiteness, which is what she feels most comfort in. She acknowledged that her parents wanted her to “fit in” the dominant society since this would enable her to potentially have a higher status in life. As Harris (1993) asserts choosing Whiteness is associated with choosing a certain prestige, privilege, power and recognition associated with being White. Lyanne chooses Whiteness by valuing dominant knowledges/“norms” and associating success with higher education, often a sentiment reflected from the dominant society. She also alludes to her lack of connection with her Polish relatives saying that geographically they are far apart but also that they (her relatives), lead different lives and have different expectations of themselves which do not coincide with her view of where she wants to be. She is not opposed to knowing more about her Polish heritage but does not really make the effort. Essed (1991) examines how ‘minorities’ often ascribe to unattainable dominant ‘norms’. She asserts that hidden under the
surface of diversity and pluralism Blacks or 'minorities' must accept the 'norms' and values of the Euro-American society as superior and that adaptation is the only way to progress in that society. This agenda is reflected in both the Anglo-Canadian and the Franco-Canadian societies and Lyanne negotiates herself accordingly.

Karen's Story

I would characterize Karen's story or experience as choosing Whiteness, but more unconsciously. This is reflected in how Karen articulates her understanding of race and asserts a neutrality which is often the discourse of Whites. Karen's experience/story also reveals how she participates within Whiteness and, in a sense, does not really negotiate her mixed-race status since she adopts dominant views. I examine how she articulates her experiences of racism, how she understands racism in our society and attempts to determine where she situates herself as a person of colour.

As Frankenberg (1993) notes the “evasion of Whiteness” is understood as being when Whites fail to recognize their role in racism and oppression. My initial inquiries into Karen's life revealed that she had not thought a great deal about race, racism and her position within group hierarchies or perhaps was not willing to share her experience. When I asked Karen about any issues related to race, racism, discrimination she replied with very evasive answers of “I don’t know how to answer that”, “I’m could not tell you”, “I’ve never noticed anything, I don’t pay attention to such things”. She also claimed to have never experienced any forms of overt racism, or at least that she could remember. Also, Karen feels adamant about being neither Black nor White, French nor English. When asked if she then has a special connection with people of colour or with Francophones she replied that she did not feel that she had to. Karen's lifestyle is greatly influenced by the dominant Anglo group and her participation within Whiteness is revealed in how she articulates her experience as a woman of colour.
Karen is 24 years old and describes herself as being somewhat dark complexioned. She asserted that many people have asked if she is from Haiti. Karen has a 28 year old sister, who could not be included in this study for lack of data. She described herself as being fair complexioned with distinct features that did not allow her to ‘pass’ for White.

In terms of education, Karen went to a Francophone school up to grade 12 in New Brunswick. She noted that her parents wanted her to be bilingual and since the community they lived in was primarily Anglophone, attending a Francophone school would help. Karen then decided to attend a Francophone university in New Brunswick, where she completed a Bachelor’s degree. She is now living and working in New Brunswick.

Karen’s parents are still married and currently live in New Brunswick. Karen’s mother was born in New Brunswick and is Acadian. Her Acadian relatives and grandparents were/are a great presence in Karen’s life since, geographically, they are so close. Karen’s father was also born in New Brunswick and is of African-Caribbean descent. Karen’s Caribbean grandparents were also born in New Brunswick, however she did not know whether any of her Black great grandparents immigrated to Canada. I suspect that she is a descendent of Blacks who came to New Brunswick as slaves with French and English colonialists. Karen mentioned that her family had little ties with their Caribbean relatives because they were greatly separated geographically.

Within her family, Karen most often speaks French to her mother and English to her father. Although her father understands French he does not speak it. In terms of linguistic abilities, she mixes French and English in various spaces. She feels very comfortable speaking the regional French that exists around her. I define regional French as the French language that is spoken in a particular community that has evolved with time and has been influenced by its surrounding.
Karen is currently in a relationship with a Caucasian man. She described her involvement with her Acadian and Black cultures as relevant in her life but does not wish to be specifically associated with one group over another.

During our first interview Karen could not remember ever experiencing any racism as a child. She noted that her older sister may remember some incidents. When I spoke to Karen’s sister, she vividly remembered defending her sister against racial attacks on a few occasions when they were younger. Even as an adult Karen gave me the impression that she was shielded from such remarks and that she was too strong to let racism debilitate her.

MK.: growing up or now have you even been faced or encountered any forms of discrimination or racism of any sorts?

K.: my race like the colour of my skin and that I knock on wood luckily I’ve never had anything...that I have noticed or that I’ve come up to face to face with there might have been said behind my back but I have no idea...I have never been confronted with it...it wasn’t a problem where I saw it it’s never been a problem like a huge problem

MK.: and even now is it?

K.: I’m too (laugh) I’m pretty strong independent person I don’t I don’t see that kind of stuff you know what I mean I just carry on with my life and I am who I am and that’s the way it is (laugh)...you know what I mean like? I just don’t know

Essed (1991) notes that “Blacks who have never seriously thought about racism are inclined to avoid explicit use of terms such as discrimination or racism” (p.77). She contends that the women who are reluctant to identify as Black or are ambivalent as defining
themselves as members of a racially or ethnically dominant group lack a comprehension of racism. I do not contend that Karen claiming a biracial identity is an indication that she does not understand issues of racism. Many researchers would also dispute this notion. Lyanne chooses a mixed identity but has a knowledge of racism and discrimination, even if she has not experienced much. For Karen, however, her socialization may have contributed to how she understands racism in her life and in society. As Frankenberg (1993) notes, Whites understand racism and their role in the sustaining of racism differently than the recipients of racism. How Karen articulates herself regarding issues of race is similar to how Whites articulate issues of racism.

During our second interview, Karen did begin to talk about race, more specifically, racism at work.

K.: people call me names on my job, I heard it once from a girl that we stopped, she was drunk and on acid, so I just laughed...I don't let it bother me. We have a lot of training to deal with such situations and we have to be able to handle it.

K.: I've had nothing but positives, people say ohhhhh you're beautiful where are you from (laughs)...where do you get your nice tan?...do you know what I mean I've never had anything negative never

Chen (1999) contends that a strategy of denial is utilized as a plan of action by rejecting the existence of racial and gender stereotypes. From his definition we may contend that Karen is taking on such a strategy since she often asserted an exceptionalism about her experience of racism. However, focusing on the larger picture of her interview, it is more interesting to note her understanding of racism in general versus her individual strategies. Moon (1999) notes that the euphemizing of racism which she describes as a strategy of "Whitespeak" is unconsciously done by Whites. She describes the term "Whitespeak" as,
The employment of a passive voice, wherein the agent of an action is made to disappear completely...passive voice enables Whitepeople to recognize historical events and thereby demonstrate their tolerance and empathy for racial others), while repressing any connection to them. It does not appear that this strategy is enacted at the conscious level. In fact, many Whitewomen with whom I spoke seemed to struggle with trying to understand and/or explain current problems faced by communities of colour (p.190).

In Karen’s case she mimics what many Whites have been accused of doing which is glossing over issues of race and racism and being oblivious of their position in society. As Moon (1999) notes this practice is done unconsciously and is ingrained in many Whites’ way of thinking. Karen equated racism with overt comments and therefore more covert forms of racism such as questions of where she is from were not seen as implying more than simple curiosity. Her reaction to racist comments may not be conscious, and therefore does not constitute an active strategy but her lack of understanding of such issues shows her to have little consciousness on racial issues. This same lack of consciousness is also found within White communities. Moon (1999) maintains that an unconscious strategy in sustaining Whiteness is done through the lack of racial consciousness and through the expression of euphemisms, Whitespeak and the passive voice.

Two other strategies which Moon describes that sustain Whiteness is the subjectifying and disembodiment of racism. “Subjectification allows Whitepeople to engage in disengaged discussions of race and racism in ways that clearly communicate that these topics have little to do with them. This disengagement allows Whitepeople to deny their own complicity in relations of racial dominations as well as any awareness or understanding of the historical legacy of White supremacy” (p.189).

K.: I’m not the type of person that’s going to get wound up for stuff like that...I totally ignore stuff like that...like that’s why possibly I’ve never had a problem I don’t confront it I don’t get myself into those situations I don’t go there
As I discuss in the first chapter, Tizard & Pheonix (1993) contend that a strategy of mental diffusion of racist comments is either done by ignoring comments or reinterpreting their meaning. Karen asserts not being phased by these comments and did not let them affect her. Furthermore, comments/questions of where she is from, are somewhat reinterpreted by Karen as being positive comments.

Whitespeak is also manifested through the "disembodiment of subjects where an anonymous agent is made ultimately responsible for the perpetuation of racism. These unmarked bodies make life difficult for the rest of us good Whitepeople" (p.191). Racism for Karen is not seen as coming from an agent, and she is reluctant to name one. She also described her neutrality as a symbol of not being racist.

K.: it's all I've known basically and I would say we're probably the least racist people in the world and that we are totally accepting of everyone and everything, I am amazed at the racism in the world but I don't act that way.

When considering Karen's story from a different perspective we see as Essed (1991) notes that Whites maintain their superiority, exclusion and subordination through ridicule, jokes and racist talk. She defines joking as "expecting or hoping for consent from others by way of laughter" (p.257), and "racist talk" as "the ventilation of racism in the form of complaints, insinuation, and other gossip. "Racist talk" is different than name calling or threats and usually takes place during casual conversations" (p.257). Karen has experienced many incidents that Essed would label as "racist talk". In addition the act itself Essed asserts is performed in specific places for specific reasons. It is usually in the presence of one person of colour and amongst other Whites. This creates a power imbalance and enables these comments to be reinforced as solely playful comments. Therefore inherent in those interaction is the dominance and intimidation of Whites.
The notion of mixed-race individuals as being neutral within racial struggles is sometimes expressed within the dominant society. The choosing of a mixed identity is sometimes controversial and unwelcomed by uni-racial individuals. I assert that choosing a mixed-race identity does not mean that one ascribes to a White identity. Many who self-identify as mixed have political or personal reasons for doing so and greatly understand the history behind such a term. It was not until the second interview that I got a sense of how Karen felt about her racial and ethnic identity. When I asked the question of what she would fill out on a form, if she had to choose she asserted,

K.: A lot of times I don’t answer but if I have to, I’ve seen some with mulatto (half one race half another race) so I checked that but I feel it’s something that is irrelevant unless they really need it...I’ll check Black if they don’t have the option of half and half but I’m not uncomfortable to choose Black but I see myself as mix

When I specifically asked about her French-Canadian versus Black Anglophone heritage she replied,

K.: when somebody ask me I don’t say I’m English or French I’m totally bilingual

MK.: okay what about race how do you self-identify?

K.: as half-White half Black (laughs)...that’s how people understand it like that’s the easiest way people understand (laughs)...that’s how people understand it like that’s the easiest way people understand (laugh)...I mean some will ask what hummmmm descent I am or some will say where’s your dad from or where is your mom from or whatever and I kinda know what they are getting at...I say well my mom’s White my dad’s Black (high voice) and I’m mix
MK.: how did that come about, have you thought about it do you know?

K.: because I have a Black parent and White parent and that it’s always been that way...I can’t remember not being with a parent who is Black and a parent who is White and French and English like that to me is normal...you know what I mean? everybody else is not normal (laugh)...you know like it’s never been an issue like that’s all I know

MK.: Do you feel that your parents taught you a good sense of identity, racial, ethnic identity?

K.: my mother is as Black, as my dad is French, you swear that just be listening to them my mom tells us more about the Black side of the family and my dad does the same for the French side the parents share both the mother tells the Black side.

Karen cannot imagine choosing one race or culture over another since her parents symbolize two distinct heritages and so she does not want to leave either of them out. Karen’s choice of a biracial identity does not presume that she adopts White “norms”. She sometimes specifies that she is half-Black and half-White. Her biracial label can be seen as an identity of colour. Lyanne also chooses a mixed identity but specifies both groups. In Karen’s case, moving past her biracial label, she does not demonstrate that she recognizes her particular status in society and how race shapes her life. Twine (1997) notes within her participants’ experiences that the expression of racial neutrality is necessary for the acquisition of a White identity. She notes of one participant that she “was not trained by her mother to a racially marked identity. She was not culturally trained to self-identify as racially visible, as children who grew up in poorer or more diverse communities are” (p.222). Another participant describes, how she acquires a racially neutral identity. Twine notes, “her mother had never racialized her, had never told her that she belonged to the Black racial category or
any other racial group. Like many of her peers she was not conscious of having a racial identity as a child" (p.222-3). Karen spoke of how race and culture were discussed in the family.

K.: I can remember they use to talk I mean have discussions but you know every now and then it would come up and it would just be about dad’s ancestors did this and mom’s did that you know what I mean we’ve never it’s never been an issue like we were just totally brought up in an open family

Twine (1997) contends that her participants used terms such as racially invisible and racially neutral. Karen does not adopt such label per se, but by claiming that we (mixed-race individuals are the least racist people) somewhat implies that we are neutral parties in this society. Through both Lyanne and Karen’s articulation of their experiences with racism and race relations we begin to see how they have been socialized and how they explain their choice in self-identification. Whites have had the luxury of not having to think about race. In Karen’s case, regardless of her biracial status, she asserts that these things (racial issues) are not a concern of hers. Her articulation of her experience shows her to participate within Whiteness on a more unconscious level. The notion of an open family for Karen and the fact that it has never been an issue indicates that race is not really discussed in the family.

It is important to consider within the following section how Karen articulates her cultural practices since she maintains that she had an open upbringing, with both cultures, I later inquire about her involvement in Black and Francophone communities. When I asked what part of the French-Canadian and Black culture she has incorporated into her life, she replied,

K.: hummmmm I guess the French language because my parents sent me to French school hummmmm we have retained some....some food like Frico, fish and I love to have that in my life...hummmmmmm Black culture my dad passed
on the pride, I brag that I have a tan all year round, I love music, my dad is into soul music, that boy can dance (laugh)

Cultural events were a large part of Karen’s upbringing. Her parents incorporated both of their cultures into the lives of their children.

K.: We had celebrations of both cultures, my mom was interested in that stuff...my dad brought us to the jazz festival and things like that

Linguistically, meanwhile, she merges and shifts her regional French with the English language in various spaces and feels very comfortable doing so. Her hybridic practice with her languages is often seen, according to Karen, as an ‘inferior’ language. Colloquial languages are often considered ‘inferior’ by individuals who believe in a ‘standard’ French or English language.

K.: I speak half and half people don’t understand what I am saying usually I’ll ask him (her boyfriend) a question in English and he’ll answer me in French then I’ll ask him a question in French and he’ll answer me in English...I could not tell you that we sit there and talk in French or we talk in English like literally it’s both literally and I had people say that more times

I was curious about Karen’s involvement within French-Canadian and Black communities. Karen is proud of being both and does not want to be forced to choose “races”, cultures or languages. I assumed that perhaps she had great ties with such communities and felt a strong bond with both. However, this was quite the opposite. After the second interview, I discovered that even though Karen self-identifies as being both she feels that she does not have a need to be a part of the Black or Francophone communities.

MK.: are you still close to the Francophone community?
K.: mostly English now

MK: Do you have a special connection with people of colour, or French people, do you feel that?

K.: hummmmmmmm I think French like when I go home...no I don't really have a connection, I do not feel the need to seek out those groups...I never really put any thought in it, I don't look at it that way, every person is just the same, I don't say that I have to support them, I don't see people as different

In terms of her fluidity as a hybrid, although she claims she is biracial/bilingual and comfortable in all settings, she has little ties with communities of colour or with Francophone communities. The perception is often that claiming or identifying as mixed-race automatically makes one racially and culturally conscious which is not necessarily the case. Karen contended that most often she is seen as mixed by Whites. I understood that comment as indicating that she had to have frequent contact with Whites in order for her to have a general sense of how she was perceived by them. Her lack of a connection with Blacks, meanwhile, was reflected in her answer when I asked how she was perceived by them.

MK.: from both like let's say from “minorities” are you perceived as Black or as mixed?

K.: I think I really can’t answer that because I don’t know what people think do you know what I mean...like I have no idea what people think and I really don’t care really the people that I Know Know me as mix because they know me they know my mom and they know my dad...I really don’t know what people think when they see me I have no idea
To summarize, I situate Lyanne as choosing Whiteness on the continuum because of how she articulates her experiences of racism and her lack of consciousness concerning race relations and racial issues. There is evidence that her way of articulating herself is often expressed by many Whites who do not have to acknowledge their race and so unconsciously perpetuate oppressive behaviours, which they often consider harmless. When asked about her involvement or connection with Francophones or people of colour, she claims having no special connection and no particular desire for one. Karen, unlike Lyanne participates within Whiteness on a more unconscious level. I did not divulge Karen’s occupation since I felt it would reveal too much information about her. When considering language, Karen being bilingual, did according to her help in obtaining her employment. She recognizes that her French language is seen as a commodity in dominant Anglo spaces. Karen utilises this ability to her advantage and is able to participate in predominantly Anglo white spaces which she may normally not have access to.
Ann’s Story

Whereas Karen opts to deny racism and attempts to perform a “raceless” existence, Ann consciously confronts racism, strategizing when to participate in Whiteness and when to actively resist it. Overall, she moves up and down the racial continuum employing her language skills strategically to counter racism and perform Whiteness. She is able to identify attitudes that are “White” and also to see how she herself can share these dominant responses.

Ann is 51 years old and was born in Toronto. She asserted to being of a dark-complexion with no indication of her mixed ancestry. Her story is somewhat complex but begins with her Francophone mother who was born in the eastern townships in Québec. Ann did not mention any formal education obtained by her mother, simply that she worked cleaning houses for wealthy families. Her mother moved to Ontario to work as a waitress and met Ann’s father who initially immigrated from Barbados to Québec to served as a soldier in the Second World War. He was recruited by the Québec government, and was offered Canadian citizenship in return for serving. After the war, her father settled in Ontario where he met Ann’s mother. Both had been divorced and never married one another, but later had Ann. During this time it was difficult for them to support themselves, let alone a family. Ann’s mother asked her sister, who lived in Montréal, if she would take Ann. Her aunt, who Ann later called her mother, was Québécoise, married to an Anglophone of European ancestry. They already had children when Ann entered the family. Ann sporadically kept in contact with her biological mother and father.

Ann’s education consisted of attending an Anglophone elementary school and highschool in Montréal. Within the home, however, Ann spoke French to her aunt and English to her uncle. Ann later attended a French university in Québec and obtained a Bachelor’s degree. She is now working, commuting back and forth, in both Québec city and Montréal. Ann has been in the workforce for many years and has attained a high position
within her employment setting. This high position has placed her in a higher socio-economic status.

Ann was married for 20 years to a Haitian man, and had two kids, but is now divorced. Her son, is 18 and she described him as being very dark and her daughter who is 12 she described as being able to “pass” as White. Ann and her husband would speak both French and English in the home. Her daughter is currently enrolled in a French secondary school. Her son did both of his primary and secondary schooling in French and is now enrolled in an Anglophone college in Québec.

Ann has a strong involvement in both the Francophone and Black community and she makes it a point to work within these communities. She is a part of the women’s and employment equity movements and has founded a rape crisis centre in Québec city.

She self-identifies as being Black and bicultural since that’s how she was/is perceived by society. Ann, remembered experiencing a great deal of racism and resistance as a child at the hands of her French community. When speaking of it now, she said that at that time, she could not do much to defend herself. She was silent. She felt as if her family, her White adoptive Francophone family, could not understand her experiences. Although they did attempt to validate her pain and did their best to challenge people around them, Ann still felt alone in this struggle.

A.: I really felt like I didn't belong anywhere. And it wasn't because my White side of the family didn't make me feel you know wanted. It was just that I was different, and you know like how could they understand. Like they couldn't understand that you know people would actually change places in a bus when I sat next to them. And I knew it was my colour, because I knew it wasn't because I didn't smell good or something like that. I mean how could they understand that.
Ray (1996) discusses how her study participants also felt like their White parent could not grasp their mixed-race experience. This creates much loneliness and alienation for these children since they have no one to really express their feelings too.

Ann's story is distinct from the others in that she has two children who are also affected by 'race' and racism. Ann recognizes that at a young age her children understand the structure of the racial hierarchy in our society, in that, having White skin provides for a different experience than having any other skin colour. She sees that they too negotiate themselves and find strategies that enable them to survive. She noted,

A: They're very much aware of what that represents (skin colour that is). For example, if the two of them are together, like my son drives my car if the two of them are together and they're lost or something, my son will always ask his sister to ask for directions. Because he knows she is more approachable physically then he can, because he's very dark. He knows he scares people. It's not his fault here but he knows being very Black he scares people. But he doesn't make a big case of it Mélanie, you know what I mean. He's just resourceful, so his resources well you know he looks at his sister who's very pale.

It is interesting to note how Ann articulates her son's experience. She claimed that he is the one who scares people because of his dark skin and not people prejudging him with a stereotype of dark males.

MK: how did you deal with race in the family with and without your ex-husband?

A: I still give to my children the same beliefs that I have which is I want them to be aware of the fact that they have to work hard in life to succeed. And ironically enough, you know the are subjected to situations that - how can I
put it. They are very much aware of their colour...for example, I don't know he'll never run anywhere. He's a runner, he likes to run but if he's by himself you know on the street or whatever, and there are people he won't run. Because he knows that there will be a police car at the end of the street stopping him and asking him where he's going. This is his reality. But he's not upset about it you know what I mean. He's not angry about it, he's not upset about it. But he does nothing that might create suspicion because if you have a Black man running on the street, even if it's in a neighborhood that's multi-cultural as we are, he knows he's going to get stopped and asked where the hell he's going. So he just deals with it.

At work, meanwhile, Ann is challenged when she disrupts the construction of categories and the social hierarchy of things when being in privileged White spaces. Essed (1991) notes the fact that as an individual of colour moves up in social status, they cause anxiety since they disrupt the social script of always being in a lower, subordinate positions.

A.: It was what I call the Québécois de souche I had difficulties with...now you know why do I have to be Haitian because I'm Black and I speak French. It was sort of like, no I'm not Haitian you know, I'm "tu sais je viens du Québec hen" and usually I take out my worst accent just to make it worse you know, like to make sure that they ahhhhhh "ahhhh wen vous avez pas d'accent"...like how long does one have to be here before one can be considered part of this Québec society.

We see here that Ann 'takes out' her worst accent to challenge the resistance she is experiencing. She negotiates herself in that she recognizes that she is seen as foreign but she attempts to use the language of the challengers to demonstrate that she can communicate as they do. We see from these comments received how Ann is perceived. By being Black and
speaking French she is not seen as being French-Canadian but as foreign. Her colour prevents her from being recognized in White Francophone spaces.

A.: I was at a parliamentary convention in Québec so I have to share this with you because I think it was one of the moments I enjoyed the most. I was at a parliamentary convention and after I have done a brief, and after I presented my brief one of the deputy's you know “du gouvernement” came up to me and said “ah ben vous savez Mme A ça nous fait plaisir de vous avoir de vous entendre parler, vous parlez pareille comme moi” I knew what he meant. So I looked at him straight in the face and I said “qui dit que c'est pas vous qui parlez pareille comme moi”. And he didn't know how to react to that. So I continued looking at him in the face pi j'ai dit “vos ancêtres sont ici depuis quand vous?” he looked at me and “pi j'ai dit les miens sont ici depuis le 17ième siècle” Okay. So we left it at that because you know like now I know that he's confused, he has no idea where I'm coming from, and he doesn't understand the point I'm trying to make.

Very often Ann is seen as a Haitian immigrant. Even though she has been told that she does not have “an accent” her knowledge of the Québécois culture creates uneasiness among many. She is seen as an imposter, in a sense an impersonator of the Québécois culture. She speaks the language but does not “look” French-Canadian.

A.: One of the things that has always irritated me all of my life is people would hear me speak French and say, “where do you come from - tu viens d'où? de quelle île?” you know I come from some island. And I used to you know joke around and say “ah oui je viens d'une belle île, l'île de Montréal” you know like well it's true Montréal is an island.
Her story reveals how the categories of French-Canadian and Canadian have been constructed to symbolize Whiteness. However, we also see how she disrupts the construction of the Black category. As was noted in the second chapter, the “Other” has been constructed as inferior and juxtaposed against the “norm” which in this case is the White Francophone. Ann also seems to have a shift in language depending on the specific space she inhabits. This is how Ann negotiates her racial status through language.

A.: I used to get offended and hurt and irritated every time I was asked the question (where are you from?), like it was sort of like what do I have to do to affirm my belonging to this society. Because basically that's what it was. I've become more tolerant in those regards...to me it's a challenge being in Québec City despite there's you know there's no Blacks, in the sense that I'm opening up a new road. I'm pioneering, you know and they're seeing that I don't eat people, you know I'm not a cannibal, I can speak their language, I can hold conversations that are intelligent, I have a position, you know what I mean. I'm using those kinds of forces to help pave the different way of looking at things.

Ann noted having to adjust to differences between Francophones in Québec versus Francophones in Montréal. She contended that differences in language and personalities took her a year to adjust. She stated,

A.: I find that the difference between Québec French Canadians and Montréal French-Canadians, is that they're a lot more reserved in Québec then they are in Montréal. They're very, you know in Montréal people talk about their family life, their problems whatever, you don't ever hear that in Québec City. People just you know there family life is nobody's business type of thing, you know they will never ask you a personal question. And there's a whole approach that's different...I think what happens when you're in the kind of
situation that you and I are, we have to develop a sense of humour here. You know on the one hand it's part of a defence mechanism but it's also, it helps us get through a whole bunch of things. And so I've been able to, because I was worried that I'm going to have to become like these people here, and I didn't want that, the kind of openness that I have and the teasing I wanted to continue it and I can and I find that I bring that out in people as well. People who have been serious joke with me and laugh with me now. So I really believe more and more that even one person can influence others very - depending on how they go about it. And so I'm aware of that and I use it. So I'm comfortable now...but I can tell you, it's been two years, but I can tell you for the very first year it was sort of like what the hell am I doing here? It's not the work didn't interest me, it's just that all the -

MK: It wasn't language either, you found it was just more restrictive?

A: Yeah. And the language was different. Because you know the Québec City people do not speak like the Montréal people...their language is, est beaucoup plus soignée, so I had to adjust to that

Ann is also challenged by individuals of colour and has to negotiate her mixed-race status/experience within spaces of colour. One such incident occurred when one of her Black friends told her “I have to teach you to be Black”. Her friend would often make comments about her hair and how dry it was. Ann commented,

A: Well at the time I was wearing an Afro and she was straightening her hair. And so you know I made the disobliging comment that at least I was staying Black, I wasn't trying to be White.

When discussing another example, Ann replied,
A: I can remember I went out once with this guy who actually at the time I didn't even know what it was, but he belonged to the Black Panther movement. And he used to call me the White woman in a Black woman's disguise. And I used to find that very insulting. And I can remember when he said to me one day, we were having this heated discussion and he said, "well you know" he said, "what would you do if you went onto a bus and the Whites were in front and the Blacks had to sit in the back, what would you do?" And I'd say, "I'd sit in the middle." And he said, "what would you do if the Whites had to walk on the right side of the street and you had to walk on the left side of the street." And I'd say, "I'd walk in the middle." And that's basically that translated how I felt, I was in the middle, what can I tell you, you know.

Essed (1991) maintains that the resistance projected from 'minorities' is not necessarily the same as the racism that is expressed from the White majority. The "minority" speaks from a different position in that, it is not so much a relationship of power and subordination but feelings of betrayal, resentment and hurt. When considering the history of people of colour in relation to Whites, and the injustices that have occurred, individuals who are seen as siding with Whites are mistrusted. Ann is seen as not "truly" understanding the struggles of people of colour when considering social issues like employment, housing and health care. They see her as spouting the same rhetoric as the racially dominant White Francophone and Anglophone groups. Our discussion reveals that Ann understands where the resistance is coming from, however, we see that she is struggling with the rational of the Black community.

MK: How are you perceived in the Black community, by immigrants, by Black Canadians?

A: I'm perceived as White...I guess unconsciously alright, because I don't see myself doing it consciously...it's perceived in the Black community that I don't
feel for the Black community. I'll give you an example. When I hear Blacks you know say, "oh it's hard to get a job or whatever," my immediate reaction would be, "well it's hard for everyone." Like we have university students who have doctorates who are driving taxicabs, okay. In other words I related more to the general economic situation, and I think for the community that is not how they perceive it, and hence they see me as not understanding the full grip of the problem. And they may be right. They may be right. But in my situation and yes you know like I said I've been refused apartments, I've been refused jobs, you know whatever. But I always felt that I would make sure that I was educated enough and pushy enough to get where I wanted to go, and that colour was not going to stop me, and to hell with everybody else. And of course I would say that I'm part of the pioneering group who made it easier for "employment equity and certain equal rights," alright because I'm part of the woman's movement. I'm part of the employee equity movement, I'm part of all of that...I've always felt like it's easy to sit back and say there are problems, but let's try to deal with them. You know and I've worked that way, so is that a White way of thinking, I don't know, but I know that others may try to block me because of my colour, but I will not block myself because of my colour and that's the distinction I make, so I have difficulty with the rhetoric in the Black communities, say well you know when you're Black it's hard, you know for me it's when you're Black it may be hard, but don't use that

Here Ann is alternating between believing in the significance of race but at the same time wanting to hold on to individualistic notions of merit. She attempts to negotiate herself in Black spaces since often times she is met with resistance.

When considering Ann's French and English cultural and linguistic practices, we see how she attempts to amalgamate both heritages in her life. The following segment
demonstrates how she switches from one language to the other and combines both cultures. This proves to be quite telling of her ‘reality’.

A - I will make you know at Christmas time, and my friends and families and everybody love it, I do what I call my West Indian French Canadian Christmas dinner, you know. Je va faire des boulettes de viande you know pi un ragoût de pattes de cochon, you know but then I'll also make rice and peas

Ann spoke of consciously attempting to participate in various cultural activities with her children, she noted,

A - I consciously make efforts to instill in them a Black identity. For example, if there is you know we go to Carribana every year. I take them out to West Indian restaurants, I love West Indian food, if there's a West Indian concert we go to a West Indian concert. If there's a gospel concert we go to that. You know I really try and expose - we'll do the same on the White French-Canadian, but you know not I mean I don't say to them well you have to, we have to go to this West Indian concert because you know you have West Indian blood in them. I don't do that. But you know we just go and it's normal. And when I say you know culture is deep rooted I think I'm trying to do basically what my aunt and uncle did, and that is expose them to what's out there.

This is how Ann expresses herself on a daily basis, and so this reflects her experience. Ann literally mixes French and English when she speaks. According to Romberg’s study (1996), Ann is shifting, merging and combining heritages. Her merging of cultures was learned within her family. However, her parents felt that attending an English school would provide Ann with more opportunities. Many of the participants’ parents sent them to English schools believing that it would be of benefit to them in the future. Ann sees herself more as
an Anglophone than a Francophone and is more comfortable speaking or communicating in English. However, she works mainly in a French setting.

A - my parents believed that, they agreed to send me to English school believing at the time that English had a better position in life then the French.

Even in a Francophone majority setting we see how the English minority has a dominant influence on Francophones. To summarize, Ann’s entire social situation reflects the complexity of mixed-race individuals lives. One’s socialization in a mixed-race, multi-cultural, multilingual family provides for an interesting upbringing which follows a person throughout one’s life. Ann faced a great deal of racism as a child and is still challenged to this day. At this point in her life she is challenged at work, primarily by White French-Canadians. She feels somewhat alienated from them since she is continuously challenged by them. Her self-identification as a Black bi-cultural/Anglophone as opposed to a French-Canadian may demonstrate that she somewhat rejects the Québécois for their exclusion of her as a member of this group. She negotiates her French and English languages depending on the space she frequents. Ann’s story also reveals that although she negotiates two types of Whiteness that she has greatly been influenced by dominant views which can be attributed to various factors. Factors such as family influences, socialization were seen as contributing to Ann being somewhat influenced by dominant ‘norms’.

This chapter reveals how the participation within and the negotiation of Whiteness is performed on different levels. The main findings are that Whiteness is symbolized by status privilege, high social class and power and that the participation within White spaces is done consciously or unconsciously. The conscious participation or choosing of Whiteness is accomplished through the positing of dominant “norms” as being superior and unconsciously through the euphemizing of racist behaviour and the performance of “whitespeak”. Finally, Whiteness is also seen as being negotiated through language, by “minorizing” dominant languages and creating one’s own. Also, the negotiation of Whiteness is done through
language by mimicking regional or standard languages to challenge dominant stereotypes of subordinate individuals.
Chapter Five: Hybridity and Performing “Blackness”

Within the previous chapter I demonstrated how two participants choose Whiteness, and how one negotiates herself in White spaces through language. For Lyanne, the performing of Whiteness is seen in how she articulates what she values which is mainly dominant Anglo “norms”. For Karen, performing Whiteness is understood by how she articulates her lack of consciousness regarding racial issues and tries to achieve a “raceless” identity. Finally for Ann, Whiteness is negotiated through her French and English linguistic abilities. These three participants can be looked upon as being at one end of the racial continuum where Ann recognizes her status as a women of colour and negotiates that identity of colour more than Lyanne and Karen.

My argument in this chapter is that racial or linguistic discrimination often drives the mixed-race individual to choose a subordinate identity/participating within a subordinate group. Also, I contend as Twine (1997) has, that an increase in racial consciousness often provides a shift towards an identity of colour. The following two stories situate themselves further along the racial continuum towards Blackness. These individuals have either chosen an identity somewhere in-between the racial continuum, in the first (Martin’s) case and choosing Blackness in the second (Chantal’s) case. The path they use to carve a place for themselves along the continuum is not straightforward. In Martin’s case, the actual violence of racism he experienced as a child greatly structured his life. Nonetheless, he has managed to create an identity of colour that is unique. How Martin articulates his experiences reveals how he wishes to be understood which is as a person who attempts to borrow from his various heritages to form an identity of colour for himself. His experience of going to Africa and seeing how differently he was treated because of his lighter skin, as opposed to his negative experience in Canada, strengthened his understanding of the challenges facing ‘minorities’ in this country. In Chantal’s case she initially performed/chose Whiteness at one point in her life, but now fully and solely identifies and performs/participates within Blackness. Her experience of going to Atlanta, and of seeing many Blacks, changed her self-perception
and made her more conscious of race and racial hierarchies in our society. How she articulates her Black experience demonstrates her loyalty to the group. The performing/choosing of Blackness not only refers to a way of speaking or articulating oneself but also to an understanding of the history of Blacks and to having a consciousness of racial issues.

**Martin’s Story**

Martin’s story begins 30 years ago when he was born and raised for part of his life in New Brunswick. He describes himself as being somewhat dark complexioned with distinct African phenotypical features. Martin’s mother was born in Québec and is Québécoise. His father was born in Nigeria and immigrated to Québec, where he met Martin’s mother. They both moved and worked in New Brunswick for several years as they raised a family. Due to undisclosed circumstances Martin’s parents divorced while in New Brunswick.

Within Martin’s family, French was the predominant language. English, however, was spoken by many of his African relatives who also lived in New Brunswick and so both were evident in their family. Martin’s experience in New Brunswick, although short lived greatly influenced his life. When Martin was ten, his father decided to illegally take the three children to live in Africa. The racism Martin experienced in New Brunswick proved disturbing for his father. Martin’s sisters were very young at that time and so experienced much less. Martin’s elementary education in New Brunswick was in French. However, once in Africa, he was taught mainly in English. When living in Africa, Martin usually spoke English but learned a little of the native language Ibo. In terms of relationships Martin had a wonderful one with his French-Canadian grandparents. He asserted that although they didn’t approve of his parent’s marriage, once he was born, they welcomed him. His relationship with his other French-Canadian relatives is basically non-existent. He does, however, have a good relationship with his African relatives.
At the age of 18, Martin returned to Canada on his own to pursue an undergraduate degree at an Anglophone university. He settled in the Maritimes as his father had acquaintances there. He is now currently working in Ontario in an environment that is predominantly Anglophone, but he still uses his French at work on occasion. One of his sisters is in England and the other decided to come back to Canada some time after he did.

Our initial topic during our first interview was that of racism and discrimination. For Martin, his experiences of racism in New Brunswick were horrible. Even now, it was very difficult for him to discuss. I contend that those experiences, as Root (1999) notes, are quite traumatic and affect a person for the rest of their lives. His experiences have profoundly shaped his identity. The following excerpt captures the sense of the damaging impact of racism and its influence on his identity,

M.: as a young kid I met with a lot of prejudice and it wasn’t it wasn’t always kids my age it would sometimes be their parents too...and hummmmmmm (pause) it’s a bit hard to take but heyyyyy (sigh)

M.: there was a time in primary school where I couldn’t come home I couldn’t come home a day without having people surround me to beat me

MK.: ohhhhh really

M.: yeah and no one would believe me believe that that was true until my dad came and saw it for himself and hummmmm I had my cousin for a whole year come to school to walk me home

MK.: hummmmm and was this let’s see were these kids in your own class or older or?
M.: they were usually they were the older brothers of kids in my class

MK.: okay so why would they why would they do that just because?

M.: just because I was different in the whole school I was the only one of colour there was another kid who was who was Indonesian sort of he was adopted and that’s it in the whole school...it was just the other kids but kids usually say what they are thinking anyways so...it’s not just mean but it’s how it is

MK.: yeah so how did you react?

M.: so how did I react to those things? (pause) well they were older kids I couldn’t do very much...hummmmmm except for tell my dad and my dad and I told him exactly where it usually happens and he parked there and waited and sure enough as I was walking home the kids came out of all over the place so (sigh)

M.: it’s funny because I kept talking about it but it seemed like no one would believe me that it was true cause they wouldn’t they wouldn’t have any Black eyes or any what they would do is they would hit me in stomach (laugh) so that so that wouldn’t show

MK.: was that the main the main form of harassment that you experienced or was there other things?

M.: there were several but as a kid I don’t think I had a very good experience

MK.: hum hum so who would would harass you were they hum you know the White children of the community or?
M.: yeah the White children

MK.: what about the parents?

M.: I remember one of the parents was actually watching out the window…I walked up and hummmmm and asked them to stop to tell their kids to stop and the parents said? get out of here we don’t want well

MK.: and they didn’t stop?

M.: no they didn’t do anything

M.: I stayed there but my dad and my cousin helped me out in the end and they would come by and either my dad would pick me up and take my home or my cousin would walk me home and they wouldn’t dare come near me when my cousin was around

His story as a child reveals what many children of colour experience, which are the overt forms of racism experienced on a daily basis. When I asked about these experiences he basically equated them to child’s play.

M.: kids usually say what they are thinking anyways…it’s not just mean but it’s how it is

When asked about his experience of racism or discrimination on more of a systemic level he replied,

M.: I am not experiencing anything direct although I know what goes on none the less it’s it’s a matter whether wether you let it affect you or you don’t...there
is always a back up excuse for racism these days...if someone is going to be racist towards you and you confront them there going to have an excuse waiting...you know that's gonna that's gonna totally hummmm hummmm like it's just something to cancel whatever your hunch or your opinion is

M.: I have been able so far not to label such experiences as being related to my colour most of the time. Although deep inside I know the truth, the person making the decision is usually quite capable of calculating a counter argument. So I ask myself what's the point? There is no shortage of good people, really.

Martin feels that challenging certain racist comments can often be a waste of time since most often, according to him, excuses usually follow such incidents. As I elaborated on in the first chapter, Tizard and Pheonix (1993) assert that a strategy of mental diffusion (mentally defusing a threat) is done by either ignoring the threat, diverting one's attention away from it, or reinterpreting its meaning. Martin diverts his attention away from such incidents by labelling the perpetrator as being ignorant. It is important to note that in Martin using this strategy, he is not aloof or in denial about his position in society or what he is subjected to, but chooses to negotiate it in a certain way. His strategy is more of avoiding confrontation since to do so would be futile.

The racism experienced as a child in addition to his racial consciousness stemming from his experience in Africa, provided Martin with a in-depth look at the significance of race and racial hierarchies present in the world. Twine (1997) notes that several of her participants who chose a White identity shifted this identity to one of colour after attending colleges that were racially and politically conscious or after having been involved with African-American men. I also contend that an increase in racial consciousness provides mixed-race individuals with a greater sense of their position in society.
M - I think going to Nigeria gave me a lot of character and strength... I also had the knowledge of what things were like here when I left so I was more prepared to come back and face them... it’s pretty (pause) I thought life was a lot tougher than it is here... it isn’t it isn’t here there is plenty of everything, not just food but opportunity too in Nigeria you can work very hard for many years but you won’t get to where you want to go unless you know a whole bunch of people... and you have a very well established family and you have connections

Martin also talked about ‘shading’ and how his status varied in Africa versus Canada. In Africa, because of his lighter shading, he was revered and respected. In Canada, the opposite was/is experienced. Martin seems to have a greater knowledge of privileges awarded for being lighter and understands its ramifications. He thus negotiates himself accordingly in different spaces. This is similar to how Shome (1999) notes of his own experience of how differently he is perceived in India, having a formal Western education, and how he is perceived in the United States, as an immigrant. Martin has also experienced this phenomenon and this reflects a great deal about what colour and shading is desired, revered and privileged in the world. Martin recognizes that his status in Canada is lower since he is seen as Black by the dominant society. For mixed-race individuals; however, there is always the threat of not being seen as a full member of any group. Even though White society will label Martin as Black, he may not be seen as such in spaces of colour. Martin experiences much resistance from people of colour and he is often subjected to tests of authenticity to prove his ‘Africaness’. He went on to say,

M - (pause) hummmmmm yeah...(pause) no matter how much I try I’m not I’m not totally African some some people I get to know on a personal level I would become very good friends and we transcend passed all that... I think it’s a combination of everything it’s not just my colour maybe it’s part of my my how how I react or how hummmmm like there more to being African then just
being of colour, I’m probably not meeting every criteria (laugh), and I’m probably not meeting every criteria on the French either

MK.: how are you told that you don’t meet these criteria?

M.: hummmm there’s a couple things like like I know I saw a family friend of my dad’s at a wedding X I hadn’t seen him in such a long time and I went up and I said good morning sir and humm his first reaction was hummmmmm your not a Nigerian do I have to invite you to come to my house...so according to Nigerian culture that’s what I am suppose to do right constantly call and say I’m going to visit just to pay my respects but I only believe some of that but maybe it’s my Canadian side that or my French side that is rebelling against it too

Since hierarchies exist in all groups/societies, Martin feels that because he is part African he exists within a hierarchy of the Black community. He commented that Africans are perceived differently than Black Carribean-Canadians, the latter are often seen as cool. The result of this is that Martin has surrounded himself with other African-Canadians and has formed close ties with a small group of them.

M - As soon as they (other Black-Canadians) knew I was African everything would change, it’s almost as if they had something they resented me for being African...it’s not it’s not Caribbean Caribbean people are different it’s it’s they are Black-Canadians, yeah I’d get that ohhhhhhh so your African kinda look (laughs)

When considering his French-Canadian heritage, Martin noted that other than the connection with his mother, his French-Canadian ties are strained. It’s not that he does not desire to know more about his French heritage but he senses great resistance from this group
both within his family and in general. When asked about his connection with French-Canadians, he replied,

M.:  Apart from my mom’s family it’s is almost none existent...I know that I have other family I know about my great aunts and I looked on the Internet and I saw my family tree from my mother’s side all the way to France and (laugh) but...

Even though Martin has been told that he speaks French with “an accent” he is not perceived as being French-Canadian by White French-Canadians. At present, he faces alienation and contestation based on the colour of his skin.

M.:  I was in sales once and a customer (a French-Canadian customer) asked me if my name was really was really Martin or if I’m just making it up to be sociable...and I smiled back and said no it really is will that be visa or MasterCard (laugh)...and I couldn’t believe he would ask me something like that...hmmmmmm I think that he couldn’t accept that I may be partially French or that I may have French heritage or culture or whatever it is

The resistance experienced from French-Canadians reveals how the French-Canadian category has been constructed. We infer from this that being French-Canadian, as is being Canadian, is having White skin. Martin is seen as an imposter in that he disrupts this construction; he can mimic the language yet does not “look” French-Canadian. The retention of the French language, however, has not always been easy for Martin and his sisters. Martin spoke about how his father’s decision to illegally take them away was very difficult for his mother to deal with. Her biggest difficulty is accepting the fact that two of her children no longer speak French and cannot communicate with her in her native tongue.
M - it's kinda of funny cause we (he and his mother) talk in French over the phone she writes to me in French and I reply in English...she's really upset cause my two sisters don't speak French although she's come to live with it but in her words she said she never thought any of her kids would not be able to communicate with her in French...when we all went to Nigeria we all spoke French they could speak French very well and they totally lost it

During his childhood in New Brunswick Martin’s experience with languages reveals a great deal about the regulation of regional languages and the notion of a superior languages. Certain types of the French dialects, the one's that are considered “inferior”, are often regulated and deemed of a lower prestige. Martin’s mother, being a French professor, regulated these “inferior” renderings of the French language.

M - I brought some (a type of French language considered inferior) home and my mom would get rid of it

MK.: ohhh yeah why is that?

M - well she is a French professor so she wants me to learn the French her French the one that she teaches in class right...it's got a nice feel to it though (the ‘inferior’ type of French) cause I grew up around it, so it I don't know it, when I am there it reminds me of when I was growing up I like it

Acadians, for instance, who are often seen as speaking a ‘broken French’ have sometimes internalized the belief that they speak poor French. The belief that one’s language is ‘inferior’ stems from the belief that here exists something superior. The standards that have been created and socially and culturally enforced create feelings of inadequacy for individuals who do not meet such standards. Standard language ideology, according to Lippi-Green (1997), "is defined as a bias towards an abstracted, idealized, homogenous spoken language
which is imposed and maintained by dominant bloc institutions" (p.64). Urciuoli (1998), maintains that often times individuals discriminate on the basis of language because it is perceived as something that can be improved on. However, this improvement is in the hope of acquiring the standard English or French believed to be superior.

Anzaldúa (1987), speaks of the shame experienced within many Hispanic communities because many believe they speak an 'inferior' language. "Chicanas who grew up speaking Chicano Spanish have internalized the belief that we speak poor Spanish. It is illegitimate, a bastard language. And because we internalize how our language has been used against us by the dominant culture, we use our language differences against each other" (p.58). She also discusses the linguistic terrorism which often takes place within Hispanic communities. She describes it as a form of in-group regulation, scrutiny and judgment of the perception of an 'inferior' language. She goes on to say,

Chicanas feel uncomfortable talking in Spanish to Latinas, afraid of their censure...if a Chicana or Latina, has a low estimation of my native tongue, she also has a low estimation of me. Often with Mexicanas y Latinas we'll speak English as a neutral language. Even among Chicanas we tend to speak English at parties or conferences...we oppress each other trying to out-Chicano each other, vying to be -the "real" Chicano to speak like Chicanos (p.58).

The fear is so intense that individuals will revert to using English for fear of being judged. One explanation for the loss of a language is the displacement of individuals in communities where their native language is less evident. Often, for whatever reason, individuals find themselves separated from their communities where their mother tongue is spoken and cultural traditions are practised daily. These individuals may slowly detach themselves from their native surroundings, preventing them from structuring and developing their language and culture. It's only when they are away for a period of time and return to their surroundings that they find out that much of what they knew, felt comfort in, and cherished is now foreign to them. This feeling of being foreign is not so much what these individuals feel but what is reflected back to them. If one has lost the language one is seen
to have lost the connection to the community. This occurrence in Spanish communities is also evident in Francophone communities. Martin’s sisters, because they were taken at a young age to live in Africa, where English predominated, lost their ability to speak French. Martin expressed how his sisters now go through great lengths to attempt to regain it, but still are uncomfortable speaking it. This fear stems from the rejection and judgement that we are afraid of experiencing from members of our community.

M.: humm my sister the one who is in P the one who is in P has gone to great lengths to try and learn...she went on a French immersion program this summer and they both have they both have French in them in some way it’s not lost like when you speak French they know what you are saying (laugh)...there was a time when they could speak French fluently and now it seems that they they can’t they don’t have the confidence to say things but they understand a lot of what you say not everything but quite a bit

MK.: so there is apprehension about speaking it because they feel it’s not as I guess it’s not very I don’t know they are insecure about it maybe is that?

M.: I think it’s kinda like me trying to speak my dad’s language, I understand when people talk in Ibo I understand what they are saying I’m just not confident enough to say anything because I don’t think I’ll sound right (laugh)

Martin expressed his apprehension of speaking his father’s native language. His lack of linguistic abilities in Ibo reflects a lack of a connection to his African culture and his comfort in speaking English reflects the strength of the linkage to that culture. This sentiment is also reflected in Shome (1999) who cites Fanon (1967) as claiming that the use or knowledge of a language reflects one’s participation in the culture. The overwhelming nature of the English language, however, is felt by many and is not unique to Martin’s experience.
Although I contend that the regulation of language within French-Canadian communities is experienced, especially by individuals who speak what is considered to be an "inferior" French language, living in a Francophone minority setting can also create feelings of regulation. Many Francophones in Canada who live in such a minority setting feel their French language somewhat slip away from them. The surge of our technological society, for example, has quickly proven to be detrimental to "minority" languages. Martin works in the field of computers and this forces him to use English.

M - when I'm at work there's a lot of Francophones at work and sometimes were together and we always talk we get talking in French and, a lot of the work is done in French because some people are Francophone and when we're together we hummm it makes sense to talk in French although the manager is English doesn't like that but (laugh) cause he can't speak French (laugh) he can't understand right...yeah it's I found it easier when I get to technical terms or if I'm in a negotiation or things like that...I'm better off speaking English cause if I don't then whoever I am talking with is going to have an upper hand

His employer is, in a sense, probably happy that many of his employees are bilingual, but speaking French is regulated to the selling of merchandise. Colleagues are not encouraged to communicate in any language other than in English.

Martin's story reveals racism, displacement, the loss of language and more specifically, the desired connection and movement toward both French-Canadian and African cultures. He attempts to carve an identity for himself within these cultures. His comments on how he self-identifies demonstrates something similar to what Hall's (1992) study shows of her participants, in a sense that, when participants are given the choice, choose to self-identify as mixed. My initial questions concerning identity with Martin were more general, simply asking how he sees himself. Martin did not really provide a distinct category of identity and asserted to being in-between, a "transient" as he referred to it. However, when
I categorized race and somewhat made him choose, he reluctantly chose one of the categories that I had listed.

MK.: what do you identify as? how do you see yourself?

M.: I have no clue, I think I am just a transient somewhere...it's it's I'm not upset about it cause I learned to appreciate all these cultures that have to do with me...I think it (this experience of being mixed) builds character, it's my experience but I still think and feel that there is more to come

MK.: would you say that you are would you identity as a bilingual person or Anglophone or just?

M.: I would say bilingual

MK.: with regards to race how do you self-identify?

M.: I just go with the easy one I say Black

MK.: okay is that what you chose or what other people how did you come to that?

M.: my choice actually...I don't see what’s the point in specifying cause then it's going to be further subdivisions along the way too

I understand this last segment as meaning that society sees Martin as Black and so when he says he goes with the easy choice, it is the choice that society has chosen that will generate less conflict. However, upon further discussion, Martin felt uneasy and unsure and somewhat preferred to see himself as somewhere in-between. Brown (1995) notes that several of his study participants when given the opportunity choose mixed identities. I
interpret this as “minorizing” dominant norms in that Martin may be persuaded into choosing to self-identify as Black since he looks it, and since it is the ‘normal’ choice in society but he is refusing to name an identity and resists dominant labels and categorizations.

The other unique perspective provided within this interview is the fact that Martin was the only male interviewed. Several differences can be noted when considering gender within the interviews. For instance, the phenomena of racism for Martin was much worse than for the women. The physical abuse may not have been unique if other males had been interviewed. There are many phenomena that could be examined with regard to gender, but they surpass the scope of my thesis. On the continuum, I would place Martin somewhere in the middle in that he has somewhat of a connection with both his African and French-Canadian heritages. Regardless of how he is perceived by them, he strives to have connection with both of these groups. I also contend that racism and an increase in racial consciousness have contributed to his sense of identity. Nonetheless, he is mostly seen as a man of colour, his own ambivalence/resistance and negotiations notwithstanding. Language both informs his identity and destabilizes it (i.e. when French-Canadians do not consider him authentically Francophone). He asserts that there is more to learn and attempts to carve a place for himself within society.

Chantal’s Story

I chose to have Chantal’s story as the last because I feel she is at the other extreme on the racial continuum where she consciously chooses Blackness. Her story is fascinating in that one can see by how she articulates herself the identity transformations that she has undergone. Chantal self-identified as mixed or part White for most of her life. However, it was not until five years ago, at the age 25, that she experienced a shift. She now self-identifies as being Black and bilingual. Again racism appears to be the definitive influence in her life.
Chantal is 30 years old and was born in Montréal. She describes herself as being fairly dark with long, curly, Black hair. Chantal’s mother was born in Québec and is Québécoise and her father was born in Barbados and immigrated to Québec, where he met her mother. They never married and only had Chantal. Chantal was raised by her mother and saw very little of her father as a child. She did not mention whether her parents obtained any formal education.

Chantal completed her elementary and highschool education in a French immersion program in Québec and then pursued an undergraduate degree in Ontario at an Anglophone university. She is now pursuing a law degree in Ontario and also plans to go back to Québec to pursue a law degree there. I am uncertain if Chantal wants to stay in Québec or work elsewhere.

Chantal’s relationship with both groups of grandparents was strained. Her French-Canadian grandfather, who was her only living grand parent, on her French-Canadian side was very racist towards her and never approved of her mother’s relationship. Furthermore, Chantal’s relationship with her Black grandparents was also strained since her Black grandmother did not like Chantal’s mother. It was not until Chantal was a young adult that finally had regular contact with her Black grandmother and began a friendship. Chantal did have her uncle, on her father’s side, in her life, who proved to be a huge influence on her. He gave her a greater sense of self-esteem and proved to be a source of strength and stability. He passed on when she was an adolescent. Chantal asserts that even though her mother was French, English was normally spoken in the home.

We began the interview by talking about her childhood and her experiences of racism. As with other participants experiences were typically of the overt forms of racism. She experienced this both within her family and from her community.
C.: French-Canadians were the worst at least the White kids the English kids at school were pretty cool but ohhhhhhhhhhhhh man in my neighbourhood it was big time French-Canadian nigresse nigresse nigresse they would just run bike they would call me names it was just bad

C.: he (her Québécois grandfather) would have disrespect for me, he would be cutting chocolate and a piece would fall on the floor and there were 3 grand children he was like ohhhhh Mia can have that piece...when I was young at that time I didn’t think anything of it. I thought maybe I’m the oldest that’s why I get the piece that fell on the floor...my mother had never gotten along with him and I think he had made comments before you know they called her nigger

As a child and adolescent Chantal made it evident to everyone that she was mixed, not half Black or Black, but mixed. Chantal wore a disguise for many years fooling many people as well as herself. She looks back on this now as a time of shame. However, she understands that it was needed in order to be where she is now. Her costume was that of a ‘healthy’ biracial child, or at least the appearance of one. Her behaviour in the past was well played, she concealed herself within this costume and lived as such for many years.

C.: I didn’t even know I was Black basically I was rejected and I’m like I’m mix I’m half White you know I’m mulatto you know it would never be like I’m Black I’m like I’m mix I’m mulatto...I had White friends saying “well Black people but you’re different” and I’d go yeahhhhh I’m different (feeling happy)....I didn’t know any better when I think back one of the things that hurts me the most is the day a girl said that to me she said well Black well not you you’re different and I was like and I didn’t know I was like yeah and when I think back to that if there’s anything I could change in my life it would just be that day
Chantal used strategies of repudiation to deal with racism and discrimination for a major part of her life. She chose a mixed or half-White identity and rejected her Black heritage. Chantal felt alienated from her Black peers and Black family since she did not see her father very often. She also felt great pressure and ridicule from Black kids at school. The scales were reversed when she was with her White Francophone friends, they tended to ridicule her Blackness and Chantal attempted to negate that aspect of herself.

At 30 Chantal is now embracing her ‘Blackness’ and trying to learn about different aspects of herself. She has gained a greater understanding of race relations in this country and feels as if there are many injustices in society. She asserts that, in studying to become an attorney she has learned a great deal about our legal system and how people of colour fit into this system. She has also learned about the racial make-up of the legal profession and feels empowered as a woman of colour to be able to change that system. She is now, however, partially rejecting her French-Canadian heritage. That is to say, she has and is still experiencing contestation and rejection from this group and so feels alienated from them.

C.: People are like (mainly White Francophones) ohhh you’re Haitian you’re Haitian you’re Haitian you’re Haitian you’re Haitian but I’m not Haitian right I’m not Haitian I’m French-Canadian and Barbados or whatever

C.: I find sometimes when I interact with French-Canadians, I worked in retail for a long time and hummmmmm it was a nice store Holt Renfrew you’d expect people to have a bit of class and a bit of you know sensibility but a lot of times people would walk over and were like “do you spike French?” you know and I’m like why do you have to ask me that first “oui je parle français” and then ohhhhhhh they’re all backed up, so I have trouble totally saying ohhhhh yes I feel French-Canadien the majority of the time they don’t make me feel French-Canadian so I totally don’t feel French-Canadian you know
C - people are always shocked or surprised Bérubé oh yeah the bank when I was young NEVER could I just go and get my bank book cause I don’t look like Bérubé you know...people just can’t stand it they just have to know how can it be it has to be a Black man named Bérubé somewhere

Chantal experiences resistance with French-Canadians, similar to that experienced by the other participants in this study. Because she is Black, French-Canadians are often shocked that she can speak French and speak it so well. Again, as Essed (1991) asserts, dominant discourses/categorical constructions become the “norm”. Chantal, being a female of colour does not fit that construct and so creates confusion for French-Canadians.

Chantal now identifies fully with the Black African-American/Carribean-Canadian community and culture. She spoke of having a shift in herself about five years ago when she decided to take a trip to Georgia with a friend. From then on, I believe Chantal’s life changed for the better in her eyes. “I am sort of still experimenting” she said, with her Black culture and longs to know more about it. She chooses to incorporate one hundred per cent of the Black culture in her life and adds to that her French-Canadian heritage.

C: I only started getting really conscious when I went to Atlanta Georgia. Image how freaked I am I was like I want to be around Black people so I picked up all my stuff and I moved to Atlanta Georgia and I did that for four months...it’s like you know what I just want to hang with Black people man...

The following segments demonstrate how Chantal performs her Blackness, through what she says and how she says it. Smitherman cited in Gay & Baber (1987) speaks of the Black language/talk as not being a simple cocktail chit-chat, but a “functional dynamic that is simultaneously a mechanism for learning about life and the world and a vehicle for achieving group approval. Even when it appears to be only causal conversation, whoever
speaks highly conscious of the fact that his personality is on exhibit and his status at stake” (p. 7).

C.: oohhhhh my god have you been to Atlanta

MK.: no

C.: Girlllllll, ohhhhh my god you have to go man you can’t get from A to B without a brother be like yo yo yo yo and like their just like so happy...ohhhhhh my god it was like a Black world it was so funny...I was thinking ohhhhhhh my goodness look at all these Black people so it always stayed in my mind and then eventually all hip hop starting and everything and I use to hang out a lot and I was just like I want to go where all the Black people are and supposedly Atlanta is the place to be.

When specifically asked about language within Black spaces she replied,

C.: Even the way I talk I always wished I could fall into Patois, but I can’t...you feel bad it makes you feel bad...I can’t even imitate it like my dad can I can’t none of my family would but my friends you know...I wish I could I wish I could even just to be able to copy it enough to be able sing some of the reggae lyrics I would be so happy (laughs)

The way in which Chantal articulates herself demonstrates her allegiance and loyalty to Black culture. Even though she was not raised within Black culture, she now mimics the Black African-American language. Chantal’s notion of “getting conscious” meant expanding her knowledge of race relations, and her Black heritage. Unlike the stage models presented in the first chapter, Chantal made an abrupt change late in her life. In addition, her current
self-identification choice, as being Black, would not be considered “healthy” according to these models.

C.: I have a ohhhhhhhhh one hundred percent connection with the Black community but maybe I have made that effort right now you know through self-realization...I am very happy I’ve come a long way but very happy happy that I am conscious

Chantal also spoke of issues of privilege since she is often suspected of being mixed. In mixed-race discourse, privilege is normally associated with having lighter skin colour and being able to racially “pass” into the White dominant society. Piper (1992) mentions how several of her family members have successfully “passed” in White society and how they relish the economic and social benefit. Chantal, on the other hand, spoke of privilege on two different levels, race and language. More specifically, Chantal noted that her linguistic abilities enabled her to inhabit spaces of privilege. According to her, the fact that she is “perfectly” bilingual, causes employers to look past her race.

C - sometimes sometimes people can see through your race if you can offer that quality that they might need right like for a job interview if they’re so desperate I went to an interview at the bank and they needed bilingual people so badly I honestly believe that racist or not they you know when they need someone I saw a memo it was URGENT French...I mean I definitely think that some people it’s one additional factor that can help you above the rest you know so

Her interview reveals how our society values certain languages over others. Capitalism and the production and consumption of goods in society is reliant on people to sell information to, people to convince, people to ‘inform’. In Canada, French and English are at the heart of capitalism. Since she currently lives in a Francophone minority setting Chantal
is desired, in the sense that, her French language is valued. She negotiates herself and her mixed-race status within spaces that as she asserts she would normally not be allowed in. More specifically, she negotiates herself with her language in how she camouflages her English speaking ability in Francophone minority spaces. She believes she is more accepted within such a space if she does this.

C - I can switch from one language to the other but maybe if I had an accent it would be different they (employers) would hold it against me also when I speak French I can sometimes get by without people knowing I try really hard you know so

MK.: knowing

C - that I am English...I went for my interview with the firm and it was all French-Canadian and we spoke in French and they were very happy you know...sometimes it helps they’ll say okay she’s Black but she speaks French you know even I think that’s what they believe so I think it’s definitely beneficial... am able to transfer my language abilities with facility I mean for sure it’s never a deterrent for me if someone is not going to want to be talking to me in French I can easily not be French-Canadian fine Black is Black it’s what I am there’s no hiding it or getting away from it so that’s why I don’t necessarily identify it’s an ability I have you know and I appreciate it and I am able to correspond you know it’s always looked upon favourably you know everyone’s like wow you speak the language gone to Europe it’s so helpful but I mean I definitely I guess it helps me as a tool not so much an identity because it doesn’t have to be there I bring it out when I want to

Chantal also spoke of having access to certain spaces of privilege because of her perceived mixed-race appearance. Chantal notes that her appearance is not sensed as a theat
in White spaces. Her socialization of having been raised in a White majority setting with her White mother has also given her the ability, as Twine (1997) notes, to adopt White discourse. She has the ability to transform herself in White spaces in that she can conceal her racially conscious political ideas and adopt a more neutral position. She recognizes that not all individuals of colour have the desire or ability to do so but I contend that for mixed-race individuals the choice is often there. Since most often Whiteness is within the family we quickly learn the skills necessary to participate in White spaces.

C.: I guess they (Blacks) can see the ease...they don’t have the ease and the facility amongst Whites I guess that you might have cause you’re raised with somebody White so I mean the differences are just always there whether they see it or they don’t it could just be physical it could just be with your ease with who you’re with you know

Chantal sometimes feels that she becomes transparent in White spaces,

C.: I feel sometimes when you have been born in White environment where I have been since I was very young they (Whites) see so much past the colour you just become transparent like everybody else and they’ll say things that they will never have the audacity to say in front of a Black person...sometimes I you know I feel like I have this carte blanche where I just fit in and I just hear things and I come back and I can you know guess what and I can tell Black people because I just feel like this little pass you know what I am saying

She asserted often feeling invisible in White spaces and alluded to the fact that, although she is uncomfortable in such spaces, she listens for comments that she can take back to the Black community. She is in a sense proving her loyalty to the Black community.
In terms of identity, Chantal self-identifies as a Black woman and considers her French-Canadian heritage/French language more in terms of a tool/ an assert. In a sense she prefers to say she is bilingual and acknowledges that her French language is seen as a commodity in this society. She does however, regulate language, preferring a certain type of French language, the idealized “proper” form, as opposed to the local “improper”/regional French.

C.: I'm not crazy about French-Canadian French I prefer the Parisian French. I hate the slangs and the twangs “moé” pis “toé” and stuff like that no me it’s “je parle le français”, French-Canadian French hurts my ears.

Chantal recognizes racial discrimination, since she has been subjected to this for most of her life. But she does not recognize linguistic discrimination, often perpetuated within groups, the in-group hierarchies which Anzaldúa (1987) discusses. In a sense Chantal is perpetuating the same feelings and thoughts of there being a superior language and denigrates those who do not speak such a language.

C.: ohhhhhh my god you know what I have survived to be this colour like don’t do me that favour (of saying that she is mix)...I mean we need we are different we’re never going to be all grey we’re always going to be a little different so we need to just appreciate those differences and respect those difference but we can acknowledge them don’t try to just erase them away cause you cannot it won’t happen
C.: one major advantage I always feel I always say I am not racist I mean I have a White and Black parent I mean I don’t feel I’m discriminatory towards any people even though sometimes I’m like the White people the White people but really I mean I will keep them in check cause they’re the majority and I have to look out for the minority cause it’s the underdog in society but I don’t have a problem with Whites Blacks you know Greek Italian whatever Jewish it’s all good to me I’ve never known I’ve never been raised to see a difference like that I mean I see differences and I appreciate them.

Since Chantal chose a mixed-race identity for most of her life and denied her Black heritage, she did not have good memories of her mixed-race existence. She feels that mixed-race people are in a special position and are exposed to things that most people aren’t and so cannot help but mature quickly and learn in such environments. She is passionately challenging society labelling her as mixed-race and consciously chooses to self-identify as Black for political and social reasons. I contend that this shift in identity is a result of the racism experienced as a child, her former denial of her Black culture and her present increased racial consciousness. An increase in racial consciousness after her trip to Atlanta was what made Chantal have a shift in identity. As Hall (1992) notes, the more participants knew about their Black culture the more they chose to self-identify as Black. Also, Chantal performs herself in many different ways, primarily in how she expresses herself but also in what she says about her ‘Blackness’. She is in a sense “minorizing” the English language with her expression of “Black English”. Chantal is also negotiating Whiteness but seems to negotiate it cautiously. Lastly, her involvement in the legal community has somewhat given her a sense of purpose in life. She asserts being greatly affected by the plight of people of colour and their need to have access to their legal rights in this society.
Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis is to attempt to gain a better understanding of how mixed-race individuals negotiate themselves along a racial continuum of Whiteness to Blackness. Results demonstrate that the study participants' self-identification as individuals of colour is not an indicator of their participation within spaces of colour. Self-identification is the result of several factors, socialization within families, displacement, history of environment, race, societal pressures, etc. When considering the participation within a racial group, as bodies of colour, the participants are not permitted to choose a White identity and meet much resistance when consciously or unconsciously participating in White spaces. The negotiation of their chosen identities in White spaces is accomplished through language. More specifically, participants negotiate their race through their French and English language abilities depending on whether they are in a majority or minority Francophone setting. This negotiation is accomplished by either disclosing the ability to speak French when in a minority setting or mimicking the regional language when in a Francophone majority settings. The performance of Whiteness is also noted through how participants articulate themselves. The consideration of dominant "norms" as superior and the lack of racial consciousness are both noted as adopting White "norms" and therefore participating/choosing Whiteness. The participation within spaces of colour and the performance of a subordinate identity are in one sense accomplished through language, but in the form of a stylized "Black English". The participation or choosing of a subordinate identity is seen to have been the result of racism and an increase in racial consciousness.

When examining the stories of the first two participants, we see that their participation within Whiteness is not shown to be reliant on their choosing an identity of colour. Lyanne, for instance, adopts a mixed-race identity, a part Lebanese and part French-Canadian identity. However, she adopts views and discourses similar to the dominant society and this is why I situate her within Whiteness. When considering Lyanne's feelings on education, she acknowledges that English universities are more prominent and more well perceived and so
consciously chose to attend an Anglophone university. When she discussed her relationship with her Polish relatives, she asserted that she has little ties with them and feels that part of the reason is that they lead very different lives and have less formal education. Lyanne acknowledged that she has been socialized, more specifically has been raised, in a predominantly White Francophone setting and that her parents wanted her to “fit in”. She has adopted many dominant views because of this. She feels that her connection to her Lebanese community is poor. Most of her friends are White, but this is how Lyanne has chosen to participate within society.

What is she negotiating? In White Francophone spaces Lyanne feels the need to specify her Lebanese identity since she is not permitted to choose anything else. She is forced to divulge her “Otherness” to appease her White surrounding and to ensure that she does not claim a White identity under false pretenses. When in an Anglo-White setting Lyanne feels more at ease in claiming her French-Canadian heritage. She is not challenged within such spaces as to whether she is ‘authentically’ French-Canadian. In addition, in a Francophone minority setting, the French language very often is a desired commodity and so Lyanne is desired for her linguistic abilities. It is to her benefit to claim such an identity in an Anglophone majority setting. She negotiates her mixed identity by attempting to carve a place for herself within Whiteness. We see within her interview, something similar to what Shome (1999) experiences in that in Québec as a young adult, Lyanne spoke the language and attempted to “fit in”. The discourse of power, however, was/is found to be with the English minority. As Shome notes of his experience in India, formal English education is the education of power. This is also the case in Québec, where the Anglophone minority have more power. When Lyanne is in a minority Francophone setting she is seen as an immigrant, a foreign body. However, because of the history in Canada with Francophones, her French linguistic abilities are desired. It is a push/pull scenario negotiated on a daily basis. The history of the two racially dominant cultural groups has to be considered as well as the history of people of colour within both groups which is another relation.
I situate Karen as also participating within Whiteness and repudiating her Blackness but on more of an unconscious level. I contend that Karen negotiates herself less frequently than other participants. Since she does not participate within subordinate groups she is less challenged. Karen unconsciously adopts/perpetuates White discourses and expresses them through her neutrality on racial issues and lack of racial consciousness. Within White Anglophone spaces she recognizes that her French language is seen as a commodity. Similar to Lyanne her living in a Francophone minority setting enables the French language to be utilised to her advantage since many employers are in need of bilingual employees.

Ann’s story reveals that she negotiates Whiteness on several levels. Ann self-identifies as a Black bi-cultural woman but disrupts constructed notion of several categories. When in White Francophone spaces, Ann is seen as disrupting the constructed notion of what a Francophone is and also what a Black woman is. She disrupts categorical social constructions through her French language. She literally adopts the language of the challenger and resists or deflects racist comments. As was stated in the first chapter, Francophones are not a homogenous group, and Ann’s story reveals how she even negotiates her identity between Francophones in Québec and Francophones in Montréal. She recognizes language differences and attempts to work in both spaces. Within a Francophone majority space, such as in Québec, Ann’s French language is not a commodity as it would be outside of Québec. An additional dimension within Ann’s story that is not reflected within Lyanne and Karen’s story is the negotiation of identity in spaces of colour. Ann is challenged by ‘minorities’ not so much because of her colour, but because she is believed to adopt dominant views regarding minorities. She recognizes this but attempts to maintain ties with ‘minority’ communities.

Martin’s story reveals how he attempts to negotiate his mixed-race status through language. When in White Francophone spaces in a minority setting he is challenged somewhat similarly to Ann since he disrupts the notion of what a French-Canadian is. When in White Anglophone spaces Martin is challenged because of his colour, however because he
is in a Francophone minority setting his French language is valued and considered a commodity. When in Black spaces, Martin is challenged not only by Africans because he is seen as only being part African, but also by other Black-Canadians. Carribean-Canadians are seen as being "cool" and hip, but Africans are seen as immigrants. Linguistically, meanwhile, he speaks Ibo, but is reluctant to engage in discussion with other Africans for fear of ridicule. Although Martin has few ties with his Francophone family, he desires a connection. He acknowledges that he has borrowed from both his French-Canadian and African heritages to carve a place for himself.

Finally, Chantal reveals a shift in identity due to the experience of racism and the increase of racial consciousness. She initially chose a mixed identity, specifically a half-White identity. She adopted a neutral stance on racial issues and shamed her Black heritage. She was participating entirely within White spaces and had done so for many years. About five years ago, Chantal went on a trip and experienced a shift in consciousness and began to recognize her Black heritage. As Twine (1997) notes a shift in consciousness can occur during university when one is exposed to courses dealing with issues of race or when one meets someone who is racially conscious. For Chantal it was the trip to Atlanta and the fact that she began dating Black men. Her story reveals how she now performs her Blackness not only in what she says but in how she says it. She adopts a sort of a hip hop lingo which somewhat symbolizes her desire to be recognized within that group and demonstrates her loyalty to the group. I place Chantal as choosing/participating within Blackness. Her choosing a Black identity is both political, social and personal. Her French-Canadian heritage/French language, although acknowledged, is less seen as an identity than as a commodity. The French language enables her to enter White Anglo spaces of privilege that she may otherwise not have access to. She recognizes this privilege and negotiates herself within such spaces. She too is challenged in White Francophone spaces by the fact that she speaks French and is Black. Her strategy often is to resist and challenge racist comments. When in Black spaces, where she is often recognized as mixed, she performs/negotiates
herself with her “Black English”. Even though Chantal is seen as mixed by Blacks she chooses to participate within Blackness.

All five stories, including my own, demonstrate how race predominates our lives. Participants all choose identities of colour, since many claim that is how they are mainly how they are perceived. Many, however, did not necessarily participate in spaces of colour. Participants choose to participate within spaces they feel comfort in and self-identify with to some extent. Whiteness is seen as being a space of privilege, power and high status. The participation within White spaces is often met with much resistance and requires negotiation by the study participants. This negotiation is often accomplished through language. Depending on the types of interactions with people, participate negotiate their mixed-race status through their French, English or other linguistic abilities. The negotiation of identity within White spaces was also seen to take place in spaces of colour. Identities of colour adopted by participants stemmed from experiences of racism and an increase in racial consciousness. Strategies are developed or undertaken by the study participants to negotiate themselves when being in either White and spaces of colour. These strategies were either active or passive, such as in the form of resistance, deflection, neutrality, diffusion, etc. In addition to these strategies taken on to negotiate resistance from the dominant society, merging, shifting and combining of cultural practices are also seen as strategies to negotiate oneself. These experiences reveal the situational nature of one’s negotiations and the unpredictability of these various interactions. The lives of mixed-race individuals, are quite complex and surpass the superficial observation of group loyalty. Our stories reveal how Blackness has been constructed as subordinate and non-Canadian/French-Canadian identity. Also, we indirectly see how a Canadian and French-Canadian identity is seen as being synonymous with being White. Finally, my story is interjected within the other stories to stand as a form of resistance which is show in how it is written and how my experiences are shared. To summarize, this thesis demonstrates that language is an intricate part of the negotiation and performance of identity, racism and one’s “race”.
References


