A Volume in
Identity & Practice in
Higher Education-Student Affairs

BLURRING BOUNDARIES AND BINARIES

Belonging, Gender, and Mixed Heritages in Higher Education in the United States

PIETRO A. SASSO
DELA DOS
& MONA NOUR, EDITORS

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Series Editors

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FOREWORD

Derrick Paladino

My heart is filled with warmth whenever I see a new book or work that speaks to the multiracial, transracial, and mixed-race experience. In some ways, these are letters to the population to say, "yes, we see you" along with calls to the profession, community, and organizations to do more. Advocacy and understanding will always be at the forefront of work in multiracial education, and as a person whose ancestral background encompasses multiple racial identities, it's not only a subject that is near and dear to my own heart, but also an issue I've striven to bring awareness to throughout my academic career.

Identity is a personal construct and in order to give people "the power to choose how one identifies" it is essential to sit with the actual population and have these meaningful conversations. Texts such as this provide the necessary foundation that allows this type of meaningful work to occur. It was not that long ago that institutions of higher education and the census decided how individuals were allowed to identify. As time progressed, we have seen a movement in higher education that allow us to expand this narrow way of thinking in merely demographic terms that only allow an individual to check off "other race" to a more enlightened place where survey participants can "choose all that apply" or even be given the opportunity to write in one's racial and cultural identity. This is a wonderful

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step forward, and this book helps to celebrate this accomplishment while positing that there is still much work to be done as we continue along this journey.

Though I now identify as biracial, this was not always easy for me for me to discuss or even define when speaking with others. Growing up in the 80s and 90s in a small town with a majority white population, I was always keenly aware of my skin color and how it differentiated me from those who surrounded me. Being brown, I was self-conscious of how others perceived me, and allowed myself to be trapped into feeling like I was somehow inferior, and even that it was unsafe for me to be in certain situations where my "browness" could be viewed in a negative or unsavory light. When questioned about my race, I often explained that the name "Paladino" was Italian, thinking that by only highlighting the European part of my ancestry, I could better blend in with the fairer-skinned kids. It was my ruse. A game I played but never won.

Throughout it all, I was unconsciously fighting against the rule of hypodescent, or the "One-drop" rule (Davis, 1991). The hypodescent rule socially and politically determined one's race by indicating that if a person possessed a single drop of black blood, then that person is considered black regardless of the individual's phenotype or chosen identity. This was white society's way of classifying multiracial individuals as subordinate to the majority population. And this disdain for race mixing led to the opposition and oppression of unions and relationships between monoracial-minority and -majority individuals. It was not until the case of *Loving vs. Virginia* (1967), a ruling that decriminalized and ended all race-based restrictions on marriage, that these unions were deemed legally acceptable. In many cases, though acknowledged legally, individuals in these types of relationships still struggled to be accepted by society as a whole.

In my youth, I struggled with being biracial, in part, because there were no discussions about what it meant to be biracial. Society's desire to place us in a simple Black or White box made it difficult to explore or define one's identity, and I lived for a long time in discomfort wondering what this all meant. My time in college was also difficult, as it was tough finding others who faced the same biracial identity challenges and emotions.

It was not until my master's in counseling degree that I saw a work that properly defined my experience as a multiracial individual. It was an article by Carlos Poston (1990) on biracial identity development that helped kick off much of my "me-search" into the multiracial identity experience. For many, college and higher education is a time when one's worldview expands, and this can bring up a lot of reflection on personal development and identity. It can be an era of discomfort, and the journey of finding one's place while simultaneously being forced into the world of

responsibility and "adulting" compounds the stress that often arises during an already difficult time in one's life.

From the days of Stonequiest's (1937) description of "the Tragic Mullato" to the increase in modern multiracial identity development models (i.e., Henrikson, 2000; Poston, 1990; Renn, 2003; Root, 1999) we have already seen an astounding amount of progress in the advocacy for multiracial individuals. In addition, professional affinity groups such as The Multiracial/Ethnic Counseling Concerns (MRECC) and Multiethnic, Multiracial, and Transracial Adoptee Concerns Group in the American Counseling Association and higher education groups like the Multiracial Network in American College Personnel Association (ACPA) have emerged and are moving the field forward. There has also been a much-needed increase in research. Organizations like the Critical Mixed-Race Studies and Conference are now bringing interdisciplinary professionals together as we all work together to turn "me"-search into "we"-search.

Facing our ever-changing landscape around self-identity is key to understanding our past as well as our future. In *Blurring Boundaries and Binaries: Belonging, Gender, and Mixed Heritages in Higher Education in the United States*, authors Sasso, Dos, and Nour have created a text that brings the multiracial experience to the forefront. This text highlights the important convergence of higher education and multiracial identity development. Readers will connect with those who are part of the community and those who are actively working in this area as they explore this time of critical development in higher education.

This text purposefully highlights three areas: Blurring, Belonging, and Being. Blurring helps explore how higher education can push beyond set societal constructs of multiracialism. It highlights the need for understanding and then advocacy for expanding conceptualization beyond these borders. Belonging takes readers into a deep dive of the expansive intersectional identities within the multiracial population. Identities such as disability, gender, transracial adoptees, international culture, and LGTBQIA+ are explored beautifully. The final section, Being, allows readers to experience empathy and connection through personal lived experiences. Personal stories are the origination of multiracial education, and this essential section illuminates the importance of the variability in identity. These stories help us find connections and allow us to be seen.

The combination of history, identity, and human experience work together in this book to create a comprehensive and meaningful voyage for the reader. *Blurring Boundaries and Binaries: Belonging, Gender, and Mixed Heritages in Higher Education in the United States* is a significant text for the multiracial population, community, and emerging allies. Lived experience is the core of this new text and I applaud Sasso, Dos, and Nour for continuing to raise awareness of the multiracial experience in higher education.

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EDITORS PREFACE

Pietro A. Sasso, DeLa Dos, and Mona Nour

This book was initially conceptualized from generative conversations with APA Multiracial Network (MRN) co-founder Dr. Kelley Kenney, who has been a significant seminar scholar in the study of multiraciality. Her work on biracial families, such as *Counseling Multiracial Families* (1999) with B. Wehrly and M. E. Kenney and her additional scholarship about identity development has won and been recognized with many awards. Also, during the COVID-19 lockdowns and transitional period, Dr. Derrick A. Paladino who authored the foreword in this text and is the co-author of *Counseling Multiple Heritage Individuals, Couples, and Families* (Henriksen & Paladino, 2009) also was extremely influential. His foundational work connecting mental health, counseling, and multiraciality helps us understand the idea that multiraciality is truly wholeness.

Multiraciality is not an identity to be fractured or abstracted by others, but rather integrated across multiple racial locations. Multiraciality is sophisticated and its weaving of complexity into forging new congruence posits new ways to understand identity. Multiraciality disrupts monoracial constructs and can be disorienting to others who are unable to have sufficient knowledge of self to be able to conceptualize that other persons occupy multiple racial locations across broader systems of culture and identity domains. Multiraciality is to be celebrated, explored, and made visible.

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Thus, this text is also reflected of different author identities and from the different academic disciplines of education, sociology, and counseling.

As co-editors, this text is collectively born out of our lived experiences as well as our own experiences from multiracial and mixed-heritage households and developmental experiences that influenced our identity salience. Thus, we use a spectrum of identity-based terms in this text regarding the contributors within its pages. These include mixed-heritage, multiracial, and multicultural.

Mixed heritage is also synonymous with "multiple heritage" to encompass the complexities and nuances of within-group differences between race and culture. For example, an undergraduate student Korean and Japanese and consider themselves mixed-heritage or have parents from multiple Latin American countries such as Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. *Multiracial* refers to those individuals who specifically identify with two or more races along a binary or with multiple racial identities. *Multicultural* typically refers to diverse environments or intercultural relationships, but within this text, it is used by contributors to describe multiple multiracial students with monoracial or mixed-heritage others. We also consider bicultural orientations within the spectrum of multiraciality and mixed-heritage identities within this text.

Our collective understanding of multiraciality is also rooted in seminal works and research, of which some are referenced in this text. Since Everett Stonequist wrote his foundational book *The Marginal Man: A Study in Personality and Culture Conflict* about the identity of biracial individuals in 1937, individuals within the Black-White binary have been framed within fractured deficits or percentages of mulatto, biracial, multiracial, quadroon, or other labels that emphasize racial identifications. Many of these identifiers were used as property and purity or racial questioning of representation.

However, the Poet Bridget Gray responded to the "tragic mullata" trope in her work *Shades of Gray*. In her poetry, Bridget Gray challenges her audience to consider which half of their biracial identity they must deny to ensure others are comfortable. Many of these experiences may not be too dissimilar from others and appear to be a unifying and common experience for those that navigate the "shades of gray" that Bridget Gray highlights can forge new identities. However, not all individuals are able to navigate or hold a depth of understanding in abstracting this racial colocation. Yet, others have experienced these liminalities of multiracial identities.

The hip-hop artist Latto, formerly Mulatto, experienced pushback against her original name and she shortened it. The R&B singer Tinashe received significant criticism because of her biracial identity as well. The ascribing of "light skin privilege" and the forms of colorism experienced by famous multiracial music artists is an unfortunate historical legacy and

component of monoracism. Monoracism is nuanced across different multiracial identities and are unpacked more throughout this text.

The song "Caramel," in 2001, by the former hip-hop trio City High, left a significant impression and serves as an underpinning example of colorism. The song aptly describes and profiles a mixed-race woman who holds privilege because of her gendered self-presentation in which she quips in the chorus, "and everything I want I got." The lead vocalist was Claudette Ortiz, who identifies as a mixed-race Caribbean woman from Puerto Rico and in media interviews she suggests that the song is largely self-descriptive of her as an artist. This song speaks to the phenomenon of biracial or multiracial identity and fluidity of identity for others who are able to navigate across multiple spaces as often coyly satirized by biracial comedians Keegan-Michael Key and Jordan Peele as well as poet Bridget Gray in her responses to the "tragic mullata" trope in her work *Shades of Gray*.

A popular remix of "Caramel" featured rapper Eve from the Ruff Ryder's hip hop group who is currently in an interracial marriage to Maximillian Cooper and has two biracial children. She received criticism in 2013 because of her statements within the media in which she suggested the goal for her children is "colorblindness," to essentially not see race. Ironically, Eve also performed a song called "Love is Blind" featuring singer and the former wife of deceased rapper Notorious BIG, Faith Evans, who is biracial.

Faith Evans was born to an African American mother and White father just as the children of rapper Eve. This causticness is to draw ire to the fact that biracial and multiracial identities exist across racialized spaces which facilitate cognitive dissonance as these identities may challenge previously held conceptualities of racial binaries (Ozaki & Johnston, 2008). In her poetry, Bridget Gray challenges her audience to consider which half of their biracial identity they must deny to ensure others are comfortable. Many of these experiences may not be too dissimilar from others and appear to be a unifying and common experience for those who navigate the shades of gray that Bridget Gray highlights can forge a new identity category. Other contemporary hip-hop artists such as Drake, Logic, Kid Cudi, Neyo, J. Cole, Saweetie, and Doja Cat have embraced their multiracial identities and introduced a new wave of identity authenticity.

Multiracial and mixed-heritage students attending college interface with race differently than their monoracial peers, which has a significant impact on their undergraduate experiences. Improving the college experience for mixed-heritage and multiracial students will require modifying existing boundaries and providing better resources and support to ensure their inclusion. Since the 1990s, many scholars have focused on the differences in engagement for students with diverse racial identities based on institutional typology, posited theories (Poston, Renn, Root, etc.), or explored

student engagement of multiracial and mixed-heritage college students. Multiracial and mixed-heritage identity development is an increasingly studied area of research, but there still remains a dearth of research, particularly related to gender.

Rap duo Black Star (Mos Def and Talib Kweli) in "Brown Skin Lady" and Kendrick Lamar's "Complexion" explores colorism in heterosexual kinship. Famously, Heavy D presented a counternarrative to his song "Black Coffee" and declares, "Black coffee, no sugar, no cream…. Hey, that's the kind of girl I need down with my team." Rapper J. Cole strong self-identifies as multiracial in which he explores this privilege in the video of his song "G.O.M.D." These forms of masculine or gender privileges unfortunately do not exist for all multiracial college men or women in the multiracial literature which fails to fully explore the spectrum of gender identities, sexualities, and expressions. This text weaves the essence of gender with specifically focused chapters to interrogate these challenges as well as inclusion in other chapters.

Contributors within this edited text interrogate racial identity development of multiracial and mixed-heritage college students in an attempt to widen our conceptualization by blurring the boundaries and binaries of gender across higher education to facilitate a sense of belonging. Multiracial identity can be limited to and "subtracted" in which multiple monoracial identities can equal multiraciality. These college students often express feelings of frustration and alienation when required to identify themselves by selecting only one racial category. Negotiating this racial subtraction coupled with navigating the nuances of identity development in college may influence the diffusion of identity. Thus, in this book, we attempt to amplify being and belonging for multiracial identities through blurring boundaries.

TEXT ORGANIZATION

The rise in the number of young adults in college who identify as multiracial or of mixed- heritage presents higher education institutions with an opportunity to expand their support of their identity development and become more inclusive in the process. This text will focus on three primary areas of (1) Blurring; (2) Belonging; and (3) Being.

Blurring explores how higher education can push beyond liminality to support individual or collective identity development to expand our conceptualization of borders and boundaries. State and federal policies have historically limited multiracial visibility and representation in higher education. Historic systems of oppression forced monoracial identity such as whiteness, which made enrollments difficult to determine. Multiracial

enrollment now continues to increase and comprises at least five to ten percent of the undergraduate population, although they have only been allowed to self-identify since 2000 due to changes in census reporting. Representing and recognizing a person's ancestry can therefore be challenging for multiracial students. Representation is no more than an asterisk due to the historical erasures of presence, which re-emphasize the enduring deleterious legacies of settler colonialism on multiracial students. Some things appear blurry because their value is found in areas of overlap, not definition; other things appear blurry because the viewer's lens is out of focus.

Belonging emphasizes identities and framing of multiracial collegiate experiences to serve as models to support the intentional identity development of mixed-heritage and genders. Higher education has been complicit in reproducing monoracial systems of oppression (Harris, 2016). Males were removed by colonial English settlers from their Indigenous communities to disrupt kinship systems and into forced labor at colonial reform schools along with those already enslaved (Wilder, 2013). Forms of settler colonialism forced miscegenation (mixing of people from different races) through sexual violence and birthed multiracial Indigenous or African Americans (Pascoe, 2009). The term mulatto was frequently applied by the White majority to denote the racial blending of diasporic Native American and Black men (Wilder, 2013). Mixed-raced and Indigenous persons individuals were exotified when their embalmed remains were displayed in university museums and anthropological collections (Wilder, 2013). This violent history offers context to the developmental environments where multiracial college men form identity. Belonging in a space or time, a community or moment, is not about individual ownership; it explores the individual experiences that merge in a communal ownership of human rights—to and to make space for affirmation, dignity, and compassion.

Being comprises ten personal narratives from thirteen contributing authors. To be or not to be is more than just "the question"—when systematically implemented and societally enforced, it becomes a structure of oppression or a key to liberation. Building on the previous sections, these chapters offer contextualization for and perspectives on the lived experiences and manifestations of the topics and ideas explored earlier in the text. Aligned with the spirit of the book, these chapters are constructed in ways that effectively use what some may consider scholarly and unscholarly approaches and structures. They blend and blur ideas to broaden perspectives while emphasizing the benefits of critically considering the value of personal experiences as evidence. The authors reflect upon and recount anecdotes of various times and contexts in their lives as they articulate pieces of their individual journeys to understand and experience belonging. Additionally, this section provides a space for experiences to be validated and honored in ways that—as many of the chapters detail—are

often not readily available for members of the communities represented by the narratives. The authors were invited to be—and the readers are invited to as well.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

This book is complementary to other existing, more recent books that continue to unpack and highlight the multiracial experience in college. These challenges of our students who identify as multiracial or mixed-heritage are often invisible or opaque to higher education professionals. Understanding the narrative of racial development for multiracial and mixed-heritage young adults in college can be difficult but is more important for higher education professionals to address student uncertainty of how to racially identify. They are often unprepared to support multiracial and mixed-heritage students who commonly report not feeling welcome on campus and lack student engagement with educationally purposeful activities. Others report encountering discrimination because they are perceived as holding privilege because they are labeled as "exotic" and fetishized. Our intentions were to explore and interrogate these themes as tensions of identity development and race from the unique vantage point of mixed heritage to support the notion of multiracial resiliency in being able to traverse multiple identities.

EDITOR BIOS

Dr. Pietro A. Sasso is an Associate Professor at Delaware State University. His research interests include college experience (student involvement, multiraciality, masculinity), student success (academic advising, student persistence), and educational equity across co-curricular spaces. He has published more than 80 scholarly publications, as well as 10 co-edited and authored texts and presented more than 100 conference presentations. He has been recognized for his research with awards from the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors (AFA), and Texas Association of College and University Student Personnel Administrators (TACUSPA). He identifies as a mixed-heritage Latino cisgender heterosexual male.

Dr. DeLa Dos is the senior director, Learning + Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for the Association of Research Libraries. Prior to this role, they spent over a decade working as a student affairs professional, which included directing social justice education as well as multicultural affairs departments. They have developed multiple nationally recognized DEI

centered educational programs and strive to integrate concepts of health & wellness, arts & expression, and societal transformation in their work to develop and advance just and inclusive environments.

Dr. Mona D. Nour is a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor, who has held numerous roles over the last 20 years in consulting, counseling, advising, administration, and teaching at the university and community college levels. Her research and publications focus on bicultural identity integration, belonging, and college student engagement. She has served as an educational consultant to revamp higher education programs, specifically regarding culturally-centered curriculum development, policy, and procedures aimed at fostering student development both academically and psychosocially. She identifies as a cisgender heterosexual mixed-heritage woman.

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PART I

BLURRING

Blurring requires either adjusting the borders between things or recognizing that the borders are a matter of perception—and were perhaps never there.

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CHAPTER 1

APPLYING THIRD WAVE FEMINIST THEORY WITH MULTIRACIAL COLLEGE STUDENTS

Path to Existential Freedom From the Patriarchy

Joanne Jodry

> Feminist theory cannot arise from a theory that would require someone to choose which aspect of identity is the one to be liberated while others lie silenced, unattended to, or rendered marginal. (Brown, 1994, p. 69)

Feminist counseling theory has evolved from the feminist movements and philosophy that were born in the battles for women's rights and equality over the ages. The first wave of the feminist movement is associated with suffragism, resulting in the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, giving U.S. women the right to vote. The second wave of the feminist movement is historically aligned with the civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s and is often referred to as the liberation movement. Feminist

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counseling theory was born during this wave of the feminist movement that resulted in more access for women in areas of education, workplace, and personal choices.

During the second wave of the feminist movement, a collective of feminist psychologists emerged. These psychologists urged the American Psychological Association to adopt changes in thoughts, interventions, and clinical practice to meet women's needs. Because of being met with rejection or silence, a group of women psychologists left the association (Tiefer, 1991) and formed an organization called the Association for Women in Psychology in 1969. They focused on specific marginalized and oppressed experiences of women in society, their interactions with quality of life, and the psychological injuries created by patriarchal constructs that created social and cultural systems and norms (Tiefer, 2009). Many people in this collective focused their work on oppression, subsequent psychic wounds, and women's lower quality of life (Baker-Miller, 1976/1987; Chesler, 1972; Mander & Rush, 1974). Feminist counseling theory evolved and grew in this second wave of the feminist movements fight for sex and gender equality.

In the early to mid-1990s, another paradigm shift in the feminist movement changed how feminist counseling theory and its clinical implications were viewed and implemented (Tiefer, 2009). This shift involved the recognition that gender was just one of many oppressions that caused psychological injuries and limited human experience. Lorber (2010) suggested, "The future strength of the feminist movement lies in the variety and density of multiple identities—not just women" (p. 313). Heterosexist patriarchal expectations and internalized messages all come from dominant majority groups. This leaves little room for the experience of those people who are marginalized, oppressed, shamed, and victimized to have an individual experience without a sense of negative internalized feelings for the larger society. Crenshaw (1991) introduced the concept of intersectionality to help understand multiple identities and their interactions with privilege and oppression in society. Third-wave feminist counseling theory emerged from the perspective that psychic wounds develop from oppression and internalization of multiple minority identities in conflict with majority thought. Brown (2010) said, "There is not one but a multiplicity, of trajectories of identity development that can lead to good functioning and / or distress and dysfunction" (p. 73). The third wave of feminist counseling theory and practice reflects the wounds of multiple oppressions of all people (Brown, 2010; Crenshaw, 1991). The heterosexist patriarchal views of the dominant oppressive society dictate norms/expectations and often victimize non-dominant voices. Emerged from this third wave of thinking are concepts of intersectionality, recognition that gendered experiences are not equal, and a deeper dive into thoughts of privilege from many perspectives (Brown, 2010; Crenshaw, 1991).

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THIRD-WAVE FEMINIST COUNSELING THEORY

To avoid patriarchal hierarchies and associated rigidity that might come from one founder, feminist theory has maintained a collective of multiple voices that contribute to the theory's ongoing development. This makes it a more challenging theory to understand and apply clinically, due to the lack of structure and "techniques."

Feminist counseling theory and clinical practice focus on inspiring the college student toward a higher consciousness and empowerment to live an authentic life of personal existential freedom. There are therapeutically creative methods of recognizing culturally embedded, and often internalized, concepts of oppression, privilege, and other dominant heterosexual patriarchal norms. The feminist counselor believes that the dominant heteronormative patriarchal culture restricts views of "normal" and promotes psychic pain in people who do not fit into that restricted view (Brown, 2010). This can have an impact on a student's self-esteem, self-efficacy, individuality, potential for growth, and overall view of the world. The feminist counselor might clinically examine the restrictions of both privilege and oppression and create a space for a multiracial college student to process how hierarchies, labels, and social norms may have impacted their individual development. The ultimate objective is to help students decide how they want to be in the world with the freedom of more awareness and the need for unconscious conformity.

The feminist counselor working with a multiracial college student must create an emotionally safe environment for them to understand the psychological impact social norms and expectations may have had on their views of self and the world. Counseling can be an uncomfortable experience for the college student who may be developmentally focused on other aspects of life (Identity, seeking romantic relationships, and so forth (Erikson, 1959/1982). Students may encounter a self-examination of social norms and expectations and how they may have been internalized with a defensive stance. Students from collectivists cultures or family systems that have a negative view of a focus on "me" may make a student uncomfortable during this examination. A safe relationship is essential for the multiracial college student to allow the vulnerability of considering these new thoughts on a path to growth. Cultural and familial considerations must be honored during these psychological inquires. Feminist theory is always grounded in a safe relationship that monitors the power between the student and counselor (Brown, 2010). The goal is to empower the multiracial college student maximize their future, raise their consciousness, and move them toward personal and existential freedom. One must first understand some basic principles that guide the theory.

Hierarchies, Systems, and Ego

The feminist counselor recognizes that social hierarchies, and the associated systems (e.g., government, legal, educational, health/mental health, workplace) that keep the artificial alignments of power and control, often negatively impact many aspects of human suffering. The feminist counselor also recognizes that the cultural systems are based on the heteronormative white patriarchal legacy and carry the inheritance of the dominant European culture. This dominant "way of knowing" allows dominant groups to reinforce what is the right way to live, determine what is respectful, and define the road to happiness and success. These messages are often internalized by almost everyone in society (Chaplin, 1999) and allow for the oppressive dominant constructs to become the accepted normal. These hierarchical systems, despite some strides toward equality, often have not changed the overarching cultural beliefs and inequalities of mainstream thinking and can be associated with the internalized etiology of shame, self-blame, and psychic pain (Worell & Remer, 2002).

Additionally, the ego (the reality that we each construct and believe) is often based on accepting and internalizing capitalistic oppressive norms as correct and true, while the minority experience is often viewed as wrong, untrue, or manipulative. The feminist counselor helps the student deconstruct external and internal beliefs driven by the dominant patriarchal thoughts, systems, and norms, as well as reconstruct differential thoughts and beliefs without the societal, and often familial, influence. The goal is to have the student take full ownership of personal decisions around ways of being, living successfully, and other personal choices, not the decisions that were given to them by society. Ideally, this leads to individuation, personal responsibility, and a higher consciousness of lived experiences. The student can choose to align with the existing patriarchal norm(s), the difference being that it is a choice, not a truth.

Psychopathology

The feminist counselor rejects ideas of normative labels and psychopathology. The feminist counselor recognizes that the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) used in the medical model for diagnosing and treating psychopathology is a patriarchal construct, developed and evolved to categorize people based on normal curves and can do harm (Brown, 2010; Szasz, 2010). Szasz (2010) suggested, "Although powerful institutional forces lend their massive weight to the tradition of keeping psychiatric problems within a conceptual framework of medicine, the moral and scientific challenge is clear"

(pp. 262–263). The feminist counselor recognizes that they work in the confines of a medical system that often views the client through a diagnostic code—a label that may marginalize or oppress them in the future (Brown, 2010). Although the feminist counselor must know how to accurately diagnose and create a treatment plan, they do not need to conceptualize the clinical interventions from a pathology frame. The diagnosis can be a collaborative effort with the student understanding that they can accept or reject this diagnostic label depending on whether it is helpful to the students' growth.

Feminist counseling values the multiracial college student's individual phenomenological experience over the normal curve and recognizes that what is "normal" may not be healthy. For example, for the college-aged student, regular use and overuse of alcohol and drugs is considered socially normal yet is not always healthy. Career choices are sometimes based on the amount of money students will make after college, yet this choice is not always healthy. Social pressure to be in a heterosexual romantic relationship can lead to unhealthy behavior. The college student needs to decide what they want to believe and then behave in a fully conscious manner, whether it is based on collectivist thought or individuation.

Although the name "Feminist theory" implies femineity, third wave feminist counseling theory has broadened the scope of healing from oppressive societal norms beyond women to other genders, including men. Gardiner (2002) stated, "Masculinity, too, is a gender and therefore … men as well as women have undergone historical and cultural processes of gender formation that distribute power and privilege unevenly" (p. 11). The feminist collective of clinicians has recognized that multiple factors contribute to every person's identity and to society's view of them as good/bad, successful/unsuccessful, appealing/unappealing, or oppressed/privileged. These factors include race, ability, socially agreed-on attractiveness, fitness/weight, socioeconomic factors, sexuality, education, geography, birth circumstances, family education, and career opportunities (Collins & Bilge, 2020). Each identity allows society to interact with the student as a privileged person, if part of the patriarchal majority, or an oppressed one, if the student is not part of the dominant normal curve.

The concept of intersectionality helps the client identify and examine how society views the multiple identities the client embodies. Collins and Bilge (2020) suggested, "For many individuals, this focus on the social construction of intersectional identities that can be differentially performed from one setting to the next has been a space of individual empowerment" (p. 167). Intersectional exploration may help the multiracial college aged person identify whether they have assimilated with society to deny or downplay parts of themself or whether they have embraced all parts of themself. This allows for a deep self-analysis of identity and ownership of

the self and for acceptance or rejection of the oppression or privilege that comes with the many parts of the self.

Patriarchal Differentiation

Borrowed from Bowen's (1985) family systems theory, the concept of differentiation describes a maturation of the self when a family member begins to individuate thought and actions from the family and takes ownership and responsibility for their own life choices. This is a different experience for people of different cultures, socioeconomic status, and so forth. Bowen (1985) stated, "If we follow the multigenerational lineage of those who emerge with higher levels of differentiation, we see a line of highly functioning and very successful people" (p. 385). This differentiation examination process often organically begins in the college-age years as the student learns other ways of being and organically begins to understand the privilege and oppression on an intellectual level, as well as a felt level. Feminist theory might encourage the multiracial college student to examine the differentiation from cultural/social heteronormative patriarchal systems that might allow them to reach a sense of freedom, agency, and personal responsibility. It is important to note that differentiation is not a rejection of what exists, it is a decision as to whether the student would like to maintain the internalized messages into adulthood. Examining with a deep dive into the social structures that seem "true" or "normal" can open the student to owning responsibility for beliefs and behaviors. The counselor can never forget the cultural and familial context the client is experiencing during the process. They can leave to more conscious living and a more authentic self by making and owning their choices. It is important to note that not individuating is an equal choice and solely determined by the client.

Power and Empowerment

The feminist counselor pays special attention to the personal power students may or may not feel in different situations in different parts of their life. Veldhuis (2001) stated, "To have power is to have the energy, ability, or agency to control, to act, to affect, to do, to produce, to impact or to influence oneself, others, events or feelings" (p. 40). The goal is to help the college student find empowerment in all aspects of life and make choices free of internalized oppression or privilege. The power differential between the student and counselor is monitored carefully as a therapeutic tool, aiming for the student to have more power than the counselor often