I Think I am a Feminist:

A Study of Feminist Identity Development of Undergraduate College Women

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Acknowledgments

Abstract

Although today's college women take advantage of the opportunities made available to them by the effort of the feminist movement, the word feminism has a negative connotation for many young women who deny identification with the label when describing themselves. Central research questions included: a) how is feminism defined by the college women in this study; b) what is the current start of feminism on this college campus; and c) how do the epistemological perspective of these young women relate to their understanding and acceptance of feminism. Fifty-six undergraduate women at a selective co-educational liberal arts institution completed a survey of their position on feminism and were asked to identify as a)feminist, b) non-feminist, or c) don't know. Twenty-five of these respondents were interviewed in depth to explore their experience of feminism. Epistemological stage of the participants was studied through the use of the Measure of Epistemological Reflection (Baxter Magolda & Porterfield, 1985). Half of the women in the study considered themselves feminist and many in the "don't know" category were exploring feminism. Definitions of feminism were contextual and varied greatly among the respondents, depending upon their position on feminism and their experiences and values. These college women faced many obstacles in developing a feminist identity: lack of role models, negative stereotypes, peer pressure, and lack of information. Each woman's epistemological stage was integral in helping her deal with these obstacles, gain awareness and form an opinion based on her own beliefs and needs. The research results in the development of a new model of feminist identity development. Five positions through which college women develop a feminist identity are presented in the model: afeminist, non-feminist, non-feminist supporter of feminist issues, feminist with qualifiers and feminist. Case studies that illustrate each position are presented. The state of feminism cannot be measured in traditional ways. Rather than counting the participants in feminist organizations and women's studies classes, new approaches must be used to uncover the extent of feminism. Although many of the women in the study were not "active" in traditional ways, nevertheless feminism was very significant in their lives.

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CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

The history of women in American higher education reveals a long-standing tension between the espoused ideals of democracies and fairness, and the realities of struggle for access, equality, and social justice. Although women, through Federal law and institutional policies, have equal access to the same facilities, faculty, and programs as their male classmates, their experiences of these educational benefits are typically not equal (Hall & Sandler, 1982). The "backlash" movements against feminism described in the mass media (Faludi, 1991) also exist in higher education settings, obscuring the inequalities of the educational experience for women.

Feminism

Feminism is a social, political ideology with a broad purpose of advancing the status of women. Mainstream feminism as a social movement has its origins in the woman suffrage campaigns of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The modern women's movement is based largely on the civil rights struggles of the mid-20th century. Feminism as a political stance has a goal of gender equality, but there are multiple approaches within feminism, expressing different philosophical or theoretical explanations for the source of inequality and different paths toward abolishing it (Tong, 1989). Liberal feminism, for example, focuses on social and economic structures such as the difference in men's and women's earnings, the absence of women in particular careers or social roles, and the differential treatment of boys and girls in the educational system. Radical feminism centers the oppression of women in the body, through sexuality, reproduction, and representation in pornography or other media. Other feminisms locate the source of oppression in other social or political structures. Some of these include socialist feminism, Marxist feminism, eco-feminism, multicultural feminism, and womanism

(Delmar, 1994; Hughes, 1998).

In addition to multiple approaches to feminism, there are different ways of expressing feminist beliefs. Activist feminists work publicly to effect political and social change. Activists work in political action groups, provide services for survivors of domestic violence and sexual abuse, hold public protests and demonstrations, or engage in other visible woman-centered work. Academic feminists are concerned with exploring and understanding the theoretical underpinnings of oppression and advancing knowledge about sources and solutions. These feminists use research and teaching as tools of dismantling the dominant paradigms and envisioning new ways of making meaning. The categories of activist and academic are not mutually exclusive, but rather can be seen as overlapping. Each feminist expresses her or his beliefs in unique ways and has a different level of activist or academic commitment.

The belief in feminist goals is widespread. Buschman and Lenart (1996) found that 59% of the undergraduate women they surveyed had some degree of feminist orientation. College women surveyed by Williams and Wittig (1997) showed a 63% rate of support for feminist goals. Another sample of college and non-college women indicated that 52% had some level of feminist identification (Cowan, Mestlin, & Masek, 1992). For many women, however, the adoption of feminist beliefs and a feminist identity comes later in life (Astin & Leland, 1991). It might be expected that the proportion of women espousing feminism would increase with age.

Belief in feminist goals does not necessarily indicate a willingness to adopt a feminist label, however. Several studies have revealed a reluctance to accept the label of "feminist" (Astin & Leland, 1991; Buschman & Lenart, 1996; Myaskovsky & Wittig, 1997; Renzetti, 1987; Williams & Wittig, 1997). Some explanations for this include (a) holding negative views of feminists based on stereotypical images presented by the

media (Buschman & Lenart, 1996), (b) a perception that women do not need collective effort for success but can rely on individual achievement (Renzetti, 1987), or (c) fear of association as a radical or lesbian (Williams & Wittig, 1997). Additionally, women of color may resist the label because mainstream feminism does not address the specific needs and issues of diverse communities of women (Williams &Wittig, 1997). African American women, for example, may be more likely to identify as womanists rather than as feminists.

"Womanist" is a term coined by Alice Walker (1983) to refer to Black feminists or other feminists of color. To many, the women's movement and feminism have been seen as a middle-class White women's movement, promoting a liberal feminist agenda aimed at providing equal opportunity for White women. This, too, has contributed to disillusionment with the feminist label. African American women and other women of color have felt disenfranchised by the liberal feminist agenda which did not apply to their experiences of multiple oppressions based on race, ethnicity, class, and gender (Baker & Kline, 1996). The womanist movement offers some parallels to feminism in the goals of equality and empowerment, but also differs significantly from the agenda of liberal feminism. Womanism is another of the diverse ways that feminism can be expressed. To refer to both womanists and feminists in the discussion of identity is one way to be inclusive of a diverse group of women committed to advancing the status of women. The interaction of feminism and sexual orientation is another important area of inquiry. Many women have resisted becoming involved in the women's movement or calling themselves feminists due to homophobia and fear of being assumed to be lesbians (Ireland, 1996). Similarly, many lesbians rejected the liberal feminist agenda as focusing on heterosexual women's concerns and ignoring issues of sexual orientation. For women

who identify as feminists and as lesbians, it is important to consider if and how these identities complement or contradict each other.

Regardless of the theoretical or philosophical approach that may be implicit in the perspective, the identity element enters when a person says, "I am a feminist" or "I am a womanist." This affirmative claiming of a feminist identity is clearly linked to the definition of identity offered above: an internal self-perception (feminist/womanist) combined with a connection to a social environment (woman's movement/womanist movement). The particular stance in feminism may vary; what is important to identity is that the label be claimed as part of who the person is. It is in this way that the ideology of feminism separates from the identity as feminist. It is my argument that a belief in a feminist political or social agenda is evidence of holding a feminist ideology. Incorporating ideological belief into a self-definition that guides how people make sense of their experiences transforms the ideology into identity.

Higher education today represents a very different experience for young women than for earlier generations, thanks to the progress their feminist predecessors gained in the struggle against gender discrimination (Astin & Leland, 1991). For example, the women's movements of the 1970's, Equal Rights Amendment legislation, affirmative action and Title IX, all contributed to increasing access and equality for women across societal institutions. College women in the 1990's gained access to more academic disciplines as well as more choices of college types, campus activities, sports, and funding for tuition. Although today's college women take advantage of the opportunities made available to them by the efforts of the older feminist movement, most seem to take these opportunities and the struggle it obtain them for granted (Faludi, 1991; Lather, 1991). Indeed, the word feminism has a negative connotation for many young women who vehemently deny identification with the label when describing themselves.

Several popular books (Faludi, 1991; Sommers, 1994; Wolf, 1993) by both proponents and critics of the contemporary feminist movement explored the "backlash" against feminism in contemporary society while offering explanations for its unpopularity. These theories range from fear of lesbian explanations for feminism's unpopularity and fear of lesbian stereotyping to criticism of a clandestine feminist "agenda." For example, some media outlets have ridiculed college feminists as strident protestors who objected to the conversion of Mills College in 1980's to co-ed institution and who thought Barbara Bush, "America's Mom," was not a suitable commencement speaker for Wellesley College in 1990 (Wolf, 1993). The derogatory term "femi-nazi," attributed to right-wing talk show host Rush Limbaugh, squelches feminist activism by equating it with the fervent single-minded hatred associated with the Germany's Nazi regime. The gender equality debate remains largely political and socially polarizing.

In this study, I argue that feminism continues to have an impact on college women but the nature and complexity of that influence are unclear. Kamen (1991) interviewed 103 self-described non-activist women about feminism in the late 1980's and early 1990's. Ten percent of the women in her study could not define feminism, while the remainder fell along the following continuum: 46% stated " I'm a feminist but…" 13% said "I'm not a feminist but…" a matching 13% qualified " I'm might be a feminist but…" and only 18% identified themselves as having a feminist identity is not without qualification (pp. 22-23). Uncertainty about one's feminist identity is not surprising as college women are barraged with multiple and frequently conflicting definitions and exception of feminism.

Problem Identification: The Unpopularity of Feminism Among College Women

A spate of recent books has outlined various theories regarding women's rejection of the feminist label. Feminism has even been identified as the new "F" word (Wolf, 1993). The label

feminism is fraught with connotation Kamen (1991) found that subjects of her study considered

the label politically hazardous, reactionary, alienating, and radical. The terms feminism and

feminist, have taken on different meaning for today's young women far beyond the struggle for

gender equality. Wallis (1989) comments, "Hairy legs haunt the feminist movement, as do

images of being strident and lesbian. Feminine clothing is back, breasts are back, motherhood is

popular again. To the young, the movement that loudly rejected female stereotypes seems

hopelessly dated" (p. 84).

Popular explanations for why young women are rejecting a feminist identity fall under

two broad categories: fear of being labeled with the many stereotypes associated with feminist as

lesbian, and women who are anti-motherhood and anti-family, career-obsessed, man-hating,

militant, petty and confrontational (Kamen, 1991; Sommers, 1994). Those who can move

beyond the labels cite frustrations with the movement and its lack of relevance to their lives and

issues. Kamen suggested that young women of color cannot find models or mediums, which

represent their interest in a movement which primarily consist of White upper class older

women. Without a clear connection to the overarching policy-driven and self-empowerment

goals of a 30-year movement, young women are more susceptible to media influences which

present negative images of feminists. The marginalization of feminism may be attributed to

problems with the women's movement itself or to combination of factors summarized by (Wolf,

1993):

> Selective and distorted coverage of the movement in the media…a tendency [of
> feminists] to be more comfortable on the margins, preaching to the choir, and a clubhouse
> mentality. Marginalization was guaranteed by the publication of several theories
> that…sounded counter intuitive and sometimes absurd to mainstream women and men.
> These theories and positions, denied debating room in the mainstream, hardened into
> rigid proscriptions, which coupled with a fear of debate to weakened the movements
> intellectual health and narrow the entry into it. Added to all this was the relocation of
> feminist debate from the mainstream press into the university, where the language that

developed around it became increasingly obscure to outsiders; a development that intensified the perception that feminism was a White, middle-class, or elitist movement. (pp. 66-67)

This study explores the ideological and identity conflict college women regarding notion of feminism. Wallis (1989) states that some women, "both wish to appropriate and yet resist feminist theoretical and political positions" and this student seeks to understand that tension within the lives of college women. (pp. 9-11). If college women are rejecting a feminist identity, it is that denial a problem for the cognitive and psychosocial development of contemporary college women. The widely recognized spokeswoman for American feminism, Ms. Magazine founder, Gloria Steinem, denied that the unpopularity of feminism on campus signifies the downfall of feminism. She explained that the female pattern to activism usually occurs later in life, after women have encountered "radicalizing experiences, such as unequal pay, marriage, child care, and aging" (Steinem, 1983). According to Steinem, "as students, women are probably treated with more equality than we ever will be again" (p. 212). Support for Steinem's theory of activism is provided by young feminist (Findlen, 1995; Walker, 1995) who have struggled with radicalizing experiences such as abortion, homophobia, sexual abuse, and addiction at an early age.

In contrast, Wolf (1993) argued that simply explaining or rationalizing the unpopularity of feminism among young women is not enough. According to Wolf, this unpopularity prevents women from achieving their goals: "a woman's life divorced from a view of feminism she can act upon is half helpless" (p.59). Karmen (1991) shared this perspective and suggested that young women need consciousness raising. She feared the feminist stigma would continue to radicalize feminism and marginalize women's issues (pp. 7-8). Kamen states, "the great irony is that although feminism has generally made a tremendous difference in the perceptions and

opportunities in many of these people's lives, it is something that they almost universally shun" (p. 24). Steinem and Vaid (1993) proposed that "the real opposition comes when you say, 'I'm a feminist, I'm for equal power for all women,' which is a revolution, instead of 'I'm for equal rights for me,' which is a reform" (p. 35). Young women seem to agree with the latter statement but are hesitant to work towards the former.

Purpose of the Study

I chose to study this subject because I work with college women who deny their feminist identity as well as the existence of sexism in their lives. Meanwhile, there have been incidents of rape and sexual harassment by professors and peers as well as issues related to low self esteem are reported to me by these same women and their classmates. I argue that claming a feminist identity is empowering and their consciousness-raising is a critical component of eradicating discrimination against women. it is an important element of their Identity development. The purpose of this study is to explore the development of a feminist identity among college women and the role feminism plays in their college experience. A critical component of the research will focus on epistemological development and exploration of contention between epistemological stages and feminist identity. As a student affairs practitioner, I hope my research will ultimately inform and influence student affairs practice to improve the educational experience for women.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this study:

1. How do college women define feminism?
2. What is the current state if femism on college campuses?
3. What is the relationship between Measure of Epistemological Reflection (MER) stages and feminism?
4. What other forces are associated with feminism?
5. What fears desued students from different lives as feminist?

Significance

The fact that woman's educational experience differ considerably from their male classmates (Astin, 1978, 1993; Hall & Sandler, 1982) raises the issue of equality of educational opportunity. These differences may inhibit women's self-esteem and achievement (Arnold, 1993; Hall & Sandler;1982, Holland & Eisenhart, 1990). Development of a feminist identity may counteract the effects of differential treatment as well as motivate college women to demand equal opportunities. Understanding the relationship between feminist identity development and epistemological development, and the connections to other college experiences, may assist educators in creating environments or opportunities, which enhance feminist identity development.

The feminist movement was founded on principles of social justice, principles similarly espoused by the student affairs profession. Social justice demands that the inequity of the college experience be challenged and eradicated, just as feminism demands the eradication of discrimination based on gender. Student development scholars and practitioners must continue to study the experience of college women if they are to provide a learning environment, which is equally supportive and encouraging for both male and female students.

The majority of college students are women, yet student development research historically privileged men by focusing on their experiences and ignoring the unique standpoint of college women. Research on college women's development is limited, and many gaps in the literature and understanding of those processes still exist. Although recent research in cognitive development of women has greatly influenced student development theory, connections have not been made between feminist identity development and cognitive/epistemological development. This study fills that gap in the literature by exploring the relationship between feminist identity

development and epistemological development. In addition, it examiner various curricular and extra-curricular activities that of contributes to the larger student development literature.

Implication for Practice

This study can assist higher education administrators in encouraging the full, equal, and just development of women college students by adding to the knowledge and theory regarding college women's development. Discussion and exploration of positive and negative attitudes toward feminism may lead to greater understanding of feminism as well as positive and negative attitudes toward women. The nuance of feminist identity development, heard in the voices and stories of the study, is the development of a conceptual model, which will enrich the existing body of student development literature about women.

CHAPTER TWO:

LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the problems facing young women who are exploring feminism is the variety of definitions of feminism. To bell hooks, "the essence of feminism is opposition to patriarchy and to sexist oppression" (Wolf, hooks, Steinem & Vaid, 1993, p. 35). Women's studies texts further define feminism as "valuing what is female" Kamen, 1991 p.25). Students interviewed by Kamen stated that feminism represented identity, Autonomy, political inclusion, and freedom (.p 25). As a synonym for feminism, the term " women's liberation" establishes a link between all oppressions and capitalizes on the metaphor of enslavement and freedom.

Historical Background of Feminism

The variety of definitions and the confusion many women experience in understanding the contemporary movement may be a result of the long and complicated history of the Women's Movement. Young women, often unaware of the many gains feminists attained over the years, focus only in the contemporary manifestation of feminism without understanding the movement in the context of its history. It seems that far too many people continue to link the feminist

movement exclusively to the activism of bourgeois white women and not to the struggles initiated by African Americans for freedom, justice, and equality. Despite this popular misconception, the fact is that the history of feminism in the United States is marked by three distinct periods or waves, suffrage, equal rights, and economic and reproductive freedom, that are directly connected to, and outgrowths of, two key movements in African American history: the abolitionist movement (which culminated with the suffragists' securing passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920) and the modern civil rights movement (which peaked with the enforcement, during the 1970s, of Title VII and Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1964). During both of these monumental historical periods and the third wave that followed them, countless numbers of black women activists developed a distinctly feminist consciousness that gave them an agency to strive for empowerment on their own terms. Collectively, their feminism was more expansive than the agenda put forth by white women, in that specific social, economic, and political issues facing African American communities were incorporated into a theoretical paradigm that today we call black feminism.

Some of the crucial elements of black feminist theory that surface in the scholarship and activism of black women during the tail end of the second wave of feminism in the 1970s, and on the eve of the third wave in the 1980s and 1990s. Close attention should be paid to the fact that when African American women advocate black feminism, their discourse recognizes how systems of power are configured around maintaining socially constructed categories of both race and gender. And, since economic difference is the main determinant producing variations in their lives, black feminists attack racism, sexism, and poverty simultaneously. The ultimate goal of black feminism is to create a political movement that not only struggles against exploitative capitalism and what Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham calls the "racialized construction of

sexuality," but that also seeks to develop institutions to protect what the dominant culture has little respect and value for --black women's minds and bodies (Higginbotham, 1992).

Unfortunately, black feminists' efforts to shape their own destiny are too often marginalized and/or interpreted as divisive by others. I will present examples attesting to the tensions black feminists experience with both black men and white society at large, as a means to engage in a dialogue on difficult issues that will not change until we confront and transform reactionary thinking and problematic behavior. Most significantly, the affirmation is essential to contemporary black feminism: a recognition of the importance of theory as a means of stimulating a particular mode of action and an understanding that "all discrimination is eventually the same thing -- anti-humanism," an observation made by Shirley Chisholm in 1971 that still holds true today (Chisholm, 1971).

The suffrage movement in America was integrally connected to the abolitionist movement in the 19th century. After being banned from abolition is convention in London in 1840, upper class and educated women reformers organized the first Women's Convention in Seneca Falls, New York in 1848. By 1900, many states had granted women legal and property rights but the federal government still prohibited women from voting. When Wyoming joined the Union in 1890, its constitution gave women the vote. Other states joined Wyoming and eventually the 19th amendment was ratified in 1920, revising the constitution and granting women the right to vote.

The advent of birth control methods and the increasing presence of women in the work force during and after World War II increased awareness that women's role were changing but laws and salaries were not keeping pace. Feminists struggled to eliminate gender-based classifications and pay inequities. Legislation such as the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 were early victories. The National Organization for Women (NOW) was

established in 1966 with a mission to achieve ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment

(ERA). The ERA prohibited gender-based denials in Constitutional rights and was first proposed

in 1923 but not passed by Congress until 1972. The required ratification of the Amendment by

38 states did not occur by the 1982 deadline.

The economic and reproductive freedom period, typically recognized as the third wave of

the women's movement in the United States, is less well defined than the previous waves.

Equality continued to be the goal; however, equality was not focused in a single issue as in the

first and second waves. Reproductive freedom and political activism remain priorities of NOW,

and issues such as lesbian rights, abortion, childcare, and women's health are emphasized by the

leadership of the feminist movement. By various factions within the movement, promote

different priorities depending upon their interests. Women of color suggest that the movement

must focus on the diversity of women's experience (Anzaldua & Moraga, 1984; Findlen, 1995;

hooks, 1984). Lesbians stress the importance of gay rights and are concerned about homophobia

within the movement and society. Complex issues and divergent views abound among feminist

for example pro-life feminists protest the inclusion of abortion rights in the feminist platform

while pro-choice feminist insisted upon it.

The struggle to end violence against women is the focus of many feminist student groups

and women's shelters. Still others insist that economic and political issues such as salary equity,

welfare, and equal representation in government are the most important priorities for women.

As we enter the third wave of feminism and African American studies in the twenty-first

century, more African American women are flatly rejecting a black feminist political

identification. Without a doubt, the well-documented reactionary behavior on part of many white

women has brought us to this juncture where the word "feminist" cannot be cleansed of its racist

and elitist historical baggage. Yet, as African American women discard black feminism, many are adopting "womanism."

Womanism, a term coined by Alice Walker, has four elements which first and foremost include "a Black feminist or feminist of color." Second, is one who "appreciates and prefers women's culture." Third, is "love" of culture and "self." Finally, the most routinized section of this quadruple expression is simply, "womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender (Walker, 1983)." Walker's color-coded theoretical parallel is primarily useful as a literary device. Nonetheless, she provides a basis for other scholars to shape the concept for analysis by implying that "womanism has a greater scope" and "intensity" than black feminism (King, 1985).

Elsa Barkley Brown's "Womanist Consciousness: Maggie Lena Walker and the Independent Order of Saint Luke" serves as the archetype for a womanist analysis. Barkley Brown details how Maggie Lena Walker's theory and activism were not separate parts; they "are often synonymous, and it is only through her actions that we clearly hear her theory."(Brown, 1989) For Barkley Brown, womanist theory fuses "race, sex, and class oppression as forming one struggle. Womanism flows from a both/and worldview, a consciousness that allows for the resolution of seeming contradictions not through an either/or negation but through the interaction and wholeness ."(Brown, 1989)." Because womanism or womanish behavior is centered in a "holistic consciousness" it is not surprising that many African American women embrace this concept, and rightfully so.

Despite the contention that womanism is more encompassing, black feminism and womanism would seem to be nearly interchangeable empowerment theories. Both avow the importance of grounding the activism of black women in their cultural heritage - a culture that overall does not encourage submissiveness or docility amongst its members. This cultural tradition provides a fertile ground for black women to resist oppression. Both theories encourage

black women to value and love self, regardless of outsiders' perceptions. (One of the most vicious weapons used by racists to exploit the labor power of, and to sexually abuse black women, has been to dehumanize and objectify them.) Lastly, both recognize black women's serious, responsible commitment to creating a whole community void of dominance.

Despite the similarities between these paradigms, many womanists continue to disclaim black feminism. While it is important to acknowledge the current anti-feminist trend in the United States, we should ask whether there are other reasons womanists resist black feminism. Are womanists discarding feminism because of its connection to privileged, white, middle- and upper-class women, despite Audre Lorde's statement that "Black feminism is not white feminism in blackface." Or, are womanist's rejecting the presumed "anti-feminine" baggage of feminism? Or, is adopting a concept -- womanism -- named by a black woman, merely "politically correct"?

Womanism is a sweeping theoretical conruct, and black women tend to select the most attractive parts of the theory to meet their needs. The flexibility of the term suits the multiple voices of black women, but it also leaves room for the negative appropriation or the disposal of "unappealing" aspects of the theory. For example, early Religious Studies scholars who employed the theory, dismissed the possibility of its including a lesbian lifestyle. Thus a fertile ground for lesbian baiting may eventually thrive despite the fact that Walker's definition incorporates women loving women, sexually and non-sexually. Black feminism, on the other hand, does not leave room for this type of dilution. The positionality of black lesbians in developing black feminist theory, especially in the 1980s, is irrevocable.

Both womanism and black feminism recognize a distinct women's culture. It seems that womanism allows black women a "femininity" presumably denied under "feminism." Prior to the modern civil rights movement, enslaved black women were written about by historians as if they were androgynous. Sojourner Truth's feminism acknowledged that slavery denied black women

"feminine" qualities, and in particular their right to be mothers. But by the second wave, white feminists located their oppression in "female" roles, and the "women's libbers" connected exterior "female" attire (bras, high heel shoes) to their oppression. But for many black women, attire and the home were not the principal sites of their oppression. In fact, the denial of black women's "femininity" has been the main vehicle used to exploit their labor power and womanhood.

Wokmanism's broad theoretical makeup nd emphasis on culture, implicitly rooted in black women's varied experiences, can be interpreted as something distinctly "feminine" and therefore enticing for many black women. But will conservative women like Phyllis Schlafly or Shahrazad Ali, in their effort to undermine the gains made by women advocating feminism, appropriate and manipulate elements of "womanism," particularly women's culture, and "women's emotional flexibility" to serve their own reactionary political aims?

Black feminism has withstood the test of time and continues to be an impressive political paradigm. Holding on to this theory is a way of protecting a progressive political agenda. Despite the fact that womanism is nearly interchangeable with black feminism, it is a relatively new empowerment theory and has not undergone a critical examination by scholars. Black feminism may conjure up the racist history of white women, but it must also be identified with the glorious tradition of black female activists' trenchant commitment to empowering themselves to create a humanistic community. It is because of this irrevocable fact that leading African American activists continue to embrace a feminist identity on the eve of the third wave (Taylor, 1989).

Multiple definitions of feminism and the complicated agenda of the movement confuse college women (Kamen, 1991). Many question whether they should claim the label "feminist" if they do not espouse all of the beliefs described by the various platforms (Walker, 1995). Others remain unclear about what claming a feminist identity might involve.

Feminism and Feminist Beliefs on Campus

While equal opportunity for women may be valued by young college women, many take for granted the gains in equality made by the second-wave feminist of the 1960s. Regardless of their stance on feminism, women in Kamen's (1991) study recognized the contributions of the feminist movement: "even those who fiercely denied that they were feminist or never before heard the word voiced strong support for women's rights in general. Most said they appreciated the women's movement and believed in that they described as its most basic goals and principles" (p.23). In a 1990 Time/CNN survey, 62% of women surveyed agreed that feminists have been helpful to women (Gibbs, 1990, p. 89).

While college women endorse the struggles for equality, some fear that achieving equality will require them to forsake femininity (Walker, 1995). Some notion of feminism is often equated with a condemnation of chivalry as evidenced by the prevailing myth that feminist hate to have doors opened for them (Karmen, 1991). Whereas feminists were once labeled as "bra-burners," now they are stereotyped as strident women who insist on opening their own doors and using politically correct gender-neutral language. Unfortunately, these critics do not understand that feminists take exception not with the helpful act of opening a door, but with the symbolism behind the gesture the implication that women is fragile and always needs the help of a man. The political correctness backlash against feminism focuses on semantics rather than the ides that replacing masculine language with gender-neutral or inclusive terms builds self-esteem. This emphasis on terminology and semantics minimizes attempts to combat sexism as evidenced in continuing the use of language, which has excluded women.

Feminists do populate college campuses. Findlen (1995) collected essays from a diverse and committed group of young feminist activists. Her title, *Listen Up: Voice from the Next*

Feminist Generation, indicates that feminism is alive and well among young women. The wide variety of perspectives she collected indicate that there is not just one young feminist voice, but perhaps as many different voices as there are feminists. Her text chronicles the awakening of these voices through both cataclysmic and gradual changes in their lives. These feminists eloquently described the conflicts and challenges they face as feminist and women.

Theories of College Women's Development

In the early 1960's, Nevitt Sanford (1962, 1966) revolutionized the burgeoning field of student development with his theory of disequilibrium. Sanford proposed that development would be enhanced by an environment balancing challenge and support. Opening an unexplored theoretical area, the next three decades saw new research and theories about moral, cognitive, and psychosocial development of students (Chickering, 1969; Kohlberg. 1981; Perry, 1970). In recent years, many of these theories have been challenged and revised to reflect the experience of women

Moral Development

Carol Gilligan (1982) was one of the first scholars to raise questions regarding the applicability of male-normed research for women. Her book, *In a Different Voice*, introduced the possibility that men and women follow different developmental patterns. Although her work focused on moral development, it raised questions and suggested new approaches to studying women in cognitive, social, and emotional areas. Gilligan's emphasis on "voice" is particularly apt as other researchers (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986; Hall & Sandler, 1982) described how different it is for women to be heard on campus.

Gilligan's Ethic of Care

Gilligan (1982) found that women differ from men in significant ways in developing moral reasoning. As a student of Lawrence Kohlberg, Gilligan noticed that women frequently failed to achieve as higher level of development as men in Kohlberg's stage theory. Within Kohlberg's six stages of moral development, Gilligan noted that women frequently progressed only to the third stage, where goodness is viewed in terms of relationship to others. Unwilling to accept Kohlberg's explanation of women's moral deficiency in relation to men, she researched moral development in women, concluding that women had a different construction of moral problem, a "different voice." Rather that using a right and justice perspective, women view morality "as a problem of care and responsibility in relationships" (p.73). Although the responsibility and right voices appear to be gender-related, they are not gender-exclusive (Gilligan, 1982). According to Gilligan's model, responsibility is more highly valued by those whose self-concepts is linked to others while those who define themselves as separate and autonomous focus on the importance of right (Belenky et al., 1986, p.8).

To develop her theory of women's development, Gilligan used research from three studies: the college student study, abortion decision study, and rights and responsibilities study. Progression through Gilligan's three stages of moral development involves conflict, which leads the women transitions to new stages. Stage one is characterized by caring for oneself to ensure individual survival. However, society views caring only for oneself as selfness, which precipitates a transitional phase of conflict between selfishness and responsibility. In stage two, the needs of the self are subsumed by the needs of others, and morality is viewed as care for others. This eventually created a crisis of identity where the inequality of self in comparison to the needs of others is recognized. Stage three, interdependence, restores the equilibrium between

the needs of the self and the needs of others. In the interdependence stage, one accepts the interconnection between the self and other as positive and healthy.

Gilligan's work was revolutionary because it raised compelling questions regarding the nature of research and assumptions about women. Research conducted on men but applied to women was clearly challenged. Other researchers initiated additional studies to further explore how women's development differed from that of men (Baxter Magolda, 1992; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986). Arthur Chickering, one of the leading college student development theorists, with the assistance of a female co-author, Linda Reisser, significantly revised his germinal, significant, prolific work in psychosocial development, *Education and Identity* (1993), to include new knowledge on women's development.

Cognitive Development and Epistemological Theories

After Gilligan's ground-breaking work challenged the applicability of male-normed theories in understanding women's development, researchers began using new methods and assumptions to study the cognitive development of women. Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule wrote *Women's Ways of Knowing* (1986) after studying how women understand and claim knowledge. Baxter Magolda's epistemological reflection model (1992) suggests that there are gender-linked pattern of differentiation within cognitive development stages.

Women's Ways of Knowing

Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986) applied Perry's (1970) and Gilligan's (1982) work in a study, which explored the voice and silences of women in educational environments. Perry proposed a cognitive development schemes based on research of a sample of male Harvard students. According to his theory, students view knowledge in a progressively more complex position from dualism to multiplicity to relativism. Perry suggested that

intellectual development is directly related to identity development as the student examines her or her values and commitments (Roger, 1989). Although Perry's work continues to be used to understand intellectual development, his study was based on a homogeneous sample of predominantly male students. The two women interviewed in his sample were not included in the results (Belenky et al., 1986; Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Belenky et al. (1986) worked from Perry's emphasis on the interconnection between self-concept and intellectual development yet focused on women's experience with knowledge. They sought to understand how the educational environment fosters knowledge acquisition and development of self-concept among women. They conceived a model with five different epistemological "perspective from which women view reality and draw conclusion about truth, knowledge, and authority" (p.3). The authors convincingly demonstrated the relationship between women's ways of knowing and their concepts of self. Belenky et al.'s model includes the following five stages: silence, received knowing, subjective knowing, procedural knowing and constructed knowing.

Silence. The first and most disturbing way of knowing is silence. Within this perspective, women feel they have no voice and remain completely under the control of others. Self-concept is poor as the woman sees herself only in relationship to dominate others. No inner voice or self-awareness is evident at this point. College women may be rendered silent when intimidated by the experience and knowledge of experts such as confident and articulate professors and classmates. Rather than raising questions or speaking opinions, they silently defer to their peers and diligently copy and study the comments of others.

Received knowing. Cognitive development progresses in the received knowledge stage, as the learner recognizes herself as capable of learning and receiving knowledge from experts,

albeit passively. Knowledge is still generated outside of herself, so the learner does not turn

inward to develop her own self-concept. A received knower views herself in terms of the

expectations of others and is very dependent upon their opinions. Her self-concept and

understanding of her social and occupational roles are dualistic, based on strict standards of right

and wrong. A college woman in this stage may begin to speak up in class, but usually quotes

other rather than expressing her own thoughts. Consequently, She is easily swayed by the

opinions of friend and experts.

Subjective knowing. Subjective knowers begin to perceive knowledge and truth as

personal and subjective. Conflict between the learner's intuition and the teaching of authority

figures surface as an inner voice is heard and acknowledged. Her opinions are based on intuition

and feelings rather than factual information. Subjective knowers begin to recognize the choice

between the needs of the self and those of others. Belenky et al. (1986) found that their subjects

did not make the smooth transition into moral interdependence that Gilligan's study suggested.

Although subjective knowers begin to recognize the importance of their needs, they do not yet

exhibit moral maturity Because the very foundation of their beliefs about themselves is being

challenged, self-concept is confusing for subjective knowers who formerly defined themselves in

terms of roles and relationships. The following quote illustrates this point:

> The instability and flux that subjective women experiment when they contemplate their future is due, in part, to the lack of grounding in a secure, integrated, and enduring self-concept. Whereas in the position of received knowledge, women derive a sense of "who I am" from the definition others supply and the roles they fill, subjectivist women shift away from this perspective and experience a wrenching away of the familiar contexts and relationships within which the old identity has been embedded (Belenky et al, 1986, p.81).

The search for a new inner-directed self-concept is paramount for the subjective knower

but may be a painful one as she explores new identities and experiences. Subjective

college women may be eager to embrace new causes and friends while casting away their former identities and associations. Course work that allows them to subjectively explore and develop knowledge is particularly appealing.

Relationship to self-concept.   While the authors did not discuss the relationship to self-concept in their chapter on procedural knowers, women in this stage exhibited stronger self-concepts as evidenced by their willingness to speak out and challenge others. Connected knowers were quieter than separate knowers, especially in classrooms, which often favor separate knowers. Separate knowing, which involves critical thinking and challenging authority, appear to be related to a stronger self-concept.

Students in women's colleges were more likely to be separate knower while women in co-ed environments more frequently used connected knowing. This pattern raises questions regarding the importance of single sex environments and self-concept, the negative impact of co-education upon women's self-esteem, and whether more procedural knowers would be connected knowers if educational environment were supportive of that perspective.

Constructed knowing. Subjective and objective strategies for knowing are integrated in constructed knowledge as women begin to understand their role as creator of knowledge. Knowledge in this stage is viewed as contextual (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 15). Constructed knowers were frequently close to graduation or entering a new phase in their lives. They were able to integrate the knowledge they learned in college with their awareness and intuition. Integration is critical in constructed knowing: "to reclaim the self by attempting to integrate knowledge that they felt intuitively was personally important with knowledge they have learned from others…weaving together the strand of

rational and emotive thought and of integrating objective and subjective knowing" (Belenky et al., 1986, p.134). The self is influenced and "reclaimed" through knowledge, which is intrinsically contextual because "the knower is an intimate part of the known" (p.137). Constructed knowing shares many similarities with Gilligan's final stage of moral development where the needs of others and the self are viewed as having equal value.

The sub-heading for the chapters in Belenky et al. (1986) on each position is particularly revealing. "Silence," which is self-explanatory, has no sub-heading. "Received knowledge" is described as "listening to the voice of others" while "subjective knowledge "is "inner voice." The "voice of reason" summarizes "procedural knowledge," and "constructed knowledge" means "integrating the voices." By describing the self-concept changes with each progressive stage of knowing, the authors established a strong connection between intellectual development and identity. They frequently used the term "quest for self" and "voice" to emphasize how patterns of knowing both impact and are affected by this quest (p.133).

Marcia Baxter Magolda and the Epistemological Reflection Model

Baxter Magolda (1992) explored knowledge as it relates to gender by expanding the cognitive development models of Perry and Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule. She developed an epistemological reflection model, which is "based on students' perception of the nature of knowledge" (p. xii). She described four stages or ways of knowing with gender influences within those stages. The stages are absolute knowing, transitional knowing, independent knowing, and contextual knowing.

Absolute knowing. An absolute knower views knowledge as concrete with teachers as experts. College women in this stage are passive receptors of knowledge rather than active participants in the classroom. They are avid listeners and note takers, rarely raising questions. Women in the absolute knower stage predominantly focus on receiving knowledge while men concentrate on mastering knowledge. Receiving knowers are less likely than male classmates to seek opportunities to demonstrate their mastery of the material. Mastering knowers are more likely to be active participants in the classroom and learning process, using questions and study groups to learn.

Transitional knowing. Transitional knowers view only some knowledge as absolute and rely upon teachers to help then understand and apply concepts. Rather than simply receiving and mastering the teaching of others, transitional knowers are concerned with understanding knowledge. Among transitional knowers, women follow an interpersonal pattern whole men prefer an impersonal pattern. Interpersonal knowers are interested in the opinions of others, share ideas, and resolve differences or uncertainties in their personal judgment (Baxter Magolda, 1992). Impersonal knowers share similarities with Belenky et al.'s (1986) separate knowers, preferring logic and research to answer questions. Baxter Magolda's patterns can be understood using Gilligan's (1982) "voice" metaphor, with interpersonal knowers echoing the "responsibility" voice and impersonals knowers using the "rights" voice.

Independent knowing. Independent knowers view knowledge as uncertain and expect teachers to encourage independent thinking and debate in class. Independent knowers follow either an inter-individual pattern (exhibited more by women) or an individual pattern (used more by men). Inter-individual knowers continue to be

influenced by interaction with others while developing independent views. Individual

knowers seek to develop knowledge on their own through independent activities such as

library study and research. Inter-individual knowers favor collaboration to enhance

learning, while individual knowers are more competitive when interacting with others.

Contextual knowing. Contextual knowers, like constructed knowers (Belenky et

al., 1986), integrate knowledge gained through a variety of approaches and seek to apply

what is learned in context. They view knowledge in relational rather than absolute terms

and enhance the learning process by interacting with challenging teachers through

questions. Contextual knowers were so few in Baxter Magolda's study that gender

patterns were not distinguishable. The small number of contextual knowers in her study

suggests uncertainty about whether the highest level of epistemological development can

be achieved during college. The lack of gender-linked difference in contextual knowers

may also indicate that these differences disappear in the highest level of knowing.

Unlike the previous theories discussed, Baxter Magolda studied men and women

in light of their similarities and difference in the acquisition and claming of knowledge

and truth. Like Gilligan, Baxter Magolda suggested that patterns within the

epistemological reflection model are gender-related but not gender-exclusive. Baxter

Magolda was useful as a tool for understanding feminism but was not the core of this

research study.

Feminist Identity Development

In addition to college student development theories, a small body of work focuses

on the development of a feminist conscious or identity. Two stage theories, proposed by

Downing and Roush (1985), and Lather (1991), describe how women progress to a higher level of feminist consciousness.

Feminist Identity Development Model

Downing and Roush (1985) adapted William Cross' Black Identity Development Stages to create a Feminist Identity Development Model. Cross (1971, 1978) conventionalized racial identity stages of changing self-concept and attitudes towards one's race and the dominant racial group. Beginning with pre-encounter, Black identity for Cross develops through encounter, immersion/emersion, and internalization stages to internalization and commitment.

Downing and Roush (1985) proposed that feminist identity development for women progresses from passive acceptance to revelation to embeddedness-emanation, synthesis, and active commitment. Passive acceptance involves acquiescence to an inferior role in life to men, traditional sex roles, and discrimination against women. Some types of crisis precipitate questions of gender roles in the revelation stage. Women in the revelation stage exhibit anger, guilt, and a negative attitude towards men. In the embeddedness-emanation stage, women are relativistic in their thinking and willing to interact with males. They concentrate on building connections with other women and affirming their identity as women. During the synthesis stages, women develop a genuine and affirmative feminine identity by transcending traditional gender roles. At this point, women recognize men as individuals rather than the collective patriarchy. The active commitment stage involves a well-formed feminist identity and taking action to eradicate sexism. Women in the active commitment stage consider males as equals yet distinctly different front females.

Patricia Lather's Stage of Feminist Consciousness-Raising

Lather (1991) based her stages theory on her research on student resistance to liberatory curriculum in women's studies. Through her experience teaching an introductory level women's studies course, Lather developed the following theory of feminist consciousness-raising. The first stage is one of ignorance of feminist issues. Women move from ignorance when confronted by oppositional knowledge. Oppositional knowledge involves awareness of discrimination and oppression of women. One either accepts or rejects oppositional knowledge. Rejection leaves the student in the ignorance stage. Acceptance of oppositional knowledge can cause one of two reaction stages. The first is burdensome, characterized by hopelessness and fear. While the second is liberating, characterized by anger and action. Lather emphasized that the stages are not linear as "one move back and forth over this chart throughout one's life, often being in contradictory location simultaneously" (p. 127).

"Womanist" Identity

The primary model of African American identity development was created by Cross (1971). Cross outlined four stages of progressive development in achieving positive Black identity. In the first stage, pre-encounter, individuals view race as unimportant and seek assimilation into White society. Emphasis is placed on individual achievement, not on collective or group action. Parham and Helms (1985) found a link between the preencounter stage and decreased self-concept in African American students.

Stage two, encounter, is precipitated by a significant event or crisis, causing the individual to question previous assumptions. Two steps are included in the encounter stage; first, the encounter experience, and second, reinterpreting the world based on this experience. During this second step, individuals test new ideas and behaviors related to

insights gained (Cross, 1971). This leads to stage three, immersion-emersion.

The beginning phase of stage three is characterized by an immersion in Black culture and a rejection of White culture. Individuals take on African-inspired dress and hairstyles and use creative means such as poetry, music, and art to express their Blackness. At the same time, anger and rage surface toward White people and culture. The individualism of earlier stages is replaced by a strong group identity and belief in collectivism (Cross,1971).

As the individual begins to emerge in the second phase of stage three, dualistic views are replaced by a more complex understanding of African American experience. Not able to sustain the intense emotionality of immersion, the individual seeks to stabilize emotions. A sense of pride replaces the guilt feelings evident in the immersion phase (Cross, 1971).

In the fourth and final stage, internalization, the individual resolves conflicts between the old identity and the new worldview. Increased self-confidence and an increasingly pluralistic perspective are characteristics of this stage (Cross, 1971; Evans et al., 1998). Cross' model is internalization-commitment. During this stage, the individual "translates the new identity into meaningful activities that address concerns and problems shared by African Americans and other oppressed peoples" (Evans et al.1998, p. 76). A strong sense of collective responsibility develops as individuals in stage five become guides and mentors for people in earlier stages (Cross, 1971).

Black feminist or womanist? Whichever choice a Black woman makes when she describes herself within the public arena is problematic. The main issue surrounding the controversy between these two terms is to what degree Black women who align themselves with issues unique to them as female African Americans choose to identify themselves as raced individuals. Black nationalist ideology then, has been and continues to be a marked influence on Black woman- oriented thought and praxis. This phenomenon has long been evident and must continue to be explored.

In her article "What's in a Name? Womanism, Black Feminism, and Beyond," Patricia Hill Collins offers insight into the histories and characteristics of both the aforementioned monikers. This article is extremely useful in locating the politics of identity construction for African American women contemplating womanism/feminism alliances. It is also of the utmost importance because, although it may not immediately seem to deal directly with the female body, what we choose to call ourselves is the ultimate commentary on the reality of our existence, our attitudes about ourselves- and hence, our bodies. It is about coming to voice, and using one's own voice as the ultimate mode of self-determination.

Collins posits that cultural characteristics rooted deep in the African American community set womanism (a movement whose name itself evolves from a folk expression) apart from Black feminism. In order to understand the philosophy behind womanism, Collins explores the traditions behind the construction of Black female identities. Investigation of Walker's text leads Collins to conclude that these characteristics uphold longstanding traditions upon which Black nationalism is also dependent. Because of the upholding of similar traditions, womanism is often linked to nationalism, and hence seen as a more "acceptable" means by which African American women can express their interests in woman-oriented ideology.

For example, Collins points out that even the origin of the term womanist comes from the expression "womanish," a term used to describe young Black women who displayed behavior usually outside the conventions White women closely followed (Cross, 1971). This being the case, Collins suggests that because this adjective alludes to the differences between Black and White women, that the spirit invoked by the use of this term by women of color is superior in nature:

> "Defining womanish as the opposite of the "frivolous, irresponsible, not serious"girlish, Walker constructs Black women's experiences in opposition to those of White women. This meaning of womanism sees it as being different from and superior to feminism, a

difference allegedly stemming from Black and White women's different histories with American racism." (Cross, 1971)

Collins positions womanist feelings of superiority within the Black nationalist traditions which shun integration. Womanism, then is seen as a separate and necessary movement for Black women. The history of racial injustice, according to Black nationalist ideology, makes it impossible for Blacks to ever reap benefits from organizations where they are forced to coexist with Whites. In addition, these same hypotheses, Collins charges, also "support a Black moral superiority over Whites because of Black suffering" (Cross, 1971).

However, Collins maintains that it is more than just its separatist nature which aligns womanist thought with nationalist ideology. She also points to how both are dedicated to the uplift/support of the Black male. In addition, both uphold patriarchal traditions which hold lesbianism suspect. For womanists, support of the Black male sets their woman-oriented thought apart from White feminism:

> Many Black women view feminism as a movement that at best, is exclusively for women, and, at worst. dedicated to attacking or eliminating men... ...Womanism seemingly supplies a way for Black women to address gender-oppression without attacking Black men. (Cross, 1971)

How, then are Black women to feel about claiming the label feminist? Collins admits that claiming this label helps to eliminate longstanding stereotypes about feminism and Black women themselves. When a Black woman chooses to identify as feminist, she is choosing to admit to a set of beliefs where gender, not race, is central. Collins identifies feminism as, "both an ideological and a global political movement that confronts sexism, a social relationship in which males as a group have authority over females as a group" (Cross, 1971).

Perhaps most importantly, feminism focuses on issues of justice for women, especially political rights, not limited to, but specifically dealing with women's bodies. To embrace a movement so wide reaching is to become a part of a world community which encompasses

women around the world. Collins asserts that identifying as a feminist who is also Black adds another dimension to the term: "Using the term 'Black feminism' positions African American women to examine how the particular constellation of issues affecting Black women in the United States are part of issues of women's emancipation struggles globally" (Cross, 1971). In other words, it is to participate in a powerful, female-centered realm where race is ideally acknowledged, but not a barrier to understanding.

However, Black women do more than just bring a unique perspective to women's issues. In addition, positioning oneself as both Black and feminist destroys stereotypical constructions of what 'Black' is and who is 'feminist.' According to Collins, when a Black woman calls herself a feminist, she challenges her sisters to seriously examine their own views on women's issues. Because gender issues in the Black community have long been downplayed in favor of concern for racial ones, when an African American woman identifies as feminist, she may be in danger of forfeiting authenticity as a Black person. This is the case, Collins argues, partly because identifying as feminist breaks certain racial family rules ((Cross, 1971). To claim feminism is to admit that gender oppression exists within the Black community, and is seen as criticizing Black men. This breaks codes of silence long thought necessary to maintain the complete racial solidarity that nationalist ideology requires to flourish, and Collins admits, Black feminists may face consequences for choosing to identify this way: "In this situation, those Black women who identify with feminism must be recoded as being either non-Black or less authentically Black" (Cross, 1971).

However, choosing to identify as a Black feminist, choosing to draw attention to gender oppression ultimately strengthens the Black community. In addition, it revolutionizes how feminism itself is viewed. Collins asserts that the existence of Black feminists changes the face

of feminism itself, and challenges any racism which now exists or which has existed within the movement in the past: "Since many White women think that Black women lack feminist consciousness, the term 'Black feminist' both highlights the contradictions underlying the assumed Whiteness of feminism and serves to remind White women that they comprise neither the only nor the normative feminists" (Evans et al.1998). One major challenge for Black feminists, then, is maintaining a position somewhere between Black nationalism and White feminism. Collins admits that identifying as feminist automatically links Black feminists to White feminist ideology, correctly or not. Some of the characteristics of White feminism fly in the face of Black cultural conventions. For instance, the fact that there are visible lesbians working in the field of White feminism is problematic African Americans who do not affiliate with feminism. Not only does it violate Black religious traditions, but it also supports the belief held by those within the Black community who are critical of feminism that feminism is a separatist enterprise (Cross, 1971). For those who are critical of Black feminism, to embrace it is to reject Black men, and to practice an ideology based on individualism, rather than the community-based activism so often prominent in communities of color. In other words, it is to identify with Whiteness, and as Collins asserts, "it's putative affiliation with Whiteness fosters its rejection by the very constituency it aims to serve" (Cross, 1971).

Collins' solution to the conflicts, which arise between Black women who womanists and those who choose to identify as Black feminists, is so simple, it could seem almost simplistic. The major point, which puts this debate into perspective, is the idea that debates over naming and identity construction itself can only take place in an environment of privilege. To go beyond naming, and look closely at the issues of power and oppression within the African American community which cut across class and gender lines is the logical way to find similarities from

which to work to make our society a better place for all Black women. In addition, exploring the ways in which gender works in tandem with racism to maintain oppression will not only open up dialogue between Black men and women, but also offer a chance to acknowledge the heterogeneity within this vast community.

Whether Black feminists or womanists, concerned Black women of both descriptions stand by the original rationales for developing a point of view and criticism, which is Black as well as woman, identified. The question is whether those who spearhead this epistemology can dare to claim that it speaks for all Black women; and further, if having voice simply makes it easy for members of the dominant culture to continue to distance themselves from actual Black women because of the accessibility of their ideology.

In the article "'Woman's Era': Rethinking Black Feminist Theory," from the groundbreaking work of scholarship on Black women writers, Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist, Hazel Carby joins Collins in examining the concerns and challenges which have come with Black women's gaining voice in the public and academic spheres. First, the challenges both scholars address revolve around the necessity of building a movement for Black women, which reflects and is supportive of the diversity within this population. Unlike early Black feminist writers like Barbara Smith and Barbara Christian, Collins and Carby reject the notion that all Black women share a common experience. Instead, Collins asserts that the attention Black women have gained in the academy has allowed differences within this group of women to be acknowledged and addressed:

> The new public safe space provided by Black women's success allowed longstanding differences among Black women structured along axes of sexuality, social class, nationality, religion, and region to emerge. ...Thus, ensuring group unity while recognizing the tremendous heterogeneity that operates within the boundaries of the term 'Black women' comprises one fundamental challenge now confronting African American women. (Cross, 1971)

Likewise, Carby posits that the pioneering scholarship of Smith and Christian is problematic because of their efforts to establish the recognition of a separate experience and language unique to and dependent upon the constructions of Black and female. This attempt, according to Carby, ignores the heterogeneity within this group about which Collins so eloquently writes. Moreover, embracing this viewpoint of a unique experience shared by Black women only counteracts any alliances of sisterhood Black feminists have made and continue to construct among other feminists as a whole. Carby argues that this mode of thinking can lead to rhetoric, which is as racist, elitist, and historically questionable as the White scholarship Black feminist scholarship was in part constructed to criticize:

> Black feminist criticism has too frequently been reduced to an experiential relationship that exists between Black women as critics and Black women as writers who represent Black women's reality. Theoretically, this reliance on a common, or shared, experience is essentialist and a historical. ... we must be historically specific and aware of the differently oriented social interests within one and the same sign community. In these terms, Black and feminist cannot be absolute, transhistorical forms (or form) of identity (Cross, 1971).

What then is the use of a mode of thought based upon the construction of a space that is occupied (though perhaps not only understood) exclusively by women who are both Black and female? According to Carby, it serves as a site, in which issues of race within the power structure, which has traditionally oppressed women, and people of color (a term she dislikes) can be investigated.

> For feminist historiography and critical practice, the inclusion of the analytic categories of race and class means having to acknowledge that women were not only the subjects but also the perpetrators of oppression. The hegemonic control of dominant classes has been secured at the expense of sisterhood. Hegemony is never finally and utterly won but needs to be continually worked on and reconstructed, and sexual and racial ideologies are crucial mechanisms in the maintenance of power. (Cross, 1971)

In other words, Carby hopes this investigation will not only lead to answers as to why sisterhood has been an impossibility within the feminist movement (s), but also may lead to a

further understanding of the construction of race, and finally, to solutions to how race and class hegemony can be conquered. To defiantly fight for a space that confronts discrimination on the basis of both race and gender is to build the ultimate site of resistance.

The main concern expressed by Collins and by Carby in another work, "The Multicultural Wars," is the use and abuse of Black women's writing within the academy as the saving grace clung to by Whites otherwise unwilling to address the issues of racism in our still nearly segregated society. As Collins forcefully states,

> For example, we must be attentive to the seductive absorption of Black women's voices in classrooms of higher education where Black women's texts are still much more welcomed than Black women ourselves. Giving the illusion of change, this strategy of symbolic inclusion masks how the everyday institutional policies and arrangements that suppress and exclude African Americans as a collectivity remain virtually untouched. (Cross, 1971)

Likewise in her article "Multicultural Wars," Hazel Carby, writing about the contradictions inherent in making Black women's literature the center of the new multicultural curriculum at universities and colleges across the country while the nation as a whole remains racially polarized also writes concerning the abuse of Black women's voice by the academy:

> ...the Black female subject is frequently the means by which many middle-class White students and faculty cleanse their souls and rid themselves of the guilt of living in a society that is still rigidly segregated. Black cultural texts have become fictional substitutes for the lack of any sustained social or political relationships with Black people in a society that has retained many of its historical practices of apartheid in housing and schooling. (Cross, 1971)

Any Black woman studying or working in the academy can relate to the concern voiced by these two women (who not incidentally, are Black women themselves). How many times have I encountered White women who assume they know the issues with which I deal on a daily basis as a Black female graduate student, simply because during their academic careers they have read several texts authored by Black women? As both Carby and Collins assert, it is problematic for anyone to assume that certain writings speak for all Black women, or address all the issues

faced by them. To assume this leads to dangerous constructions in which "real" Black women find themselves caught. According to Carby:

"...feminist theory has frequently used and abused this material to produce an essential Black female subject for its own consumption, a Black female subject that represents a single dimension--either the long-suffering or the triumphantly noble aspect of a Black community throughout history. Because this Black female subject has to carry, the burden of representing what is otherwise significantly absent in the curriculum, issues of complexity disappear under the pressure of the demand to give meaning to Blackness. (Cross, 1971)

Ironically, for Black women, while the celebration within the academy of texts written about and by Black women has given us a voice, this visibility has also served as a means by which White academics continue to assume they can speak for us. Hence, in the same way within the women's movement, the study of Black feminist/womanist thought and theory is often (mis)used by White feminists as an endpoint, rather than the beginning of the establishment of dialogue and true alliance with "real" Black women, (or, Black women not constructed by the academy).

The answer? Once again, it is very simple. It is for Black women in the academy as students, teachers, and scholars to go beyond class and sexual orientation differences and unite as a powerful representative force. Our existence, as well as our willingness to speak out and not be silenced, will lead to a realization that different voices and experiences make up the community of African American women. This is our first step. After we have established our own distinctive voices in our place of school and work, we will be able to turn toward solving the problems which lead to our limited representation within the academy. Only then will we be secure enough to combat the issues of gender oppression facing women globally.

Summary

Despite new and exciting research on the cognitive/epistemological and feminist identity development of women, many gaps still exist in the literature on women college

students. Women have been challenged constantly in higher education, but studies of their experience indicate their support is not given in equal measure (Hall & Sandler, 1982). Although participation in the feminist movement could improve their educational experience for various reasons, feminism does not appeal to many college women.

Instead of silencing women, higher education must help women find their unique voices. This study is designed to enhance the knowledge about college women through exploration of epistemological and feminist identity development. Through the research design, based on the theories outlined above, I have sought to give voice to college women's thought and experiences of feminism.

CHAPTER THREE:

METHODOLOGY

To understand the development of a feminist identity among college women, I undertook a mainly qualitative study informed by feminist methodology principles. I use a mixed method that included purposeful sampling of traditional-aged female undergraduates at a small liberal arts college. Interviews and an instrument to measure epistemological development were used to collect data for the study. The research questions for the study included the following:

1. How do college women define feminism?
2. What is the current state if femism on college campuses?
3. What is the relationship between Measure of Epistemological Reflection (MER) stages and feminism?
4. What other forces are associated with feminism?
5. What fears desued students from different lives as feminist?

Rationale for Qualitative Design

A qualitative design was most appropriate to explore the research focus and questions because I sought depth and detail about feminist identity rather than normative data. I wanted to be involved with the women in the study and co-construct a shared understanding of feminism rather than remain a detached observer. Rather than chart brief answers on a Likert-type scale, I heard stories, learned from illustrative examples, and asked clarifying questions.

The study followed qualitative research design principles as defined by Patton (1990). These included a focus on discovering patterns, knowledge, and truth in response to questions "deemed important by one's discipline or personal intellectual interest" which contributes grounded theory composed of knowable and explainable patterns (p. 100). In addition, the research methodology contained aspects of feminist research methodology such as emphasis on enhancing the voices of women participants; interconnection between the researcher, participant and knowledge; and acceptance of the role of values and context in the research. Although I originally planned to create case studies of college women at different stages of the feminist identity model (Downing & Roush, 1985), the women in the study did not fit these theoretical stages. Instead, I used case studies to illustrate the positions in the model of college feminist identity development I developed because of the research. These case studies are offered in Chapter five.

Site Selection

Research was conducted with women students enrolled in a four-year private liberal arts college in New England. This highly selective college matriculates 2,030 undergraduates, including representatives from all 50 states. Ten percent of the students are international. An equal number of males and females attend this well-endowed and established institution, which is located in a small town.

This institution was chosen for a variety of reasons. I anticipated that the selective admissions standards would result in a student body representative of all four of Baxter Magolda's (1992) epistemological stages. These stages, described in the literature review in Chapter Two, are absolute knowing, transitional knowing, independent knowing and contextual knowing. In addition, the academic reputation and liberal arts curriculum are similar to those of Miami University of Ohio where Baxter Magolda conducted her research. The diversity of the student body enhanced the study because the participants benefited from a wider range of experiences than those at a more homogeneous institution. In addition, the academic institution's curriculum included a major in women's studies.

Participant Selection

I selected participants for the project through purposive and snowball sampling (Patton, 1990). I asked administrators and faculty in student affairs and counseling services to identify women as prospective participants who represented a variety of interests and activities. To achieve purposive sampling, I sought participants from all four classes, a wide selection of majors, clubs that represented both liberal and conservative political agendas, geographic backgrounds, racial diversity, and the spectrum of sexual orientation. I specifically requested introductions to students in women's studies and psychology courses, athletes, leaders in student government, and resident advisors. A faculty member in the psychology department served as gatekeeper for me for the project and identified students interested in being respondents. I contacted leaders of the following campus clubs to solicit respondents: African American organization, Amnesty International, a capella singers, campus newspaper, feminist organization, hall councils, dance group, equestrian club, campus activities, social Greek organizations, Hillel, Newman Society, Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Alliance, literary journal society, women's rugby, student alumni organization, and the volunteer service club. Several respondents asked if they could have copies of the survey to give to friends who were interested in the issue of feminism. In these, multiple ways snowball sampling occurred.

Prospective participants were contacted by letter or electronic mail and then by telephone. A brief questionnaire was distributed to prospective participants asking for a response to the question, "which term best describes your position on feminism?" Basic demographic information was also requested on this written survey. Responses to the questionnaire were used to create a pool of 56 potential interviewees from all classes with a variety of majors, interests and activities.

The rationale for this approach to sampling was to create a diverse pool of participants who represented different values, interests and experiences (e.g., participation in activities, Academic majors, conservative or liberal political beliefs, and exposure to feminist issues). My goal was to learn about various influences upon the development of a feminist identity as well as

the challenges young feminists face in a college setting. I also sought out participants who were at varying stages of epistemological development. The project was limited in scope to traditional aged (18-23) students from the U.S. and Canada.

Data Collection

Data were collected from responses to a questionnaire (Appendix C), interviews (Appendix D), and the Measure of Epistemological Reflection (Appendix E), an instrument that evaluates epistemological development. This triangulation of data enhanced the validity of the results (Patton, 1990). Interview questions focused on feminism and epistemological stages.

Questionnaire

After initial contact was made, a brief questionnaire (see Appendix C) and the consent form (see Appendix B) were distributed to the prospective participants. The questionnaire focused on identifying a position on feminism, demographic information, and involvement in women's studies courses, organizations and leadership experiences. I reviewed the responses to the questionnaire and then selected 27 respondents to interview from the pool of 56 possible participants, based on diversity of responses to the questionnaire. The other respondents were prioritized as a secondary pool to be used if redundancy or attrition required additional participants.

After this initial approach, the respondents interviewed and surveyed were upper class students and predominantly students who identified as heterosexual (one woman identified as bisexual). Although sexual orientation was not a question in the interview or survey, most participants self-identified through their answers to various questions or by volunteering the information. Hoping to diversify the respondent pool, I asked faculty in first year psychology classes to solicit volunteers. Four new first-year respondents were gained as a result. I then used the student gay and lesbian organization web site to request participation from lesbian and bisexual women. Several women responded and two agreed to be interviewed.

Initial Interview

Interviews were conducted in various locations on campus selected by the respondents. At the beginning of the initial interview, I introduced the project, and myself using the cover story shown in Appendix A. I also reviewed the consent form (Appendix B) with the participants. The initial interview focused on definitions and understanding of the terms feminism and feminist, as well as whether the participant identified as a feminist did. If time allowed, I also asked the second interview questions as the respondents were generally eager to continue the interview beyond the initial questions. At the end of the interview, I asked the participants to complete the Measure of Epistemological Reflection and mail it to me through campus mail within seven days.

Measure of Epistemological Reflection

The Measure of Epistemological Reflection (MER) was developed by Baxter Magolda and Porterfield (1985). The MER (see Appendix E) is used to assess stages of epistemological development as described by Baxter Magolda in *Knowing and Reasoning in College* (1992). Epistemological development is defined as "assumptions about the nature, limits, and certainty of knowledge" in the MER (Baxter Magolda & Porterfield). The instrument is designed to address six domains of epistemological development including decision-making, the role of the learner, the role of the instructor, the role of peers, evaluation and the nature of knowledge. The series of questions in the MER take approximately one hour to complete.

Follow up interviews

Follow up interviews were conducted with seven respondents who represented various feminist development and epistemological stages. The second wave of interviews focused on the role of feminism in the lives of the participants–their choices, experiences, and role models as well as the reaction of others to their position on feminism. These interviews took place a semester later than the initial interviews so additional questions involved changes in the respondents' attitudes toward feminism since the last interview. In addition, I used interview questions suggested by Baxter Magolda (1992) to provide additional information regarding epistemological development.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed deductively (e.g., categorized by a prior epistemological and feminist identity stages) and inductively (e.g., categories emerging from data) in terms of epistemological development as well as the development of a feminist identity. Patterns and connections between the two types of development were analyzed. To help with the analysis, I charted participants on a matrix with feminist identification on the horizontal axis and epistemological stages on the vertical axis (see Table 1, p.41). Results of this analysis and a completed chart are included in Chapter Four.

Deductive Analysis

Deductive analysis was conducted using the theories of feminist identity development and epistemological development described in Chapter Two. Transcripts of the interviews were analyzed extensively and compared to the descriptions of the theories. I coded transcripts for key words from the theories as well as patterns and themes, which are described later in this chapter.

Feminist Identity Data Analysis

Initially, participants were categorized using a typology of the three responses (i.e., yes, no, do not know) to the question of how each identifies with the term feminist. Commonalities, patterns and distinctions within the three categories were grouped together and organized as themes. However, the three categories did not appear to adequately describe the range of positions on feminism described by the respondents. The model of feminist identity development proposed by Downing and Roush (1985) was used to analyze these positions in greater depth. Transcripts were reviewed to compare

respondents' answers to questions about feminism to the descriptions of stages of feminist identity development in the Downing and Roush model. The stages of this model are passive acceptance, revelation, embeddedness-emanation, synthesis, and active commitment.   It was very difficult to identify these stages in the women participating in the study. Awareness of

women's issues, anger, activism and relationships with men were significant themes that emerged in comparing the data to the theory.

In addition, I compared the words of the respondents to the consciousness raising stages described in Lather's (1991) model. Lather's stages involve moving from ignorance to being confronted by oppositional knowledge and either accepting or rejecting this knowledge. If the knowledge is accepted, the woman accepts the knowledge as either burdensome or liberating. I reviewed the transcripts for key themes from Lather's theory. These themes included awareness of oppositional knowledge, consciousness-raising, participation in women's studies courses and the impact of that participation. Although more parallels to Lather's model were found in the data than parallels to the Downing and Roush model, the model still fails to fully describe the feminist identity development of the women in this study. More description of the findings and analysis follows in Chapter Four and Chapter Five.

Epistemological Development Data Analysis

To analyze the data on the epistemological stage, I became certified to rate data from the Measure of Epistemological Reflection (MER). Twenty-one participants in the study either completed the MER or answered the second interview questions, which related to an epistemological stage. The epistemological stages of the MER are: Absolute Knowing, Transitional Knowing, Independent Knowing and Contextual Knowing (Baxter Magolda, 1992). As outlined earlier, I assumed there would be a link between epistemological development and acceptance, rejection or ambivalence regarding feminist identity. In reviewing my earlier assumptions regarding epistemological stage and feminist identity, I found distinct patterns but not those I had anticipated. Attitudes towards learning, knowledge and the role of learner and teacher are not only applicable to classroom learning as theorized by Baxter Magolda but also to the development of opinions and values regarding identity issues such as feminism. Epistemological stage also affects how participants defined critical terms such as feminism and discrimination. Further description of the findings regarding epistemological stage follows later

in this chapter; my analysis of the relationship between epistemological and feminist identity development is contained in Chapter Five.

Inductive Analysis

Further analysis of the data regarding feminism was largely inductive. When comparison to the Downing and Roush (1985) and Lather (1991) theories became difficult, I sought to define stages of feminist identity, which fit the experiences of the women in the study. Patterns, exceptions and unique cases developed from extensive review of the transcript data. Data from the interview transcripts were coded and organized in computer databases to clarify patterns and themes.

I began with a baseline definition of feminism to help chart the women's status as feminists; however, I heard many different definitions from the participants. The use of a simple baseline or singular definition was not possible. I then grouped the various definitions into categories, which are explained in Chapter Four.

After constructing the matrix of feminist identity position and epistemological stage, analysis of patterns revealed relationships between feminist identity and epistemological development. In addition to describing patterns, I selected five participants to illustrate in detail in individual case studies. Themes, which resonated throughout the interviews, were considered to elucidate further patterns of feminist identity development.

General Themes

After transcribing the interviews, I analyzed the transcript data to identify patterns and common topics. The following prevalent themes surfaced repeatedly in the transcripts:(a) a lack of congruence between participants' definitions of feminism and feminist, (b) the use of the term "girl" or "woman" as a self-descriptor, (c) feminist role models, (d) participation in women's studies courses, (e) impressions of and involvement with the campus feminist organization, (f) participants' awareness of and experience with sex discrimination, (g) beliefs about women's issues or the feminist "agenda," and (h) the importance of the opinions of friends, family, and significant others in influencing position on feminism. I conducted a second level of analysis

and looked for patterns in these themes within the three positions on feminism: "yes, I'm a feminist;" "no, I'm not a feminist;" and "I don't know." Finally, I constructed a database of the themes with a record for each participant so the themes could be sorted under various categories such as epistemological stage, position on feminism, or the themes outlined above. A discussion of the themes described above is outlined in Chapter Four.

Patterns within the Positions

In designing the study, I explored several potential patterns within the stages of epistemological development. Although generalizations cannot be made about all women in each category, I expected to observe the following. First, I assumed that epistemological development would have an impact on definitions of feminism as well as acceptance, rejection or ambivalence regarding feminist identity. For example, I assumed that women in the absolute knowing stage would be clustered as either feminist or non-feminist, with little ambivalence about their feminist identity. I also thought that transitional knowers might be more ambivalent, while independent knowers might be more likely to choose a definitive position and less likely to be influenced by peers in their choice. Contextual knowers theoretically more comfortable with ambiguity, might be either feminists or non-feminists but would be able to articulate and explain their position in detail than others. The final stages of many human development theories share common themes of integration, action and commitment, which led me to question whether reaching the highest level of development is necessary to make the commitment to feminism.

Other assumptions involved the influence of role models, experiences and affiliations on feminist identity. I expected that women with positive feminist role models who shared commonalities with the respondents would be more likely to claim a feminist position. Furthermore, respondents who knew feminists they perceived as negative role models might be more likely to reject a feminist identity. I assumed there would be a relationship between curricular and extra-curricular involvements and feminist identity development. I was curious whether women become feminists after taking women's studies courses or joining women's organizations or vice versa.

Trustworthiness and Authenticity

Validation and verification of the results were attempted through triangulation, Measure of Epistemological Reflection validity studies, and review of rival explanations and negative cases. Interview and survey responses were compared and inconsistencies between responses were explored and clarified in the interviews. The quality of the study was assured using prolonged engagement with participants and persistent observation. I utilized peer debriefing in designing this study and continued to consult with peers throughout the project. Design and member checks confirmed the authenticity of the analysis and results. Respondents were mailed transcripts of the interview with my analysis of their responses and were then asked to correct or clarify the transcripts several did so. These respondents offered clarifying explanations or context for their remarks but generally agreed with the content of the transcripts.

Researcher's Subjectivity

One of the principles of feminist/qualitative research was also a possible threat to the validity of the research: the subjectivity or bias of the researcher. To reduce the threat of overly influencing the study by not recognizing my assumptions, it is helpful to identify aspects of the "subjective I" of the researcher early in the process.   As a researcher, I brought the following beliefs and experiences to my research on feminism:

I identify as a "third wave" feminist but have not been an activist in the feminist movement. During college, I did not consider myself a feminist and shied away from the term "woman" to describe myself. After experiencing discrimination in the workplace, I began to explore feminist beliefs; during graduate school, I began to describe myself as a feminist.

I am a student affairs practitioner in higher education. Most of my career has been centered on residential education but recently I have added responsibilities in student activities, health services and personal counseling. My areas of interest within student development include cultural pluralism, eating disorders, women's issues and self-esteem. I also serve as a volunteer rape crisis counselor at my community's battered women's shelter.

Summary

This research project was designed to study the development of feminism in college women using qualitative methods to explore definitions, experiences and patterns described and exhibited by the participants. The relationships between epistemological stage, experiences with feminism, and feminist identity development were the focus of the research design.

CHAPTER FOUR:

FINDINGS

This chapter highlights the findings of the study relevant to the development of a feminist identity among the college women interviewed. The chapter begins with a brief overview of the campus environment as it relates to the study, followed by demographic information on the study participants. The data are presented under headings drawn from the research questions guiding the study:

1. How do college women define feminism?
2. What is the current state if femism on college campuses?
3. What is the relationship between Measure of Epistemological Reflection (MER) stages and feminism?

4. What other forces are associated with feminism?
5. What fears desued students from different lives as feminist?

The Campus Context

Participants in the study were undergraduate women at Stanton College (a pseudonym) when interviewed. Stanton is a highly competitive, residential liberal arts college in rural New England. Twenty percent of the student body of 2,000 are students of color. Students are attractive, affluent and athletic at first glance. The students I interviewed were intelligent, articulate and active in a variety of extra-curricular activities. Student clubs abound and many focus on activism–whether political, environmental or altruistic in nature.

Stanton College has a reputation for emphasizing co-education and equal opportunity for women; participants mentioned this emphasis on language and the pride the institution takes in promoting co-education. Study participants often referred to the emphasis on co-education as well as the "politically correct" language taught by the college. Yet many also cited examples of overt and covert discrimination by male professors in the classroom. The student feminist group and a current task force on the status of women criticized the College's treatment of women in terms of harassment and rape as well as the lack of women in high level administrative positions. Many faculty departments are dominated by men, and only one woman occupies a Dean's level position within the administration.

The student feminist group includes approximately ten active members and a mailing list of 50 members. The group sponsors weekly discussions and dinners, a film series, and an intensive week of rape awareness programming in the spring. The feminist group shares a house/center on campus with the women's studies program and the gay, lesbian and bisexual student organization. At the time of the initial interviews, current topics of interest for women on campus included the Take Back the Night events sponsored by the feminist organization, the lack of a formal Sexual Assault Policy at Stanton, and obscene and inflammatory anti-male graffiti, which had been painted on the sidewalks to draw attention to the Take Back the Night events.

The week's spotlight on dating violence also stimulated discussion among students of the status of male/female relationships at the college. Although Stanton allegedly has a high rate of inter-alumni marriages, most students felt dating was non-existent at Stanton. Relationships were categorized as long-term, serious and generally involving an off-campus partner or short-term, one-night stands. Most people socialized in co-ed groups as opposed to casual dating. Several students commented on the co-education emphasis creating a unisex vision of classmates, regardless of gender. However, others noted the emphasis on physical attractiveness in the dating scene.

Demographic Information on Interview Participants

Fifty-six women returned the initial survey circulated by mail (see Appendix C); demographic information on the entire survey group (see Appendix F). From this pool of 56 respondents, 27 women participated in individual interviews. Of the 27 interviewed, 11 identified as feminists in the survey, six said they were not feminists, and ten did not know whether they identified as feminist or not. Ages of the survey participants ranged from 18 to 21; however, three participants chose not to disclose their age. The participants included five first-year students, eight sophomores, eight juniors and six seniors. Racially, 22 of the participants described themselves as Caucasian. Two participants identified as African-American, one each as Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander, and one as "other." The majority of the participants were from the Northeast; however, several were from the Midwest and the West, and one was originally from Central America. As she currently identified as a resident of New York, I included her in the study, which was to study North American women's attitudes toward feminism. Varieties of majors were represented. Psychology was the most predominant major, which is not unusual because many of the surveys were distributed through introductory and

upper-level psychology courses. A summary of the survey data on the interview participants is as follows:

Demographic Data on Interview Participants

pseudonym	age	race	grad	state	politics	majors	women's studies
Caroline	20	C	2008	MA	I	American Studies	no
Rachel	21	C	2007	CT	I	Psychology/Art History	no
	20	C	2008	MA	D	Biology/Biochemistry	no
Eliza	19	C	2008	WI	D	Biochemisty	no
Emma	19	AA	2007	NY	D	Psychology	no
Leti	20	C	2007	PA	R	Bio/Psychology	no
Cindy	20	O	2009	NH	R	Bio/Psychology	no
Karin	19	AA	2008	NY	I	Environmental Studies	no
Jess	21	C	2007	VT	I	English/Psychology	no
Anna	19	C	2006	NY	D	English/Political Science	yes
Terri	20	A/P	2008		D	Psychology	no
Lori	19	C	2009	ME	R	Undecided	no
Chelsea	20	C	2008	NY	R	Political Science	no
Megan	21	C	2006	NY	R	History	no
Staci	19	C	2009	VT	I	Undecided	no
Titi	18	H	2009	NY		Psch./Latin Amer. Studies	no
Linda	19	C	2008	NJ	D	Psychology	no
Lucy	19	C	2007	CA	D	Geography	no
Kathy	20	C	2007	NY		Spanish	no
Jenny	21	C	2007	OH	D	Sociology	yes

pseudonym	age	race	grad	state	politics	majors	women's studies
Molly	21	C	2006	MT	D	Psychology	yes
Ellen	20	C	2008	TX	D	Psychology	yes
Allison	21	C	2006	ME	D	Am. Hist/Women's Studies	yes
Abby	21	C	2006	ME	I	History	yes
Barbara	18	C	2009	ME	I	Undecided	no
Kim	20	C	2007	VA	D	Sociology/Anthropology	yes
Chantal	18	C	2006	ME	I	Theater/Spanish	yes
Maureen	19	A/P	2007	MA	R	Biology	no
Jean	19	C	2006	MA	D	Women's Studies	yes

Findings

Feminism Defined By These College Women

To learn how the women in the study defined feminism, I analyzed responses to several related questions. In addition to their definitions of feminism and feminist, I explored participants' awareness of and experiences with discrimination, their understanding of the feminist platform of beliefs and their use of girl or woman as a self-descriptor.

Defining Feminism and Feminist

Rather than requiring participants to respond to a standard definition of feminism, the inductive research design allowed them to define feminism for themselves. I hoped to hear what connotations and denotations the term feminism evoked rather than simply have the participants respond to an a priori definition. In addition, I hoped to explore the connection between how participants defined feminism and whether they defined themselves as feminists. Because of this open-ended approach, no two definitions were the same. Words such as "strong," "confident," "knowledge," and "opportunity" permeated the definitions of self-defined feminist respondents. Respondents Ellen, Linda, Molly, Allison, Jenny and Lucy, all self-defined feminists, offered the following descriptions of feminist and feminism. Ellen described a feminist as "someone who believes that everyone has the right to go about their life the way they want to, regardless of what sex/gender they are. A person who believes that all people should be treated equally, and generally that translates into maternity, family leave, wages, and things like that."

> Linda wrote the following definition of feminism through email correspondence with me:
> Feminism means being aware of myself as a woman and understanding that I am
> not inferior. Not only am I aware of myself as a woman but how others like
> society, men, and women deal with the issue of gender. For me, it is not about
> being involved in the feminist group here at school, but following the example
> other strong, capable women set. I respect them and want to be like them. It is an
> attitude that gives me the ability to be confident and say to myself, "I can do
> whatever I want to do." I sincerely believe every woman should think that.
> Feminism to Molly meant "women can do anything, deserve freedom, rights,
> opportunities." To Allison, the word feminism was "about a struggle, new modes of
> thought, trying to get away from hierarchy and the entry point is feminism–it opens up
> into other areas of oppression. Feminism is your particular approach to that struggle."
> Jenny's definition of feminism was "a woman holding a high self-image, resistant against
> attack, not better than men." Lucy thought feminism was "being strong, having strong
> character, not being really submissive, knowing, self-confident. Being comfortable with
> who you are is another part of being a feminist."

Self-described non-feminist respondents Staci, Lori and Chelsea, had less positive definitions of feminism. Staci described feminism as "the belief that women are not as superior as men and feminism will bring about equality." To Lori, feminism was "controversial, personal, comes/derives from your personal experience." Chelsea, who was "definitely not a feminist," described feminism as the "plight to make males and females equal," and feminists as "the Take Back the Night group, people who march."

Among the "don't know" group, including Caroline, Anna, Cindy and Emma, feminism was not as clearly defined as it was for the feminists and non-feminists. Caroline's definition of feminism was a belief in women. Anna agreed with her feminist peers that feminism involves "providing a role model for other people and being comfortable with which you are." To Cindy, feminism meant "equal rights, [women] can do anything a man can do. I do agree that women should have equal opportunity." Emma thought a feminist was "someone who's interested in improving the plight of women, to make sure women are given the same opportunities as men are, but I don't think that gives you a right to like shout it."

Awareness/Experience of Discrimination and Sexism

To understand these women's experience with sexism and concerns about the status of women, I asked questions, which explored their awareness and experience of discrimination and sexism. Issues such as rape, battering, safety, pay equity, women's health issues, and the media's portrayal of women were among the topics discussed. The majority of participants, ranging across all three categories, had experienced some form of discrimination even though not all identified it as such.

Awareness of women's issues. All the self-described feminists expressed awareness and engaged in some activism concerning women's issues. The lack of a sexual assault policy at Stanton was a particular concern for several feminists. Allison said, "I feel like sexual violence against women is inscribed in every conversation that happens here with men, especially random ones. I feel like assertions of authority, profound ones, are an expression of violence." One feminist said that her feminism had been literally "beaten out" of her after she had been raped

and battered; she no longer was sure she could call herself a feminist. When she arrived on campus, having been an activist in high school, she was disappointed by the judgmental nature of the college feminist organization and had since abandoned much of her feminism.

For some feminists, increased awareness of sexism led to fear and loss of innocence. Allison said, "Before I started actively thinking about feminism, I wasn't scared. It was eye-opening, but I'm scared now, and I was less scared before."

Among the non-feminist group, the participants expressed varying levels of awareness of women's issues. Job discrimination was more acknowledged than social issues (e.g., rape, violence, or harassment). Staci mentioned her recent exposure to the issue of pay inequity between men and women in the U.S. and others mentioned awareness of pay inequity and job discrimination based on the experiences of older siblings and class reading assignments. Several of the non-feminists suggested that feminists exaggerated the incidence of date rape to make a point. For example, Staci did not think date rape was "as big a deal [that the] one in four [women will be raped] posters make it sound." She thought people had "gone overboard, drawing the line too thin. People need to take more responsibility for their actions." She was interested in events sponsored by the Campus Feminist Organization during Take Back the Night Week and would have attended if she had more time. Terri was not concerned about rape at Stanton and had not heard about students being stalked or battered. Lori thought that Stanton was a safe campus: "the only rapes are date rapes." Megan became more aware of the incidences of date rape at Stanton after working with the administration on a sexual assault policy. Chelsea contended that issues such as date rape and battering were individual issues, not overall women's issues.

The "don't know" group of women ranged from significant awareness and political activism to unconcern. Those women who supported feminist beliefs but were reluctant to claim the "feminist" label were more likely to demonstrate awareness about women's issues than those who admitted to limited awareness of feminism in general. Caroline was concerned about women's pay equity issues but otherwise was not sure how women are treated unfairly. Anna

and Emma were very aware of issues, and Emma made a point of trying to educate others about important issues for women.

Experience of discrimination. All but one of the self-described feminists recalled at least one personal experience of discrimination, in a classroom, work or social setting. The one who had not experienced discrimination, raised in a liberal, non-sexist environment, was aware of the differing experiences of others. Classroom discrimination was most predominant, raging from differential treatment to overt sexual harassment by faculty and male peers. Linda's first recollection of being treated differently was from grade school: girls were not allowed to have the milk distribution chore in school because supposedly they could not lift the milk crate. Linda and her friends staged a protest, with signs, and won a small victory–the largest girl in the class was allowed to alternate with the boys in distributing the milk. Allison described a class where the teacher flirted with students and tried to touch her when she met with him. As a result, she always asked a friend to accompany her to individual meetings with this professor.

Some of the self-described non-feminists described discriminatory experiences while others had no experience of gender discrimination. Titi described experiencing differential parenting in comparison to her brothers. Her father did not allow her to do everything her brothers did. Her experiences as an independent college student conflicted with the traditional sex-role expectations of her family; none of her brothers attended college; she was the first in her family to do so. Titi also described sexist treatment and comments from her male friends at Stanton but she defended them by saying they treated her as an equal. Megan mentioned condescending treatment by male professors in political science classes. Although Chelsea said she had never been treated differently because of her gender, she did mention being sexually harassed as a waitress.

Nine of the "don't know" women cited personal experience with discrimination, particularly in classroom settings in both high school and college. Cindy remembered several experiences in high school where the teacher pitted the boys against the girls in physical and academic competitions. She described how one of her Stanton professors never learned the

names of the two women in the class yet memorized the unfamiliar foreign names of male students. Emma cited several experiences of grade discrimination in high school and college.

Expectation of discrimination in the workplace. Among the self-described feminists, several gave illustrations of subtle and overt experiences of workplace discrimination. Others clearly anticipated facing discrimination in their careers; some were even making plans to avoid certain firms or types of work. Kathy, who had a job offer from a company in which she interned over the summer, and her friends frequently talked about their fears of discrimination in the work force. She hoped she would receive other offers so that she could turn down the company because of the sexual discrimination she experienced and observed during her internship. She interned in a firm which, prior to her internship, employed women only as secretaries; sex-role stereotyping was still firmly in place.

The non-feminists expressed different positions on the issue of job discrimination. Some were unconcerned, others were quite aware, and several did not anticipate being personally affected by discrimination although they were aware of its occurrence in society. Staci did not expect to encounter discrimination in her chosen field of medicine. She thought awareness had changed treatment of women, and White men were more likely to be disadvantaged now. Terri's sister, a recent college graduate, had experienced pay inequity. Lori was very concerned about job discrimination; while a non-feminist, she described herself as a feminist on work-related topics such as opportunity and pay equity. Megan experienced differential treatment when working in a law firm: although the men in the firm respected women's intelligence, they commented on a woman's appearance first, then her work. However, Megan thought the women lawyers in the firm "were not doing anything to help themselves." Megan was concerned about her ability to juggle a future law career and child-rearing in the future and planned to work in a district attorney's office rather than in private practice because of the more reasonable hours.

The women in the "don't know" category had either already experienced discrimination in the workplace or anticipated facing the issue once they began working. Emma described the sexist treatment she encountered as a waitress. Caroline expected she would be more aware of

equity issues once she began working. Although Anna expected to encounter discrimination, she found it challenging to prove herself in situations where less was expected of her than of male peers.

The Feminist Platform of Beliefs

Literature on the unpopularity of feminism cites the assumption of an "all or nothing" feminist agenda or platform of beliefs as a reason for college women's rejection of the agenda (Kamen, 1991; Walker, 1995).   The self-described feminists in this study unilaterally rejected this assumption and did not believe they had to adopt any beliefs other than equality of women if they identified as a feminist. In contrast, most of the non-feminists believed there was a set feminist agenda, especially related to abortion. The uncertain category expressed mixed opinions on the issue of a feminist agenda.

> As a feminist, Ellen did not believe there was a set platform all feminists must support: I think that is how our generation is going to become different than previous generations– you don't feel as boxed in by the definition of feminism. People are starting to form their own definitions of what it means to be a feminist–you can be pro-life and be a feminist, you can be at home and in the traditional role and be a feminist, if you believe you are a feminist.

Allison agreed that "there are countless different feminisms." Two feminists voiced disagreement with the Equal Rights Amendment with articulate arguments about the negative effects it would have on poor women. All of the feminists expressed their ability to choose their personal positions on a variety of issues involving women. Although several expressed pro-choice stances on abortion, they did not believe they were required to take this stance. As independent women, these feminists wanted to choose their own feminist agenda. This finding is particularly important because it illustrates the changing nature of feminism as young feminists adapt feminism to fit their needs and beliefs.

In contrast, non-feminist Staci thought that her pro-life position on abortion affected her position on feminism because she believed that feminists are supposed to be pro-choice.   Titi held that because she loved men, she could not be a feminist. She also saw a conflict between

her Mormon faith and feminism. Megan, a non-feminist, defined feminism as "very political, very defined, if you're this, you have to be this, support of issues such as abortion." Although Lori described different agendas for different feminists, she was concerned that acting "like a lady" and appreciating gentlemanly behavior was incompatible with feminism. Chelsea was the only non-feminist who did not believe there was a set platform of feminist beliefs: "Feminism is a way of thinking with many different views."

Some of the women in the uncertain category were unclear about whether feminism had a set agenda, while others felt they could not claim feminism because of that agenda.   Anna was concerned about political correctness and "the Black and White of others' feminism, you have to believe in all the right issues."

Use of "Girl" or "Woman" as a Self-descriptor

The women in the study varied widely in their use of girl or woman as self-descriptors. No patterns emerged within the categories other than common reasons for using whichever term was chosen. Reluctance to claim the term woman was related to age and youthfulness by participants within all three groups. Those who used "woman" cited experience, rather than age, as their reason for claiming the term. Many respondents noted that the Stanton administration used the term woman to describe its female students. Respondents also noted that they used the two terms interchangeably, depending on the group in which they were participating. Most did not object to being called girl by others, particularly elders, if the term was not used to degrade them.

The feminist participants were divided among those who used girl because they did not feel old enough to be called a woman, and those who used woman because it was empowering or reflected their experiences. Jean said she "stopped being a girl at 13 because of issues I was dealing with." She held that using girl to describe a woman was degrading because boy is not used to describe similarly-aged males except to insult them. Maureen "tends to use girl, but I think it's a reluctance on my part to admit I'm getting old or older. It has more to do with age than sexism." Others used different terms depending on the context. Abby said, with her

boyfriend, she talks about other females as girls, in class she uses the term woman, and with friends the term chicks.

Several non-feminists used woman to describe themselves. Staci described herself as a woman because she had "reached that stage of maturity, seriousness"; however, in some circumstances, with friends, she would call herself a girl and did not object to others calling her a girl. Lori qualified herself as a young woman to escape the age issue. Titi cited the independence of college life as her reason for using woman. Megan used girl and woman interchangeably and often used guys to address both male and female peers. Chelsea also used guy to describe men and women. To her, the term "woman means a feminist and I'm just a person."

Contrary to what one might assume, the majority of the participants in the uncertain category used the term woman. Several described using girl in a derogatory way to pass judgment on females who did not behave as women. While Cindy had used woman ever since she started dating, Emma said "I don't think I'm a woman yet, it's not just age, I don't have the experience to be called a woman."

In designing the study, I assumed that feminists would call themselves women while non-feminists would use the term girl. Obviously, this was an erroneous assumption. In recent years, girl has become a more powerful and accepted term through slang expressions such as "girlfriend" and "girlpower." My assumption that girl is degrading and woman is empowering was based on dualistic thinking that does not apply to these women's definitions of the terms. The context in which the terms are used are far more important to these women than the actual terms. Language and definition are critical points to understand before moving to a discussion of the status of feminism at Stanton.

The Current State of Feminism on this College Campus

Data used to evaluate the current state of the respondents' views on feminism included (a) participants' position on feminism and the reasons cited for this position, (b) participants' identification of feminist role models, (c) awareness of the campus feminist organization, and (d)

participation in women's studies courses. More of the women in the study identified as feminist than was expected. However, as random sampling techniques are not used in qualitative research, there may have been self-selection on the part of the participants. Disproportionately more women with an interest in feminism may have responded to the survey than those without an interest.

Position on Feminism

In the initial survey, 28 of the 56 participants identified themselves as feminist, ten did not identify as feminist, and 18 did not know their position. These women contradicted my assumption that the majority of college women reject the feminist label, as supported by Kamen (1991), Lather (1991), and Wolf (1993).

The survey respondents interviewed included 11 from the feminist category, six from the non-feminist category, and ten from the uncertain category.   Two of the women who initially responded "yes" changed to "don't know" during the interview, and one changed from "don't know" to "yes." All three revised their positions when they further clarified what feminism meant to them. One of the women who changed to "don't know" said she had been a feminist but was no longer sure about feminism since coming to college. Another seemed more comfortable taking a feminist position on paper than in describing in person how she felt about the issue. The woman who changed to a feminist position declared in the middle of the interview, "I guess I am a feminist after all."

None of the women of color identified as feminists; two said they did not know their position and two described themselves as non-feminists. One non-feminist felt it directly contradicted her values. She and the "don't know" respondents were all concerned that feminism might alienate men of color whom they needed as allies. Others said they were simply too busy with other issues and activities to focus on feminism.

In the interviews, many respondents clarified their position on feminism with qualifiers and explanations. Molly described herself as "a moderate feminist, not raging, I don't believe women never get a chance. Yes, women have been repressed but it's gotten so much better."

Several feminists expressed concerns that they would be identified as "feminizes." Maureen noted that feminist is such a loaded term that in her women's studies classes, people would say "I believe in women's rights but I'm not a feminist." Maureen considered herself a feminist, "without attaching any fancy names, not a liberal feminist." Lucy did not initially consider herself active enough to be a true feminist; however, in her second interview, she had begun to act more upon her beliefs.

Several feminists were concerned about the perceived confrontational nature of feminism. Barbara did not think she needed to identify herself publicly as a feminist, rather "it's part of who I am as a woman." Avoiding confrontations about feminism, she stated, "I'm proud of being female and don't have to justify it. I don't want to get into annoying arguments." Although Jenny described herself as a feminist, she would not identify herself as one in a group that was "highly charged in the other direction" because feminism "is not something I have to defend." Allison described herself as "definitely a feminist" and thinks it is important to identify as one because "the Rush Limbaugh idea of a feminazi caused women to be reluctant to identify as feminists which lead to being reluctant to fight patriarchy."

Terri stated that she was not a feminist because being a woman was not the only issue for her and lack of time and varied interests prevented involvement in women's issues. Staci was not a feminist because she did not see the need for it and feminism conflicted with her pro-life position on abortion. Lori contended that feminism is valid in the working world and considered herself a feminist on job-related topics, but personally she was "old-fashioned and doesn't have a problem with a lot of the male-dominated things. Liberalized girls cause people to generalize about all women." Titi thought her femininity, religion and love of men were incompatible with the beliefs of feminism. Megan expanded on her answer in the survey when she checked "I am not a feminist" and added "in the sense that the views are at the cost of men." Chelsea was a self-proclaimed "conservative Republican anti-feminist" who thought feminist issues were silly and debates over feminism frustrating.

The women in the do not know category were either proponents of equality for women who rejected the trappings of the feminist label or women who were unclear about the meaning of feminism and its role in their lives. Although Rachel initially said she had "no clue" about her position on feminism, she defined feminism as "empowerment, opportunities, freedom to do what you'd like, fends for yourself." As she further described feminism, she guessed she actually was a feminist. Caroline was not sure whether she was a feminist but guessed that she would have a different position in the future. She expected to think more about feminism when she was in the working world. Anna described herself as a passive feminist, depending upon how feminism was defined. Anna thought that identifying herself with the feminist label "takes attention from who I really am, that word is so charged, so many definitions flying around that I'm not comfortable with." Cindy was not sure whether she was a feminist because she was not "sure what a feminist would think." She thought of feminists as "too much, extreme, don't need men." Emma was also concerned about anti-male sentiment and extremism: "I don't associate myself with the hardcore feminists. I think I feel strongly about women's issues, I just don't know if that term [feminism], I think that term comes with a lot of stigma."

The women in the study illustrated the range of positions introduced by Kamen (1991): "I am feminist," "I am a feminist but," "I am not a feminist but," and "I am not a feminist." Participants who rejected feminism cited reasons ranging from concern about their relationships with men to disagreement with the perceived feminist agenda. Women in the "don't know" category cited a lack of awareness of feminism, inability to devote time to the issue and concern about the agenda as well the impact of feminism upon their relationships with males. These varying concerns were also reflected in their impressions of the campus feminist organization.

Awareness of Campus Feminist Organization

Of the 27 participants in the study, only one was an active participant in the campus feminist organization (hereafter referred to as the CFO). Several women in the uncertain

category mentioned attending events sponsored by the organization. The group sponsored a week of rape awareness programming during Take Back the Night Week just prior to the interviewing. Many participants referred to these events or the publicity. Some participants were unaware of the group while others had a negative image of them because the organization did not fit their definition of feminism. Several feminists said they disagreed with the group or had personal conflicts with some of its members. Chantal said the group had a "bad reputation, they're blatantly judgmental" particularly of women who want to get married and have children. Others simply said that feminism is fundamental to their identity, and they saw no need to proclaim it by joining a club. Allison believed the organization was not radical enough and too "accommodating to men." Several feminists described hypocritical behavior of organization members when they acted in non-feminist ways. Maureen described her frustration after attending a CFO dinner where organization members complained about men's treatment of women and then seeing the same women the next night at a party doing the same thing that they were complaining about the night before: "It's so counterproductive." Maureen, a feminist and women's studies major but not a member of the CFO, was shunned by a CFO member who assumed that all women's studies majors should be members of the organization.

Two of the non-feminists had close friends who were actively involved in the feminist organization while the others had little awareness of or interest in the group. The non-feminists with friends in the group respected the commitment of their friends but were not interested in joining the group. They did not feel any pressure from their friends to participate. Megan, another non-feminist, was concerned about hypocrisy among the members of the group and blamed members of the group for recent anti-male graffiti on campus. However, she said, "a lot of the women [in the organization] aren't anti-male, they do put women's issues in the forefront." She did not believe in "segregating mentalities. If there's a women's center, there should be a men's center next door."

Among the uncertain group, women expressed either lack of awareness of the campus feminist group or disapproval of their actions. Caroline was unaware of what the initials of the

organization stood for but she did recognize them from posters on campus. Cindy knew of the existence of the group but did not personally know any members. Anna thought the intentions of the organization were good but questioned their methods; she's "not affected or impressed by them." Although she attended several dinners and events, she did not "click" with some of the members of the group. Members of the group at an activities fair confronted Emma: "You were yelled at that if you are a woman, you should be interested in the [feminist organization]. I was turned off by it." However, Emma not only attended CFO events and dinners, she also brought a group of male friends to a dinner for a discussion of the sexual harassment policy.

Role models

In designing the study, I predicted that role models would be significant in developing a feminist identity. The data supported this prediction. All the self-identified feminists described important role models. The non-feminists and the "don't know" group could not think of many role models nor had negative role models for feminism.

Many feminists cited their mothers as role models for feminism–some, who worked, some who stayed home, but who taught their daughters to be independent. Barbara described her mother as independent; she worked outside the home and demonstrated to Barbara that women can "do these things." She also learned from her mom about "not making my identity in relationship to a man." Faculty members and high school teachers were frequently mentioned. Gloria Steinem was mentioned by one participant and others cited Hillary Rodham Clinton as a role model.

Several of the feminists also mentioned the non-sexist attitudes and support of their fathers. Male teachers who promoted feminist beliefs had a strong influence on their students. One feminist thought that male faculty members at Stanton seemed more feminist than female professors. She expressed disappointment that the women faculty were not better role models. This expectation that women faculty should be self-proclaimed feminists and good role models places a heavy burden on women at an institution which appears to offer many challenges for women faculty.

Maureen chose her role models not because they identified as feminists but because of what they embodied. The feminists seemed particularly impressed with women who successfully combined family and academic roles. Lucy's role models, counselors she met at camp, impressed her because they were "energetic, upbeat, knowing what they believe in, sticking to that and being comfortable with who they are." Several described influential friends, resident assistants, and roommates. Many respondents said, "I think she's probably a feminist" when referring to role models but were not sure.

Women in the non-feminist category described positive and negative feminist role models. Terri had several friends who were actively involved in the campus feminist organization. Lori talked about her mom raising her to be "independent, not dependent on a man." Staci and Titi could not think of any role models, family or close friends who were feminists. Staci knew some acquaintances who fit her description of a feminist but if anything, she thought they subconsciously influenced her opinion of feminism in a negative way. Megan had friends who were strong feminists. She was turned off by these feminists who were either "avid supporters of everything feminist all the time" or who were hypocritical. They preached equality and the importance of recognizing women but then did not practice what they preached in terms of degrading themselves in relationships with men. Many of the women in the study expressed moral indignation at the sexual conduct of other women at the institution and seemed to equate true feminism with sexual purity.

Chelsea described her mother as an "ardent" feminist, "a one-issue person who votes for women's issues always." Chelsea and her mother argued about feminism. She used to think all feminists were the same until she met a very good friend who led the feminist organization. This friend was a feminist but she thought about other things too, she could "put feminism on the back burner."

Within the "don't know" group, the participants' recollection of role models was mixed. Some mentioned their mothers while others were not sure if the women they mentioned were actually feminists. Others mentioned negative role models, particularly peers who were strident

and anti-male. Feminists in the anger and action stages of feminist identity development are often ardent in their criticism of patriarchy and their reaction to increased awareness of oppression. Feminists in these stages are often the most visible feminists on campus because of their commitment to activism. Thus, others are exposed to only one stage of feminism and draw conclusions based on this limited exposure.

The anti-male stereotype is particularly threatening to women who are concerned about their romantic futures. A culture such as Stanton's which prides itself on alumni matchmaking yet does not foster traditional dating practices creates an atmosphere of competition and fear about one's relationship prospects. Add to that the pervasive derogation of feminism by many males, and one can easily see why unattached heterosexual women might avoid a feminist stance, which might limit their appeal in the dating arena.

Although Jess' mother was a positive role model for her, her peers who were feminists were negative role models because they were anti-male, "over-strict, anal view, all for abortion, women's rights, choice, rape awareness, very cautious." Other than her mother, she could only think of one teacher who was a role model for feminism. Caroline could not think of any role models, although she described her mom as a "hero" who worked as a lawyer and raised four children. She also had two friends who were self-described feminists. Anna's mother was a feminist, and she described teachers who were vocal about feminist issues: "I was very attracted by them."

Other than occasional mothers and teachers, few participants in any category were sure that the people they identified as role models were feminists. It is likely that many of their role models considered themselves to be feminists but did not identify publicly as such. As with the campus feminist organization, the women in the study had high expectations of role models. They admired the "superwomen" who excelled at both work and family rather than recognizing that some women choose to focus on one or the other. Gloria Steinem and Hillary Rodham Clinton were the only public figures noted by the participants. Kamen (1991) noted the lack of feminist role models for young women and expressed concern that they could not connect to the

movement when it was identified solely with older White upper class women. However, those women who had taken a women's studies class were more likely to identify role models than those who had not.

Women's studies

Lather (1991) noted the positive relationship between enrollment in a women's studies course and development of a feminist identity. A majority of the women who identified as feminists in this study had taken at least one women's studies class. The classes did not change their position on feminism but all found the course work strengthened their already existing feminist beliefs and ability to articulate their positions. Ellen said, "I think [women's studies] helps you define who you are and who you want to be, by understanding your experience." Her women's studies experience "broadened my definition of what it meant to be a feminist and helped articulate it." After taking a women's studies class, Abby "felt justified in calling myself a feminist because the course clarified issues, cleared up stereotypes and gave me vocabulary to use." Linda felt "more informed and more aware" as a result of what she learned in class. Maureen became a women's studies major "by default" when she realized she had taken so many philosophy and history courses which were cross-listed in women's studies. Her classes helped her "make a more informed decision [about feminist issues], helped me to intellectualize where my stance was, reinforced what I believe."

Critics of women's studies (Denfeld, 1995; Sommers, 1994) blamed radical feminist writers for frightening away prospective feminists. Ellen shared her perspective on this issue: "I think that they come on really strong and if you're not really sure, it causes pressure for you to accept that definition [of feminism] and if you're not ready to do that, it turns you to the other side."

None of the women who identified as non-feminists had taken a women's studies class. What Lori had read about women's studies did not appeal to her, even offended her. She was "not empowered by the women's movement, and wouldn't be inspired by a class." Only one

woman, Terri, was interested in taking a class in the future because she did not know much about the field but thought it would be helpful in her psychology major.

Of the women who were not sure of their position on feminism, only Anna had taken a women's studies class. Anna did not like the class because she did not like the professor, she did not enjoy being with so many women because "everything was politically charged–people tried too hard to superimpose their experiences on their learning." Upon reflection, she believed she was too young to appreciate the class, and she might appreciate it more as an older student. Caroline heard positive feedback about women's studies courses and was thinking of taking a history course about women authors. Cindy was also interested in taking a women's studies class–on women in religion to support her religion minor. Emma wanted to take a class in women's studies in the future.

All of the feminists indicated that they had already developed an interest in feminism before taking a women's studies class. The courses held no appeal for the non-feminists except Terri. However, some who were uncertain about feminism were open to the idea of exploring the courses and therefore exploring feminism further.

Like feminism, women's studies at Stanton appears to be stigmatized as anti-male and strident. Although women's studies is a legitimate academic program, the political nature of the curriculum frightened some of the participants. Even those who enjoyed political science courses did not recognize the value of being more informed about women's history and issues.

Developmental Issues

Developmental issues clearly played a role in the assumption of a feminist identity. In particular, psychosocial and epistemological development is related to how a woman reacts to feminism. The responses to questions about feminism were also compared with the models of feminist identity development proposed by Downing and Roush (1985) and Lather (1991).

Psychosocial development

The data revealed the importance of relationships with others in developing a feminist identity. The relationship of the women to peers, family, and significant others played a role in

how the participants reacted to feminism. Relationships to others play a key role in moral and identity development (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Gilligan, 1982). The relationship themes prevalent in the data are the stereotype of feminists as lesbians, the participants' relationships with men, and the support of others for feminist beliefs.

Lesbian stereotype. The stereotype that all feminists are also lesbians (Wallis, 1989) was voiced by some of the non-feminists. Although these women did not believe the stereotype, they expressed a concern that other people might make the feminist/lesbian connection. Lori admitted that when she first thought about Stanton feminists, she assumed they might be lesbians. Another admitted that her organization declined the invitation to use the women's center on campus for meetings because of fears of association with the campus lesbian group.

The majority of women in the study were unconcerned that their sexuality would be questioned as a result of feminism. One of the women in the study who did not think there was necessarily an association between Stanton feminists and homosexuality noted "if anything, I would characterize, stereotype our feminists as male-crazy." However, many of the "don't know" women expressed concern that feminism is associated with an anti-male attitude. Either assumptions of lesbianism or affiliation with an anti-male agenda would be equally damaging to one's romantic prospects.

Relationships with men. Clear patterns emerged among the three groups when discussing the impact of a feminist identity and relationships with men. Some feminists made it clear that being a feminist did not mean being anti-male while most non-feminists and some in the "don't know" category clearly identified the feminist agenda as anti-male. This circumstance served as the major reason why they did not consider themselves feminist. Titi, a non-feminist, was very concerned about the anti-male sentiment she perceived about feminism. Megan also expressed disapproval of the anti-male sentiment of many feminists. She thought that feminist was "completely synonymous with anti-male" at Stanton College. She defined feminism as "a sexist attitude against men."

None of the feminists were concerned about the impact of their feminism upon their relationships with men. Those in both the feminist and do not know categories who had male friends who were supportive of feminism were not concerned about feminism having an impact on their relationships.

Cindy, a respondent in the uncertain position, thought people "need a mate" and she believed feminists do not need men and prefer independence. She also felt that males might be intimidated or turned off if she identified as a feminist. For Emma, what she perceived as anti-male sentiment among feminists clashed with her beliefs about the equality of men and women and made it difficult for her to identify as a feminist. Emma and others described a climate where males regularly made fun of the campus feminist organization and feminists in general. Most participants seemed unwilling to challenge this ridicule for fear of being labeled anti-male. Despite claims of equality for the sexes, a sexist atmosphere, at least in the social scene, appears to remain at Stanton. The competitive dating environment for women makes it difficult for individual women to challenge the status quo. Many of the women in the study were concerned about the impact of feminism upon their relationships with men. The feminist women were either unconcerned about this issue or enjoyed relationships with supportive men. However, the major obstacle for many of the "don't know" women and the non-feminists was their assumption that being a feminist meant being perceived as anti-male.

Support for feminist beliefs. Support for feminist beliefs among friends and family was expressed by a majority of participants, regardless of their feminism position. Participants frequently discussed women's issues with friends and indicated that if they were to publicly identify as a feminist, most of their friends and family would be supportive. Those who identified as feminists indicated that the majority of men in their lives were supportive of their feminism. The non-feminists discussed women's issues with their friends and several went so far as to develop close friendships with feminists. The women in the uncertain category were less certain about the reaction they would receive if they took a feminist position. Jess said if she were to announce to her friends that she was a feminist, her friends "would be surprised, would

like to know why, and would assume she had been influenced by someone else, but would accept her position." Cindy anticipated support and respect from her female but not her male friends. Emma was concerned she would be perceived as the stereotypical feminist and spoke repeatedly about the stigma attached to the word "feminist."

Although many of the "don't know" women and the non-feminists felt that their friends would be supportive of them if they declared themselves as feminists, this support did not seem influential in developing a position. However, the opinion of family and male friends seemed more important in the women's decision-making process. In some cases, Chelsea and Jess, in particular, their mothers' feminism was overwhelming. The role others play in helping a person develop a position on issues such as feminism is related to epistemological stage, discussed in the next section.

Epistemological Development

As discussed in the literature review, the four stages of the Epistemological Reflection Model (Baxter Magolda, 1992) are absolute knowing, transitional knowing, independent knowing, and contextual knowing. The epistemological stages of the study participants who completed the Measure of Epistemological Reflection or answered related questions during the interviews are charted in Table 2. The horizontal axis shows the number of respondents in each stage of epistemology as well as position on feminism.

Table 1

Feminist Identification and Epistemological Stage Matrix

Position on Feminism	# of Respondents in Each Epistemological Stage			
	Absolute	Transitional	Independent	Contextual
Feminist	0	2	5	4
Non-Feminist	0	1	2	0
Don't Know	0	1	5	1

The study participants demonstrated more advanced epistemological levels for their age and year of study as compared to the research of Baxter Magolda (1992). Although the

participants represented the traditional range of ages and all four classes, none of the participants were absolute knowers and the majority were at the independent stage. The older participants were generally rated in the independent and contextual stages, but many sophomores also were independent knowers. Among the feminist participants who completed the Measure of Epistemological Reflection (MER), the two youngest demonstrated transitional and independent knowing patterns, five were clearly independent knowers, and four, including three seniors and a sophomore, were contextual knowers.

Two of the three non-feminists who completed the MER demonstrated independent knowing patterns and one, a first year student, was in the transitional stage. Of the "don't know" respondents, one was a transitional knower, five were independent knowers, and one senior was a contextual knower. In summary, the participants were clustered in the upper stages of epistemological development, with the majority demonstrating independent knowing patterns.

In the methodology chapter, I stated my assumption that epistemological stage and feminist identity position would intersect in the following ways: (a) absolute knowers would be more likely to view feminism dualistically, choosing a definitive pro or con position on the issue; (b) transitional knowers would be more ambivalent about feminism and would be more concerned about peer opinions on the issues; (c) independent knowers would be more definitive on the issue and would be less concerned about peer opinion than transitional knowers; and (d) contextual knowers would choose either a feminist or non-feminist position and would be less concerned about contradictions and ambivalence regarding issues within the feminist agenda. Although the study data reflect my general assumption that epistemological stage is related to feminist position, the relationships and patterns were different than I expected. As none of the participants in the study were absolute knowers, I could not explore the first assumption. However, epistemological stage is clearly related to the development of a feminist position in the upper three stages of knowing.

Transitional knowers. The transitional knowers were scattered across all three positions and did not support my assumption; however, they remained very influenced by peer opinions

regarding issues such as feminism. Although role models whether negative or positive, were important players in the decision-making process for these women, the transitional knowers were beginning to recognize the fallibility of teachers and therefore peer role models became as or more influential than adult role models were.

Applicability is a critical learning concept for the transitional knower, so the perceived importance and relativity of feminism to the lives of these study participants played a crucial role in determining their position on feminism. Cindy, a transitional knower, was "not sure I am a feminist because I'm not sure what a feminist would think." She was also concerned about the reaction of peers and worried that males might be "turned off or intimidated if I said I was a feminist. The word itself is kind of strong." Lucy, a feminist, was also influenced by peers. She "used to think of feminists as loud, outspoken women who were more often than not lesbian, just out there yelling and screaming. Now, I think a feminist is anyone sticking up for what they believe in, things that need to be fixed." Her views of feminists changed after coming to Stanton and since becoming a camp counselor. "I'm not sure why my attitudes changed, maybe because now the other camp counselors talk with me about feminist issues as an equal. I have one lesbian friend who calls herself a feminazi. It's been interesting, hearing new perspectives."

Transitional knowers are also beginning to understand that a position on an issue is no longer simply a yes or no choice. Lori, a non-feminist and transitional knower, thought "feminism is controversial, personal and comes from your experience." She disagreed with a lot of feminisms, but considered herself a feminist on job-related topics. "In the working world, feminism is valid." Her use of the plural term "feminisms" indicates her awareness of the complexity of the term and its different meaning for different people.

Independent knowers. Independent knowers accept the uncertainty of knowledge and the validity of their own beliefs. Baxter Magolda describes the independent knower as "embracing and subordinating others' ideas" (1992, p. 136). At first I was surprised by how many "don't know" women were independent knowers. However, I realized that this was not inconsistent with independent knowing patterns. These women were not ready to claim a position because

they were still forming their opinions and gathering knowledge to make their decision. The independent knowers were more influenced by peers than expected, but the inter-individual patterns of learning demonstrated by women in Baxter Magolda's study emphasized continued interest in peer opinions in the learning process. Independent knowers enjoy debate, and many of the independent women in the study not only discussed debate as a positive learning process but engaged in debating the issue of feminism in the interviews. Megan, a non-feminist because she did not want to be associated with an anti-male movement, nevertheless enjoyed discussing feminism and recently served on a committee to create a sexual assault policy. After this experience, she had "a better awareness that date rape happens...I'm much more aware of confidentiality issues around rape. It's easy to say administration and blame the collective."

Independent knowers dislike limitations placed on their knowledge and the learning process. This characteristic was reflected in the independent knower participants as they resisted feminism or feminists if they felt constrained by a feminist agenda with which they did not agree. Eliza was uncertain about her position on feminism because she did not like the kind of feminism, which involves "hating or resenting men" and anger. However, she emphasized that she believed in the struggle for equality for which feminists are fighting. Conversely, Rachel's independent nature encouraged the development of her feminism:

> a feminist is outgoing, directive, is willing to take a step forward, they do not let anyone push them around or restrict them from doing anything. Now that I am defining it, yeah, I guess I am a feminist. I see myself as willing to go beyond, not be restricted if someone tells me I cannot do something, I stand up for myself.

An important characteristic of independent knowing is open-mindedness and thus the independent knowers resisted those feminists whom they perceived as single-minded and judgmental. Chantal, a former feminist and independent knower, was frustrated by the feminists she met in the CFO:

> The meeting was too radical. The group has a bad reputation, they are blatantly judgmental. They judge women who want to get married, have children, and be housewives. Women can cook and still be feminists. Choice is important, you do not have to have a job.

Contextual knowers. Contextual knowers are comfortable with ambiguity and place knowledge in context. The learning process involves "integrating one's own and others' ideas" (Baxter Magolda, 1992, p. 168). All but one of the contextual knowers were feminists with clearly defined opinions regarding feminism, which suited their individual situations. Jenny described herself as a feminist but said she might not identify herself as one when with certain groups of people. "With friends and family, I definitely would, but not in a group that was highly charged in the other direction." Although I was surprised that one contextual knower, Anna, was still undecided about feminism, she was continuing to explore feminism within the context of her environment and needs before taking a stance on the issue: "If feminism is defined as politically active and engaging in a lot of women's issues on campus, then no, I'm not a feminist. However, they [feminist issues] are important issues." She concluded that she was a "passive feminist."

Abby, a contextual knower and feminist, said her choice of girl or woman to describe herself depends upon context: "with my boyfriend, I talk about others as girls, in class I use the term woman and with friends the term chicks. Chick is equivalent to guy, it is hip, with-it. Girl can be derogatory while woman is more professional." The contextual knowers' opinions on issues such as acquaintance rape, affirmative action, and welfare reform reflected thinking based on complex, well-researched study of the issue within the context of society. Maureen, a feminist, described her stance on the Equal Rights Amendment:

> I do not support ERA. I have a unique stance on ERA because I am a history major. The women who initially proposed this bill were those who did not need it, and the women who did need it, did not want it. The shortsightedness of the ERA proposal does not protect the needs of mothers... Affirmative action is being used as a crutch by women but there is a steadier stream of women in the work force. It definitely was needed and had a useful purpose. We have to be careful because people turn it around–you just got the job because you are a woman. You have to be qualified to even use affirmative action, but that has gotten lost.

Feminist Identity Development

The Feminist Identity Development model described by Downing and Roush (1985) includes five stages of feminist development: passive acceptance, revelation, embeddedness-

emanation, synthesis, and active commitment. This model better reflects the experiences of older women or perhaps second wave feminists than those in this study. Most of the women I interviewed did not fit the Downing and Roush model; they described little if any anger toward men. Many actually excused the sexist behavior of men they knew and seemed reluctant to blame male acquaintances for sexism. Emma described her male friends' reactions to a feminist housemate who spoke out about women's issues: "The men feel like they have to prove something. They are annoying. I don't think they really mean it." They did not see a connection between derogatory remarks and sexist behavior from their friends and sexism in general. Most "don't know" and non-feminist participants at first had difficulty thinking of a personal example of sexual discrimination yet later many described overt sexist and discriminatory behavior they had experienced. Caroline could not think of any instances where she was treated differently in the classroom, but then she remembered her high school soccer coach and older men teachers, "they were kind of sexist. I remember getting frustrated because they were really sexist." She also remembered being stared at by boys in high school, "like walking the gauntlet. It was so uncomfortable." Nor did they accept the first stage belief that women were inferior to men. These women were raised with Title IX and expectations of equality. Staci, a non-feminist, thought that "women have just about all the rights men do...awareness has changed treatment of women and White men are more likely to be disadvantaged now."

Most of the women in the study had not yet survived a "radicalizing" experience such as job discrimination, sexual abuse or childcare (Steinem, 1983). Despite the lack of a radicalizing experience, many of the women had developed a feminist identity.   However, many were anticipating job discrimination after college and were preparing strategies to deal with it.

In the avowed feminist category, the women were in the synthesis or active commitment stage of Downing and Roush's (1985) model or did not match any classification stages. Many feminists were not active in promoting their beliefs but simply considered feminism part of their identity. Barbara described her feminism "as part of who I am as a woman" and therefore she did

not think it necessary to publicly identify as a feminist and open herself up to confrontation from others with opposing beliefs. However, several were very active, including Allison, who said she learned through women's studies courses that "you need to do feminist not just be one." The non-feminists either did not fit the model or were likely to match the passive acceptance stage. None accepted the belief in the superiority of men inherent in the passive acceptance stage. Of those in the uncertain category, many fit the synthesis category yet did not describe themselves as feminists. Again, those uncertain participants who seemed passive did not accept the superiority of men.

Lather (1991) observed a transition from ignorance to oppositional knowledge among the women in her study. Some of the women in the study reported in this dissertation had not experienced this transition. Others rejected the oppositional knowledge and took a non-feminist stance. Caroline is an example of a woman in either Downing and Roush's passive acceptance stage or Lather's ignorance stage who was beginning to be confronted with oppositional knowledge:

> Feminism is a belief in women. You think constantly about how women are treated that life is not fair. I do not think this way, but I can see that women, in the big picture, are treated unfairly. I do not personally think I have been treated unfairly. The twins, my feminist friends, have not been treated unfairly either. I do not know why they act like that, they are just interested in women's issues.

Caroline said she does not know exactly how women are treated unfairly, but she did hear on the news about women's pay equity issues and found the information upsetting.

Lather's (1991) position during which women feel burdened, hopeless and afraid only described Chantal, who said her feminism had been literally "beaten out of her," leaving her with the impression that feminism was "dangerous." The liberating, anger and action behavior was demonstrated by Allison. Allison described feminism as "the fight against the man" and described herself as a "ball-buster." Among the participants in this study, few described feelings of anger, except at those feminists who gave feminism a bad name. Nor did some of the feminists in the study feel the need to act upon their feminism. Linda described herself as a feminist "by outlook, not activities. I'm all for women's rights, offended by jokes, sexist

treatment, but I'm not about to shave my head." However, she also believes being a feminist "is about setting an example to those females who look up to me for some reason." As described above, all but one had a positive experience when studying women's studies; however, the classes at this institution did not seem to have the cataclysmic effect described by Lather.

Limitations

Several factors related to qualitative research methodology limit the study and serve as barriers to understanding the issue of college feminism. Time constraints limited the number of second interviews conducted as students were busy with end of the semester commitments. Lack of congruence with existing theories of feminist identity development made theoretical analysis difficult. The limited access to student of color does not provide this study with a cross section of the national undergraduate women's population. In addition, the participants exhibited higher epistemological development levels than the average college student or the participants in Baxter Magolda's (1992) study at a comparable institution.

Summary

The data presents a view of contemporary feminism, which is varied, complex and contextual. The relationship of epistemological stage to feminist identity development warrants further analysis, particularly involving the patterns within feminist identity positions. Although the feminist identity models of Lather (1991), Downing, and Roush (1985) provided a framework for interpreting the data, the incompatibility of the participants' experiences with the stages of these theories led me to develop a new model of feminist identity development, which is presented in Chapter Six. In addition to the model, Chapter Five includes further analysis of the data in the context of the participants' experiences and the developmental theories introduced earlier.

CHAPTER FIVE:

DISCUSSION

College women face many obstacles in developing a feminist identity: lack of role models, negative stereotypes, peer pressure, and lack of information. Each woman's epistemological stage is integral to how they deal with these obstacles, gain awareness, and form an opinion based on their own beliefs and needs. In this chapter, I will describe patterns and interpretations drawn from the experiences and beliefs shared by the women in the study. After a discussion of the context of this study, I utilized three frameworks for discussion of the research findings: participants' definitions of feminism and its role in their lives, definition from the literature, and my definition as researcher. First, I focused on how the women in the study

defined feminism and how their definition related to their feminist identity. These college women held very individualized beliefs about feminism–how they defined feminism, which feminist beliefs they embraced or rejected, and how they acted upon their beliefs. Experiences and people, which influenced the women, also varied widely. Role models, courses, and experiences with discrimination corresponded with how they identified with feminism. Respondents' relationships with men also were related to their position on feminism.

I next viewed these women's experiences of feminism in the context of feminist identity theory and epistemological development theory. The stages of feminist identity theory were not easily identifiable in the women in the study and therefore seemed less relevant to their experiences. However, the stages of epistemological development were clearly defined in the women, affected how they defined feminism, and formed an opinion on women's issues and how they dealt with conflicts regarding their beliefs.

In the third section, I will share my model of feminist identity development as a framework for understanding the experiences of the women in the study. Finally, I will conclude by returning to the questions posed in the introduction chapter. Is development of a feminist identity important for women? How does feminism affect their experience of college? How does feminism affect their lives?

Context

 Study participants' views on feminism and being a feminist were influenced by those around them, the media, and society in general. Several participants explained that they were feminists but not feminazis or radical betraying the assumption that being a feminist automatically meant being radical. Several gave two different definitions of feminist–what they believed personally and the general populace version. For example, Anna differentiated between her personal definition of feminism, "providing a role model for other people and being comfortable with who you are," and the feminism, which is dualistic and politically correct.

The Stanton community's experience of feminist activism as personified by the campus feminist organization also played a role in the respondents' views of feminism. The group was

generally seen as radical, man-hating, and focused only on a single issue. However, several feminists criticized the group members for hypocrisy in their actions as opposed to their words. The organization was ridiculed by males and females. Most of the feminist participants in the study did not want to be included in or associated with the campus group.

Although the college does have a women's studies program, a Women's Center, and an active feminist group, the lack of role models in the faculty and administration is contradictory to the promise of co-educational opportunity promoted by the college. Outside of women's studies and those programs with an equal number of male and female faculty, women students had limited exposure to women faculty, let alone feminist faculty. The comments of some participants that the male faculty seemed more feminist than the women faculty indicated that a hostile climate still exists for women who advocate feminism in the academic workplace.

Stanton women participants seemed to be very concerned about their relationships with men, whether as friends or dating partners. In the competitive dating environment of Stanton, some participants, particularly younger women, were unwilling to espouse a belief that might intimidate or repel men who do not support feminism. Yet others appreciated the support of male allies and were unwilling to alienate them through hostile anti-male activities.

Stanton students were perceived by the participants as apathetic and, adversely, activist. The motto that Stanton students "work hard and then play hard" carried into their extra-curricular activities. The majority of the women in the study held the belief that being a true feminist involves activism, and for some, they simply did not have the time to devote enough attention to the cause. Some feminists and "don't know" participants felt guilty that they were not more involved in the issue. The academic demands on these students were very strenuous, and many were also involved in a multitude of student activities and leadership roles. Yet all were willing to take time to discuss the issue of feminism.

The Participants' Views on Feminism

The women in the study offered complicated and individual definitions of feminism, which went far beyond the concept of believing in equality for women. These descriptions were

generally positive and empowering across all three positions. Definitions of feminist were more complicated and likely to be value-laden. Radical was often a qualifier.

Definitions of feminism and feminist by the participants can be grouped under four categories: (a) feminism equals stridency, (b) feminism equals personal qualities, (c) feminism equals social change, and (d) feminism equals equality. The first, feminism equals stridency, involved adding a great deal of additional issues to the basic assumption of equality for women. Definitions included assumptions of an anti-male agenda, pro-choice agenda, belief that women are not treated fairly, and single minded pursuit of the issue of equality. Words such as strident, strong, angry and radical were used in these definitions. Often these women described feminism in more neutral terms but added judgmental and stereotypical descriptors to the definition of feminist. Feminists were also characterized as opponents of pornography and oppression and proponents of gender-neutral, politically correct language.

The second category involved adding personal qualities to the basic assumption of equality for women. These qualities were positive ones such as being strong, confident, able to stand up for oneself, knowledgeable and comfortable with one's identity. The definitions in this category ascribed these qualities to feminists who also served as role models for other women.

In the third category, feminism equals social change, in addition to personal attributes, some respondents' defined feminism according to how it changed women. To these women, feminism brought not only the belief in equality but awareness, knowledge, empowerment and freedom. Activism had a positive connotation in this category when used to describe a feminist.

Finally, in the fourth category, feminism equals equality, the definition of feminism became more simple. The women in this group defined feminism as equality for women and a belief that women can do anything. There was a great deal of congruence between feminism and feminist - a feminist is simply someone who holds feminist beliefs. There also was an awareness of multiple approaches to feminism in this group; feminists did not necessarily have to believe in the whole feminist platform. However, there was a definite activist component to being a

feminist. Words such as struggling, fighting, and taking a stance were used to describe feminists.

The additional meaning placed on feminism currently makes embracing the movement all the more challenging for young women. In retrospect, it was extremely important not to pre-define feminism in the study and ask participants to respond to that definition as a great deal of information was gleaned from the complexity of their personal definitions.

These women did not like being told what to believe and rejected feminism if they believed they would be forced to adopt a platform of beliefs. Even those who embraced feminism disliked the brand of feminism that was prescriptive. Those who were comfortable with feminism felt they had the option to accept or reject various beliefs; that they had line item veto authority in claiming feminism. The "don't knows" either believed they had to accept the whole platform or were not sure. The non-feminists all chose not to be feminists because they disagreed with what they perceived as the feminist platform.

Issues

Issues the participants associated with feminism included language, experience and anticipation of discrimination, health issues, and safety issues. Discussed below, stances on these issues ranged from indifference and ignorance to public action to improve the situation for women.

<u>Language</u>

Although I began the study with the assumption that graduating from girl to woman in describing oneself was a critical step in claiming a feminist identity, I was basing my assumption on an outdated concept of the meaning of girl. Girl can have a positive connotation now; young women have reclaimed the word as a term of power and one, which describes the unique nature of women's relationships. Girlfriend, girlpower, riot girrrls, and girls' night out have given girl new meaning. Participants did say that they resented the term girl if it was used paternalistically but only rejected the context, not the term. These women are not thinking dualistically about

terms and labels but instead imbue individual meanings and use terms interchangeably, depending upon context and setting.

Many participants voiced frustration about the emphasis on changing language to be inclusive and politically correct. Some objected to this because it was annoying and some because they believed gender-inclusive language to be a "band-aid" approach to sexism. Those in the former category did not appreciate the underlying importance of inclusive language. This was a recurring theme among the non-feminists and many "don't know" women–a denial of the presence of sexism in their personal lives.

Awareness and Experience of Discrimination

Most of the participants were aware that they had increased opportunities as opposed to women a generation ago. Some participants, particularly in the non-feminist and "don't know" groups, believed equality had been achieved. Others recognized, as Steinem (1983) cautioned, that college might be the last place where they would feel equal to men. However, the chilly climate described by Hall and Sandler (1982) still existed for these women. The sexism they described was generally more subtle than overt, and they were more likely to confront or complain about overt discriminatory behaviors such as grade discrimination than sexist remarks. They were very forgiving of male friends but critical of male faculty. More than any other form of sexism, grade discrimination motivated some women to challenge their male teachers. In general, most of the women seemed resigned to subtle sexism; they recognized but did not challenge it. Their unwillingness to challenge seemed based on concerns about making waves, which might affect their academic status or hopelessness that their efforts would be futile.

Although most of the feminists demonstrated a high level of awareness regarding feminist issues and sexism, most were unwilling to blame male acquaintances for perpetuating sexism. Others, in the non-feminist and "don't know" categories did not make a connection between their personal experiences and sexism. At first, they could not recollect experiences of discrimination, but when asked about specific issues, they gave concrete examples of sexism.

Some seemed to differentiate between sexism and discrimination. Unless they believed they had lost an opportunity as a result of the experience, they did not feel victimized.

Many seemed to take sexism for granted as long as they continued to receive opportunities to learn or work. Sexism is so systemic in contemporary society whereas racism and other oppression is much more obvious and likely to be condemned. For women of color, racism and sexism overlapped, and they were not sure if they could separate out the basis on which the discrimination occurred. The women of color in the study felt they had to focus their energy on combating racism first because it was much more oppressive.

Health and Safety Issues

Some of the feminist participants also considered health and safety issues as examples of continuing discrimination against women while others viewed such issues as women's issues. One non-feminist, Chelsea, considered such issues as date rape and battering as "individual issues, not women's issues." Chelsea believed she could protect herself from being a victim of such issues by being careful.

Chelsea symbolizes the rejection of "victim" feminism, which is how some authors (Denfeld, 1995; Roiphe, 1993) have characterized contemporary feminism. The version of feminism, which characterizes all women as potential victims and all men as potential rapists and batterers, was unappealing to the women in the study. Although most of the women were concerned about safety issues such as assault and domestic violence, they viewed this as just one issue of feminism and not the whole focus of the movement.

Several women mentioned the recent court case involving an alleged date rape at Brown University as an example of "victim feminism." This case, which received publicity blaming the victim and university for mishandling the situation, provoked much discussion on college campuses about the responsibility of both men and women for their behavior. The women in the study who mentioned the case questioned whether a woman should be held accountable for her actions, which might have led to the situation. Rather than viewing the issue in terms of right and wrong, the women explored the issue in context and tried to learn from the situation. Other

women mentioned their concerns about alcohol use and how it affects women. In particular, they were concerned about women students who were so drunk at parties that they could not take responsibility for their actions and well-being.

Most of the students felt that Stanton was a very safe campus, if you were sober. Several respondents were concerned about lighting issues and did not want the college to wait until an assault occurred before addressing campus security. Another mentioned her worry that Stanton women assumed that their male classmates would treat them with respect simply because they were intelligent men who had been accepted into Stanton. She worried that falsely based trust would lead women into dangerous situations.

Domestic violence was rarely mentioned. Most of the women had not heard of incidences of battering on campus. A few knew of violent relationships among their friends and neighbors but the majority assumed it was not an issue for the campus population. Those who did know of situations were unsure how to help the victim. Participants who had taken women's studies courses seemed more conscious of the connection.

A women's health issue mentioned by several women was the lack of funding for breast cancer research. One woman had recently produced a play on breast cancer, and many of the participants had either seen the play or the theater posters and were concerned about the issue. Birth control and sexually transmitted diseases were also mentioned as examples of health issues that affect women.

Role Models and Relationships

Two types of relationships were important to these women in developing a feminist identity–relationships with feminist and female role models and relationships with men. The importance of these relationships were different within the various epistemological stages as learning from experts and peers is more or less significant within the different stages of knowing. For absolute knowers who rely upon teachers and experts to impart knowledge, role models play a critical role. The feminist or non-feminist beliefs expressed by teachers and parents will be viewed as truth by absolute knowers. Teachers and experts help transitional knowers apply

knowledge and therefore continue to play a critical role in the development of beliefs about feminism. Peer role models and male friends play a more significant role in the learning of independent knowers, however, independent knowers still look to teachers to provide ideas, which the student can embrace or reject. Contextual knowers look to role models to provide contextual expertise; therefore employers, advisors or women's studies professors can be influential in providing opinions and knowledge to help contextual knowers construct a position on feminism. Peer or male opinions are less significant to contextual knowers.

Role models. The presence of positive female and feminist role models in the lives of the feminist participants clearly helped these women resolve conflicts they had about feminism as well as contradicted the negative publicity feminism received from the media. Even if the role models did not identify as feminist to the participants, the participants considered their behavior and values to be feminist. Most of these role models were significant presences in the participants' lives: family members, close friends or admired teachers. Although a few public figures and authors were mentioned, the majority of role models were ordinary women.

In contrast, negative role models such as strident activists confused or repelled those non-feminists or "don't know" women in the transitional and independent knowing stages. Their attitudes symbolized feminism to these women who in turn rejected the movement based on their impressions of it from these role models. The non-feminist and "don't know" women could not name any positive feminist role models. Frequently they cited the accomplishments and teachings of their mothers, translating feminist role model to female role model.

Many of the feminists and "don't know" women cited examples of role models who excelled at both traditional roles as mothers and non-traditional roles as career women. To them, the best feminists were those who still filled traditional female roles of wife and mother while also working. However, many of the women were more realistic in envisioning their own futures and were making plans to design their careers to meet family needs. Others in the "don't know" and non-feminist category thought it was important that their mothers had sacrificed

career for family while raising their daughters as stay-at-home mothers. Finally, many of the women appreciated role models who retained their femininity while seeking equality with men.

The attitudes expressed about negative role models and hypocritical feminists are reflective of the influence of the patriarchal system and internalized oppression. Women are held to a higher standard of expectations and accomplishments then their male counterparts, and feminists are held to even higher standards. This backlash against feminists and harsh criticism of women is divisive and makes it impossible for women to unite to overcome discrimination.

Relationships with men. Most participants mentioned significant males in their lives in the context of explaining their position on feminism. Women in the non-feminist and "don't know" groups cited concerns with what they perceived as the anti-male attitude of many feminists. A few "don't knows" and feminists mentioned significant others who were supportive of feminism; Eliza claimed that her boyfriend was more of a feminist than she was. Several feminists described actions or conversations with their fathers that were supportive of feminism. No one mentioned the concept that it is safer for men to be allies than for women to be feminists although several noted that some men understand that they will be more attractive to certain women if they are seen as sensitive men who are supportive of women's issues.

However, many "don't knows" also mentioned concerns that men were threatened by or disparaging of feminism, and the women were reluctant to identify as feminists if it meant alienating important men in their lives. The "don't knows" and the "non-feminists" expressed concern that feminism was equated with an anti-male attitude; since they loved men, they could not be feminists. Those who expressed concern about the anti-male agenda were divided among two groups: one, which was concerned about the effect of feminism on their social life and another, which felt an anti-male agenda was unfair to men, and constituted reverse discrimination.

Although not explicitly discussed, an underlying theme of concern about the impact of declaring a feminist identity on one's social life emerged for the heterosexual women in the non-feminist and "don't know" categories. The "non-feminists" and the "don't know" seemed to fear

that being a feminist would have a negative effect on their relationships with men, particularly potential or current romantic partners. Many described the scornful and joking attitude of males toward feminism as well as the general unwillingness of Stanton women to challenge men on these attitudes. Most of the self-described feminists were able to meet these challenges and enjoyed debates while the do not knows seem to fear controversial discussions of feminism. However, some of the feminists were selective in identifying as feminists in certain settings where they knew their feminism would be viewed negatively.

Only one of the participants expressed anger at an individual man. Patriarchy was seen as an obscure concept, unrelated to the individual men in the lives of the study participants. There was a general lack of willingness to blame men they knew for perpetuating sexism even in the face of sexist jokes and discriminatory behavior. Many of the participants did not want to be confrontational and simply accepted sexist behavior.

Acting Upon Their Beliefs

The highest stage of Downing and Roush's Feminist Identity Model (1985) involves active commitment. Most of the feminists in the study would not be categorized in this stage because they had not acted upon their feminism in traditional ways. For some, this was a purposeful choice while others wished they had the time or commitment to be more active. Most were interested in women's issues but it was not the predominant issue to which they could devote their limited free time. Still others were active in promoting the cause of women's equality in subtle or non-traditional ways. Abby used theater to promote women's issues and presented a play on breast cancer to raise awareness of women's health issues; several other participants commented on how much they were affected by the play. Linda and Lucy used their roles as camp counselors to initiate discussions with young girls about body image and self-esteem issues.

The different forms of activism demonstrated by the feminists in the study illustrate that there are different ways of demonstrating one's commitment to feminism other than subscribing to Ms magazine, supporting NOW, and marching on Washington. However, the assumption that

activism must take certain forms may lead to discounting the less visible actions of feminists such as those in the study. In addition, this may explain why it is assumed that feminism is currently less popular on campus. If feminism is measured by participation in Take Back the Night marches and numbers of women in the campus feminist groups and women's studies courses, many feminists will be left out of the census.

The interface between action and belief was illustrated in the negative reaction to the campus feminist organization. It is unfortunate that most of the avowed feminists interviewed wanted nothing to do with the campus feminist organization because they could have served as role models who represent different versions of feminism. The organization was paradoxically criticized both for being too radical and too complacent. The women in the study were very critical and judgmental of the group, and members were held to very high standards by these outsiders. The CFO also suffers from ridicule by many male members of the community. Participants who were concerned about their ability to attract male partners were reluctant to affiliate with the CFO for fear of alienating potential mates. If participants are reluctant to claim feminism as a belief, they certainly are not going to join an organization, which is viewed so negatively by the community. Many participants seemed afraid that declaring oneself a feminist would leave them vulnerable to the same attacks suffered by the CFO.

It is also worrisome that personality conflicts became more important than supporting the feminist cause. Some of the reasons the less active feminists and "don't know" women shunned the label feminist were to avoid association with the CFO. These women believed much of the negative publicity about feminists on campus derived from negative images of the group. Even when these women knew the stereotypes and accusations about the CFO were untrue, they failed to defend the group because they wanted to avoid confrontation. Women in all three categories criticized CFO group members for hypocritical interactions with men and held these women to higher standards of behavior because of their membership in the group. Yet these critics did not see their own hypocrisy in their unwillingness to challenge their peers who

make sexist remarks. Perhaps they avoided the CFO group because they feared their ability to meet their own standards.

Despite an unwillingness to confront peers, several feminists and "don't know", women were very critical of the Stanton administration in reference to women's issues. However, they did not act upon their criticism by challenging the administration. Most were reluctant to be viewed as confrontational by either peers or administrators.

Women's studies

Enrolling in a women's studies course could be interpreted as acting on feminist beliefs, a form of activism, which was safe for many of the feminist participants. One of the questions posed in the beginning of the study was which came first–an interest in feminism or a course in women's studies. The majority of the participants had already developed an interest in feminism prior to the class and found that the course work helped them clarify and articulate their position while providing significant knowledge about women's history and women's issues. Therefore, it appears that women's studies is more likely to attract students who are predisposed to feminism. If faculty hope to positively influence women to embrace feminism through women's studies courses, the programs need to be marketed differently to attract women who are undecided or opposed to feminism.

Summary

The variety of definitions of feminism presented by these women means that there are many versions of feminism and ways of acting upon feminist beliefs. However, for most of these women, feminism represents the personal rather than the political in that most embraced feminist beliefs but had not yet begun to see how their actions could benefit other women in addition to themselves. Most were concerned about the impact of feminism upon their own lives, whether they embraced, rejected or questioned feminism.

Feminism Data in the Context of Developmental Theory

The data regarding epistemological development from both the MER and the participants' answers to questions about feminism revealed patterns of learning about feminism

within the categories of feminist, non-feminist and "don't know" participants. Thus, it can be inferred that epistemological development is related to the development of a feminist identity. However, the current theories of feminist identity development (Downing & Roush, 1985; Lather, 1991) do not adequately explain the feminist positions of the women in the study.

Epistemological development

Theories of epistemological development are useful in interpreting the data about feminism in several ways: the role of peers and role models, the different approaches to feminism within the different epistemological stages, and the gender-related patterns within the first three epistemological stages. Peers and role models were discussed earlier and the data indicates that they play significant roles in helping a woman form a feminist identity. However, the role changes depending upon the woman's current epistemological stage.

In addition to peer and role model influence, the ways in which women gather and internalize knowledge and opinions depends upon epistemological stage. Absolute knowers expect to be told what to believe and are dualistic in their thinking. Feminism is either right or wrong, depending on the perspective of the teachers to which the learner is exposed. Being a feminist also involves ascribing to all feminist beliefs.

Transitional knowers can accept that some knowledge is uncertain but they are still very dependent upon experts teaching them how to apply knowledge. Peers begin to play an important role in the learning process for transitional knowers. Transitional knowers can accept some ambiguity within the various issues of the women's movement but remain very interested in the perspective of their teachers. Transitional knowers want to know how feminism applies to their lives. Peer opinions on feminism are important and transitional knowers are very concerned about how they would be perceived by peers if they adopt a feminist stance.

Independent knowers understand that knowledge is uncertain and enjoy debates and exchange of opinion in forming their own decisions about knowledge. Peers' and one's own opinion are viewed as legitimately as the teacher's thoughts. Independent knowers do not like being told what to believe about feminism and want to form their own opinion on the issue.

They also want to pick and choose which issues they support within the feminist movement. They are also more willing to take a stance, which is not supported by their peers, and enjoy debating the stance with others.

Contextual knowers weigh their own opinions against the opinions of others and try to apply knowledge within context. These women feel comfortable disagreeing with certain aspects of the feminist agenda while still calling themselves feminists. They also may choose when and where they identify as feminists depending upon the receptivity of the audience. Contextual knowledge also involves responsibility within the community to which one belongs and thus requires acting upon beliefs. Acceptance of feminism depends upon its relevancy to the experiences of the contextual knowers. Contextual knowers also feel an obligation to act upon their beliefs and may hesitate to call themselves feminists if they do not believe they have been active in the movement.

Within the first three epistemological stages, gender-linked patterns are observable and were supported by the data in the study. Women's knowing patterns most commonly involve interdependence upon others to enhance the learning process in the absolute, transitional, and independent stages. Female absolute knowers usually exhibit a receiving knowledge pattern as opposed to the mastering pattern more often demonstrated by males. Receiving knowledge about feminism involves listening to and recording the information presented by experts.

Transitional knowing is either interpersonal or impersonal. The most common female pattern, interpersonal, uses strategies such as collecting others' ideas, gathering new ideas from peers, and personal judgment. Feminist experts can provide opportunities for students to discuss feminism and demonstrate practical examples of feminist issues, which impact the students. Collaboration and the opportunity to be involved in the learning process also help engage the interpersonal learner.

Independent knowers exhibit interindividual or individual learning patterns in deciding their position on issues and knowledge. The female-linked pattern, interindividual, involves thinking for oneself but sharing views with others and then incorporating others' views if

appropriate. Thus independent knowers benefit from the opportunity to discuss feminism with peers under the guidance of teachers or experts. However, they choose a position on feminism based on their own needs rather than peer pressure.

Theories of epistemological development provide a way to analyze the data and the different ways the participants interpreted information and opinions about feminism before taking a position on the issue. In addition, the women based decisions about language, peer pressure, and women's issues on their epistemological concept of knowledge and the decision-making process. Although not all the women in each stage took the same position on feminism, they used similar strategies to form their position. Differences in position were related to their experiences, teachers, and peers.

Feminist Identity Development

Although the feminist identity development model of Downing and Roush (1985) was generally not applicable to the women in the study, it did provide a framework for analyzing the data. In attempting to fit the participants' descriptions of feminism into the stages of passive acceptance, revelation, embeddedness-emanation, synthesis, and active commitment, I learned what is different and similar about contemporary feminism as opposed to traditional feminism. The importance of knowledge and awareness of women's issues and the emphasis on action remain significant for women developing a feminist identity. Revelation often comes in the form of learning about oppression rather than experiencing it personally. Anger and separation from men is no longer part of the development process. The young women in the study did not begin the development process with an acceptance of their inferiority to men but with an expectation of equality. Beginning at this starting point may be significant in explaining why they do not experience the anger phase. Many jumped from the revelation stage to the synthesis stage because they did not need to segregate themselves to work through their anger at men.

Although Lather (1991) provides a framework for understanding feminist identity development that is more applicable to the participants in the study, there continue to be inconsistencies between the participants' experiences and Lather's development process. The

hopelessness and fear Lather observed in some women after they were confronted with oppositional knowledge was not described by any of the participants. Yet most did not exhibit the anger described in the liberating phase and many were reluctant to take action upon their beliefs. The cataclysmic effect of oppositional knowledge did not seem to occur for these women; rather consciousness-raising was a gradual process.

These theories, particularly the Downing and Roush (1985) model, may not have been applicable to the experiences of the women in the study for the same reason that many young women do not identify with the women's movement–it is not relevant to their experiences. Thirteen event-filled years, during which young women have benefited from such achievements as Title IX legislation and the ascension to public office of many prominent women, have passed since the Downing and Roush model was published, and these events have had a significant impact on young women and their beliefs about issues. Lather's (1991) theory is based on women involved in women's studies courses. Although her theory is useful in understanding the feminist women in the study, it is less applicable to women who have not taken a women's studies course.

Chapter Six

College Feminism Model

<u>Introduction</u>

As I reviewed the data in the context of current feminist identity development theories, I found the categories of feminism proposed by Wallis (1989) to be more useful than those of the feminist identity development theories. Although Wallis did not present a model, she suggested that many women put qualifiers on their feminist position, including women who say "I'm not a feminist but..." or "I am a feminist but...." I also was not convinced that a stage theory of development was appropriate in discussing feminist identity, as stages lead to the presumption there is one final stage, which represents full achievement of a feminist identity. For many of the women in this study, their position as a feminist or non-feminist represented thorough study of the issue and a position which was fully developed yet it did not match the synthesis or top level in Downing and Roush's (1985) model. Thus, I tried to group the participants into different positions, which were clearly distinguishable and represented the range of experiences of feminism for these women. As men are clearly influential in development of a feminist identity for most of the women in the study, I included relationships with men in the positions in the model. This model is limited to traditional aged college women and recent graduates.
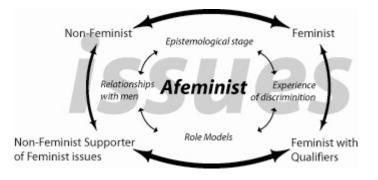
As epistemological stage appears to be useful in understanding how women develop a feminist identity, I use the epistemological reflection model (Baxter Magolda, 1992) to explain each of the positions in my model. Significant in distinguishing each position will be how women make a decision regarding a feminist identity and how women make decisions about

feminist issues. These decisions are made in the context of other factors: epistemological stage, relationships with men, role models and experience of discrimination.

Most women are introduced to feminist issues at some point during their college experience or during their first job after graduation. This introduction sends women in one of two directions if the increased awareness interests them enough to move from the afeminist position. Prior to this introduction, a position in the model is the "afeminist." The afeminist has not yet formed an opinion about feminism and is uninformed or disinterested in feminist issues. She has no significant feminist role models and rarely if at all discusses feminist issues with peers. Some women choose a non-feminist stance when presented with feminist issues. Others explore feminism with varying levels of commitment, either as non-feminists who support feminist issues, feminists with qualifiers, or feminists.

Positions in the College Feminism Model

Five positions through which college women develop a feminist identity are presented in the model: afeminist, non-feminist, non-feminist supporter of feminist issues, feminist with qualifiers, and feminist the following diagram illustrates this model:

College Feminism Model

 Each position is presented in depth with an accompanying case study of a woman who represents the position. This model is not a stage model with a hierarchy of positions. Each position is legitimate and reflective of women's needs and awareness at the time. There is fluidity between the positions. A woman could move from afeminism to feminism directly

without progressing through other positions. A feminist might become a non-feminist about beliefs, which conflict with her experience. A non-feminist who supports feminist issues could be active in promoting her beliefs and never move to the feminist position. Within the feminism, non-feminist supporter of feminist issues and feminist with qualifier positions, women can be either active or passive in their beliefs.

<u>The afeminist</u>

College women who take the afeminist position claim not to be affected by or concerned with women's or feminist issues. They have given little thought to feminism and are not interested in exploring the topic further. They are comfortable with their status as women. Some say they do not have time to deal with feminism as they are concerned with so many other activities. They are relatively uninformed regarding social issues and the status of women. Unconcerned about women's concerns such as domestic violence and sexual assault, they assume that they are safe from such violence if they are careful to avoid certain situations. They assume either that they have achieved equality with men or accept sexism as natural. The opinions of men are important to heterosexual women in this position, and they do not want to jeopardize their relationships with controversial opinions on issues about which they have little knowledge or interest.

Caroline was an afeminist who was beginning to learn about feminism issues. She was on the brink of moving to another position and was also a transitional knower.

<u>Caroline.</u> Caroline was a sophomore American Studies/Art History major from the Northeast. She played varsity soccer and spoke frequently of her boyfriend, a hockey player who was studying abroad. She exhibited characteristics of transitional knowing in terms of epistemological stage. She mentioned several times that she did not think she had much to say about the topic of feminism. However, she referred frequently to two of her friends who are ardent feminists. Other than these two, Caroline was not sure if any of her friends were feminists. Caroline was not sure whether she was a feminist. She described herself as a girl and

used the term boy to refer to her male friends. She thought that the term woman meant "older, settled down."

Caroline defined feminism as a belief in women and added that "you think constantly about how women are treated, that life isn't fair for women." Caroline did not think this way, although she said she "could see that women, in the big picture, are treated unfairly." She did not think that she had been treated unfairly. She also thought that her feminist friends had not been treated unfairly either. She could not understand why her feminist friends held feminist beliefs. She did not know exactly how women in general are treated unfairly; however, she had heard about women's pay equity issues on television news. When she thought about this issue, she was upset. She expected that once she began working, she would be more aware of these issues. In fact, she guessed she would have a different position on feminism in the future. Caroline did not think feminism had affected her life so far, but she thought in the future it probably would.

Caroline could not recollect any instances where she was treated differently in the classroom. She later remembered that her soccer coach and older male teachers in high school seemed "sexist. I remember getting frustrated because they were really sexist, nothing specific." She also described "being stared at high school, like walking the gauntlet. It was so uncomfortable." As an athlete, she was aware of physical differences when competing with men.

Caroline was not aware of the feminist group on campus and had not heard students talking about rape or violence. She had not taken any women's studies courses although she knew several people who recommended them. She personally had not thought about taking a class in women's studies although she mentioned a history course about women authors that interested her.

Caroline could not think of any role models, but she admitted she did not think about the issue much. "Right now, I don't think I need a hero." However, she did describe her mother as a hero who worked as a lawyer while raising four kids. She also described one female teacher in

high school who was a feminist. Although she could not identify role models, she mentioned friends and a teacher who were feminists. In a psychology class, when Caroline was asked to write what was best about being either female or male, Caroline could not think of answers and was surprised that her friends had such long lists.

Caroline seemed very insecure and apologetic that she was uninformed. She repeatedly questioned the importance of her opinions. Although she said she was not very aware of issues, we discussed many different topics, and she seemed intrigued by the questions asked of her. She seemed comfortable, absorbed in her life at Stanton, and at this point unconcerned about conflicts or questions about the treatment of women. Yet she was somewhat aware of these conflicts and expected to deal with them in the future. She seemed disturbed by feminists' concentration on women's issues, to the exclusion of other concerns and interests.

The non-feminist

Women in the non-feminist position have moved from afeminism to making a decision that they do not support feminism. After being exposed to feminist issues, they decided that feminism was inconsistent with their beliefs. These contradictory beliefs may include a pro-life position on abortion, religious beliefs, or conservative political beliefs. Both absolute knowers and independent knowers are uncomfortable with the contradiction but for different reasons. Absolute knowers feel there is a right and wrong stance on issues while independent knowers do not want to be told what to believe. Transitional knowers in this position are unlikely to have peers and family members who support feminism. Contextual knowers have weighed the issues and feel feminism is incompatible with their beliefs.

Many non-feminists are concerned about the pro-choice stance of many feminists or the assumption that being a feminist means being anti-male. Relationships with men are important to non-feminists and they are concerned that feminism would alienate their male friends, boyfriends, and family members. If non-feminists have any role models for feminism, they are generally perceived as negative, strident, and focused solely on feminism to the exclusion of other issues. Most of their peers are either non-feminists or afeminists, and they are not

interested in discussing feminist issues with friends. Family members are either non-supportive of feminism or negative role models for feminism against whom non-feminists rebel.

Chelsea was a non-feminist and independent knower with strong opinions on the subject of women's issues. She felt feminism was contradictory to her conservative beliefs.

Chelsea. Chelsea described herself as a self-proclaimed "conservative Republican anti-feminist." She was a sophomore majoring in political science and economics involved in leadership roles in a variety of clubs and student government organizations. She also belonged to a co-educational fraternity. Chelsea said she has better relationships with males than females because the "conversation is better with guys. Girls talk about hair and eyes, and have a lot of problems with eating disorders. They exercise to lose weight, not to enjoy the activity. Guys play sports to have fun." With her male friends, Chelsea appreciated being able to talk about sports and politics.

Chelsea described a feminist as "the Take Back the Night group, people who march." She started to say all feminists are women, then corrected herself to say the feminist movement involves mostly women. She defined feminism as "about the plight to make males and females equal." She used to think all feminists were the same until she met a new friend who was actively involved in the campus feminist group. Chelsea described her friend as someone who can "put feminism on the back burner" and thinks about other things too.

When asked to identify her feminist role models, Chelsea cited her friend and her mother. She described her mother as an "ardent feminist." Her mom has always worked and was the leader of a women's group in her business. The two of them have frequently fought about feminist issues.

Chelsea was frustrated that feminists are "one issue people, they vote for women's issues always." Chelsea did not vote by gender but instead preferred to vote for the best candidate. She thought men generally are better suited to politics because they have more experience. If she does not recognize names on a ballot, she said she tends to vote for the male candidate. Chelsea defined herself as "anti-abortion but not pro-life" because abortion is a personal issue and she did

not want to be identified with a platform. Chelsea expressed the position that issues such as date rape and battering are individual issues, not "women's issues."   In her opinion, women are not "made to go as far in terms of career and having kids screws up a career. We're supposed to have the kids, breast-feed."

Chelsea could not recollect any instance where she had been treated differently because of her gender, although she later mentioned being sexually harassed when living in New York. She thought that the presence of women in the co-ed fraternity prevented open discrimination although she had heard that males in the fraternity resented the desegregation.

Chelsea had no interest in taking a women's studies course. She was one of only a few women in economics classes but did not think she was treated any differently than the males.

Chelsea found debates over feminism frustrating and silly. "Feminism is one way of thinking, there are many different views." She did not believe there is a feminist platform to which all feminists must ascribe. She felt she was considered a traitor to other women because she was not a feminist but she resented the assumption that just because you are a woman you must also be a feminist. She stated that women are biologically different but individuals should not be treated differently. She did not think of herself as a girl or woman but a "guy." To her, the term woman meant a feminist. She said, "I'm just a person."

Chelsea was an independent knower. She viewed issues such as rape and discrimination as problems for individuals, not for women in general. Individuality and freedom to choose were important to her; she did not like being told what to believe. However, unlike typical independent knowers, she was very judgmental about others.

She seemed to enjoy the company of men more than women. She resisted feminism, despite or because of having strong feminists in her life. She described contradictory feelings about the biological differences between men and women, yet wanting to be considered one of the guys, just an individual. She knew there was a contradiction between what she said about women's suitability for leadership roles and what she did as a student leader on campus. In fact,

she seemed to enjoy being controversial and contradictory and engaging in debates over issues such as this.

The non-feminist supporter of feminist issues

The non-feminist supporter of feminist issues holds some feminist beliefs but does not identify as a feminist. A typical statement of someone in this position is "I'm not a feminist but I believe in equality for women." They decline to identify as feminists for several reasons: (a) they disagree with aspects of what they perceive as the total feminist platform; (b) they feel feminism is incompatible with their beliefs about men; (c) they do not feel they have enough information about feminism; or (d) they are not active in supporting their beliefs. These four categories also represent the four stages of epistemological reflection. Absolute knowers are concerned that they will be told what to believe if they become feminists, especially on issues such as choice and affirmative action. They believe there is a feminist platform of beliefs and one must support all beliefs in the platform if one identifies as a feminist. Independent knowers may also resent being told what to support. Transitional knowers share the concern of the non-feminists that feminism is associated with an anti-male attitude, and they do not want to be perceived as anti-male. Independent knowers want to choose a well-informed position and lack the knowledge about feminism to take a definitive stance. They also rely upon information from peers and may not have feminist peers and role models with whom they can discuss feminism. Contextual knowers feel they must make an active commitment to their beliefs and therefore cannot identify as feminist if they are not ready to take action against sexism and discrimination.

Karin was an example of a non-feminist who is supportive of feminist issues. She was active in showing support for women's issues but unwilling to claim a feminist identity at this point in her life. She exhibited the epistemological patterns of an independent knower.

Karin. Karin was a nineteen-year old sophomore environmental studies major. She was secretary of the African-American student organization and served on the college committee on diversity. She played rugby and was a Big Sister to a local child. Her favorite pastimes were hanging out with friends, riding horses, and immersing herself in different things. Karin talked at length and gave vivid examples of her opinions.

 Karin mentioned that she had been thinking about the girl/woman question. She recognized that she referred to other females as girls as well as thought of herself as a girl, but she called her male acquaintances men or guys. She used "guys" to talk to a group of women. She had become accustomed to being referred to as a woman. It was still "freaky" when she heard it, because she thought woman meant someone older, wiser than she was.

Karin would not call herself a feminist, because she did not really know what the definition of feminist was. She said she studied feminism in a class and read many authors and still did not have a clear definition. She also did not consider herself a feminist because she was not active. "Things happen every day, where something is said by some guy which isn't right, but I don't speak out but if it got to a certain point, I would step in. If something is 'not right' I say something." She thought her "beliefs are more feminist than not." She thought about feminism frequently, especially after studying ecofeminism in a class. She was surprised that she was the only person in the class who knew what ecofeminism was. Many people in the class did not believe in it, and she challenged them to think about it. Karin talked about Rosemary Ruder, an ecofeminist author she liked. The guys in the class were not interested but the girls seemed to be curious after she spoke.

Karin's definition of feminism was "women actively speaking out on issues that affect them and having a certain set of beliefs that secure your own interests as a woman." Karin's stereotype of a feminist was "someone who is always making sure that everything is correct in what people say and in their actions. You wouldn't support something that puts women down." She talked about language and used the example of "freshman." She tried not to use it but to instead say "first-year." Karin admitted that some men considered her ideas radical and asked

"what, are you a feminist?" I asked if she thought that was a put-down. "Their [men's] image of being a feminist is something I don't agree with, but if it were a fellow woman [she then realized that term was a contradiction] - then it's okay." Karin thought a lot of men were "really freaked out by it [feminism]" and used feminist as a derogatory term. She thought these men were afraid of women and afraid of women's power.

She believed that if she were really a feminist, she would not care what men think. Part of her stereotype is that feminists do not care about the male perspective. "No matter what, people need each other." She talked about the reviews of Waiting To Exhale and how it was criticized for saying that women need men at the end. Karin thought that women do need others, including men. She believed the male perspective was important.

Karin expected that people would treat her differently if she were to announce that she was a feminist. "People would think twice about who I am." Her good friends would be "right there with me though."

We talked about the CFO. She did not know much about it other than events such as Take Back The Night. She had been to a dinner at the Women's Center on the topic of being a woman at Stanton. She found it interesting, though disappointing that not very many people (all women) showed up. She did not think people at Stanton talk about the CFO much but "people stay away because they view them as feminists." Karin thought that was unfortunate. She admitted she really did not like the word feminist because "it doesn't do the CFO justice. The CFO isn't just about feminism, it's about being a woman."

As for feminist role models, Karin thought her mom would not say she is a feminist, but Karin has learned a lot from her about being a woman and woman of color. Her mother "had to almost become a feminist, to speak up for herself."

Karin could not tell if she was treated differently in class as a woman but she thought she was as a Black woman. She thought the professors at Stanton were "pretty aware" about sexism. A professor noted in a science class that there were more women than men in the class and what

a change this was. One of her favorite professors always made sure that everyone in class had a chance to speak up and he almost favored the women.

We talked about a pornography discussion she had in class. The class was trying to define what pornography was. Karin was the only one who thought that Sports Illustrated was degrading to women–she challenged others in the class to think about that. People in the class thought that girls being bulemic did not have anything to do with the models in Sports Illustrated or pornography. It was obvious that all the guys in the class had read Playboy at some point, but none of the girls had seen one. She was amazed that "it is so accepted for guys" to read it.

Karin and her friends talked about women's issues, either randomly or as a carryover from class. Karin noted signs about rape statistics but did not have any personal knowledge of acquaintances being raped. Yet she knew it occurred to other students. She was concerned about the predominance of male faculty in the sciences. In terms of discrimination, she described a rugby coach who made offensive comments about estrogen-deficiency and stereotypical remarks such as "guys run laps if they are upset and women cry." This same coach made a point of telling people to let him know if he was offensive. Karin saw this as hypocritical.

Karin described an experience where she voted for all women candidates because she did not know anything else about their platforms. She thought she would continue to vote this way whenever she did not know more about candidates.

In terms of epistemological stage, Karin was an independent knower. Karin's most significant learning experience was not having a final exam in her religion class. This teacher (one of her favorites) decided that the class knew the material and a final was unnecessary. She learned the most she had ever learned in this class. She was introduced to many new concepts and thought seriously about religion. It really broadened her perspective.

In discussions, Karin preferred to listen first and then make a radical point to get discussion going. She tended to do this more on issues about which she cared and was informed. She was less apt to talk about the pornography issue because she did not have as much

knowledge. In that case, she would ask questions. She did not always ask questions in her biology class because there are so many smart people in the class. She used tutoring sessions and met with professors to ask questions out of class.

She expected that her professors would always have an answer to her questions - not necessarily the correct answer, but that they would offer an opinion. She did not expect her professors to be experts. She had a hard time adjusting to college after boarding school in terms of relationships with professors–she thought that her advisor should be concerned about more than just academic issues.

Karin's most important educational decision this year was to decide not to continue as a pre-veterinary studies major. She tended to do what other people expect her to do. This was finally a decision she was making for herself. She loved animals and wanted to learn more about them, but felt there were other ways to do that sort of work than injecting needles into animals. Her views on medicine for animals changed since she did an internship with a vet. She learned a lot about how cows are treated and she had a hard time ethically with the practice. She also volunteered with the Humane Society and was upset about how everything was geared toward human needs. She was upset by practices such as neutering and dehorning.

 Karin wished she had gone to a college with more diversity because she thinks she would have learned more. She thought Stanton was restrictive in that way.

Feminism has affected her in that she was able to empower others through her knowledge. Many would assume that Karin is a feminist because of how she acted upon her beliefs. At first, Karin did not think she had a definition of feminism, then she gave an extremely articulate and clear definition. She talked to friends about women's issues frequently and takes a feminist stance in many conversations, especially in the classroom. She seemed torn between just "living" and being an activist. She thought she could not really call herself a feminist because she is not active. She thought of feminism personally but also in terms of helping others. She talked at length about not being accepted by Whites or Blacks–the sexism issue is blurred with the race issue for Karin. We discussed the double oppression of being a

woman of color. Karin talked about the Women of Color group on campus and said that issue is discussed frequently.

Karin gave vivid examples of sexist treatment on the rugby team. She seemed very aware of women's issues. For example, though she had no personal knowledge of rape, she assumed it happened, worried about dance parties and what happened afterward. She took being a feminist very seriously and was not sure she was ready to make the commitment.

Feminist with qualifiers

Feminists in this position disagree with certain variations or stereotypes of feminism and are reluctant to call themselves unqualified feminists. Most frequently, they note that they are not "radical" feminists. Absolute knowers would be unlikely to take this position as it involves relativity and ambiguity. Transitional knowers in this position want to avoid confrontations about feminism with peers or teachers who do not share their opinions. Independent knowers resent that the feminist movement tells them what to believe about women's issues rather than letting them form their own opinions. Contextual knowers want to be able to adapt their feminism to different situations and may, like the non-feminist supporters of women's issues, feel that they are not active enough in support of feminism. However, many women in this position are very active

in their support but are cautious about when and where they announce their feminism.

Jean was a feminist but not when defined by "some connotations" of feminism. She was an independent knower who resented being told what to believe about women's issues.

Jean. Jean was a junior English/Psychology major who played a leadership role in several organizations, including the Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Alliance group (GLBA). She talked about the GLBA sharing the Women's Center with the CFO–they occasionally co-sponsored programs, but there was little "overlap" between them. When asked if she thought sharing the house caused people to make assumptions that the CFO members were lesbians and the GLBA members are feminist, Jean said she knew that some groups would not co-sponsor events with

GLBA because of that assumption. "I'm sure that some feminists are lesbians and some lesbians are feminists, but some aren't."

Jean only recently started using "woman" to identify herself and "now it bugs me when I'm called a girl, I'm 21. I stopped being a girl at 13 because of issues I was dealing with." She found calling someone a girl who was a woman degrading. "Boy isn't used for males this age–unless it is to degrade."

Jean did call herself a feminist, but not when the term implied certain connotations. She mentioned her disagreement with changing language to be female rather than male, in the Bible for example, or calling God a she. But "I don't like the fact that men get better wages, unless of course they're better qualified." It upset her that if a woman's name is Sam or Jamie, it is always assumed it is a man.

For Jean, feminism meant "equality of women." Jean believed that "there are differences between men and women, they excel at different things, women shouldn't necessarily have to compete on male teams, there are biological differences, but if the woman meets the qualifications, they should be able to play." She did not want standards to be lowered for women–if a female cop was defending her life, she wanted her to have met all the qualifications to be a cop.

She shared her opinions on the recent controversy about the women cadets at the Citadel. Jean did not think there should be either all male or all female colleges. She mentioned applying to but deciding not to go to a women's college because she felt it would not prepare her for the real world.

She thought that there was an association that CFO and other Stanton student organizations are more radical. "Organizations tend to go to the extreme, it's a safe environment to be radical." She did not think individuals were as radical as the collective CFO appears. "They had to be radical to achieve results" but "people don't react well to radicalism." However, she thought that the "campus is remarkably open minded." Jean thought students were alternately "protected and challenged by the college."

Jean described her mom as a role model -- her "lifestyle choices" were feminist. She thought the men on campus "are more feminist than they believe" because Stanton forced everyone to treat everyone the same. She did not think the female professors were very feminist, in fact, the male professors seemed more feminist.

In discussions with friends, women's issues came up but not specifically about feminism. There were several shows on television about biological/gender differences, which led to discussions. In her writing class the day of the interview, she was asked to write from a different perspective (e.g., a 20-year male should write as a 50-year old female). But Jean wondered if the perspective was based on gender or age difference. In this class and elsewhere, she and her classmates talked about whether there really are differences between males and females. Jean thought it was getting harder to find differences because the connections are increasing.

Jean shared her opinions on issues of rape and battering: "it goes on, we don't hear much on it." She thought one of the reasons date rapes were not reported was the mentality that "this is Stanton College, if a Stanton college student rapes me, I really provoked it because these are smart intelligent guys." Jean thought lighting was a big issue for preventing rape and also accidents. She thought battering tended to be more emotional than physical on campus. She feared that women viewed themselves as "inferior to whoever they're dating. Everyone is smart, physically attractive, stylish, gorgeous." She told stories about men who tried to put down their girlfriends. She said her boyfriend tried it once on her and she just brushed him off.

We talked about the dating scene and instead of just stating the situation as others did, Jean offered reasons why typical dating patterns do not exist: Stanton is isolated, the type of events where you take a date are not present, and even the movies shown on campus are not romantic. People tended to do things in groups.

Jean had not taken a women's studies course but had studied women writers. She was starting to see more women writers profiled in American literature and modern literature classes. She thought that women just were not writing in earlier times. In her psychology classes "there have not been huge advances [in the psychology of women]. There is a lack of

material on and by women." She did not observe differential treatment of men and women in her English and Psychology classes. There were generally more women than men in her classes.

In terms of job discrimination, she "never felt that way, grew up in Vermont." She worked in jobs at minimum wage where there was no opportunity for wage discrimination. Jean described the female technical director for whom she worked in the theater department (which is unusual) and told a story about how a male assistant technical director could physically lift things more easily because of greater upper body strength.

Jean thought some people made assumptions when she identified herself as a feminist, especially around choice issues. She said her pro-choice stance was not necessarily related to being a feminist. "I don't like being told what to do. Usually the connotations aren't necessarily negative, they're just wrong." She definitely did not agree with changing gender of language in literature. She believed that it was not a problem to call God a he, because God is not male or female.

She was not sure about feminism's impact on her. "I don't know that it has yet. My environment has allowed me to be outspoken." She was not sure whether feminism or her environment had influenced her. However, if her mother was a feminist, perhaps feminism directly shaped her environment as well. She said she had mixed opinions–she did not like the use of pink and blue for female and male babies and her favorite toy was a fire truck, but there are "instinctive differences," especially in terms of physical strength.

Jean's "feminism with qualifiers" seemed based on a dislike of being told what to do or believe. She resented the emphasis on politically correct language and was concerned that biological differences between men and woman are not acknowledged. She seemed to spend a significant amount of time discussing feminist issues with friends and enjoyed learning through debates.

Feminist

The feminist does not put any qualifiers or restrictions on her position. She supports feminism and is either active or passive in her support. She has a basic definition of feminism as

a belief in equality for women. She has feminist role models and supportive friends and/or family. The men in her life are either supportive of feminism or willing to engage in debate over the issue. She is self-confident enough to challenge non-feminist beliefs but may choose the most appropriate time and place to reveal her feminist identity. Her position on various feminist issues depends upon her epistemological position. Absolute knowers are supportive of all aspects of the feminist agenda and believe everyone is either a feminist or a non-feminist. They have had significant influence from strong role models. The transitional knower is willing to explore different views of feminism but needs the support of feminist peers and role models. Independent knowers select which issues to support within feminism. Contextual knowers are comfortable with various forms of feminism but feel it is important to demonstrate support for their beliefs.

Ellen was an active feminist and contextual learner.

Ellen. Ellen served as co-chair of the campus feminist organization at Stanton. She was extremely involved for a sophomore, serving on various residence hall organizations and campus-wide committees. She was also a member of a co-ed social fraternity. A psychology major from the Southwest, she was considering a double-major in women's studies. At the time of the interview, she was 20 years old.

She described herself as "definitely a feminist and not afraid to say it." She began to take a feminist stance on women's issues in high school, gaining a reputation as "the one who does women's issues." She thought her feminism grew naturally through developing concerns about issues such as pay equity, sex discrimination, childcare, and assault. Ellen recognized that assumptions are made about her because of her position as a feminist, yet these assumptions do not concern her. Ellen described a feminist as "someone who believes that everyone has the right to go about their life the way they want to, regardless of what sex/gender they are. A person who believes that all people should be treated equally, and generally that translates into maternity, family leave, wages, things like that."

Ellen described her mother as a feminist role model. "I think she's hesitant about it. The real world issues, how it applies, I think she is definitely a feminist, I just do not think she thinks there needs to be all this theory. She's not into consciousness-raising...she's more into getting out there and doing it." Ellen cited several other role models, including Hillary Clinton and writer Zora Neale Hurston as well as faculty and administrators at Stanton. Women who challenge patriarchal authority gained Ellen's admiration. Taking women's studies courses and reading women writers helped Ellen "define who you are and you want to be, by understanding your experience." Ellen, reflecting a balanced perspective, was critical of radical feminist authors.

Ellen frequently received teasing because of her involvement in the feminist group but was not discouraged by the teasing. She focused on increasing awareness of the group during a busy "Take Back the Night" week of activities. Although generally she was optimistic about the uphill battle the feminist group faced, she expressed discouragement when she shared her opinion of the reasons why Stanton women with feminist beliefs were reluctant to join the feminist group. She thought that students who professed interest in the issue but will not join the group were afraid of being labeled man-haters. "It's definitely hard to do when you feel you are in the minority."

Ellen described the conflict of being co-chair of the feminist group while pledging the fraternity. She felt she had to hide from her feminist friends the fact that she had joined a fraternity, and that she had to hide her feminist identity when at the fraternity. Her friends were a mix of feminists and non-feminists, although most of her closer friends were feminists. One of the ardent "non-feminists" in the study was a close friend of Ellen and appreciated Ellen's ability to focus on issues other than feminism.

When talking with her feminist friends, "we question our relationships with men, we're supposed to be independent women, why do we keep going from relationship to relationship, what does this say about me?" They also talk about health situations and "how will

we be able to take on the outside world–is it really that bad? Is there really a lot of

discrimination on the job? We fear change and don't know how to handle that."

When asked if feminism helped her find answers to these questions, Ellen answered:

"feminism stresses you out more, I'm not supposed to compromise myself, am I going against

what I believe in? But that's not bad, at least we're consciously aware."

Ellen voiced strong, well-thought-out opinions on a variety of issues. She was frustrated

by Stanton's lack of a sexual assault policy. As a member of a campus-wide task force on

gender, she shared several incidences of institutionalized sexism by the administration.

Feminism helped Ellen "develop my opinion, helps me say them. I think articulating and

having self-confidence to know what you are going to say. Feminism really helps you feel more

self-confident and go beyond superficial."

Ellen's responses to the interview questions and the questions in the Measure of

Epistemological Reflection corresponded to the independent or contextual patterns in Baxter

Magolda's Epistemological Reflection Model. Ellen seemed to have embraced feminism

without feeling the need to think through all the issues. She was not concerned about

assumptions but rather enjoyed surprising people because she did not conform to their stereotype

of a feminist. She was very passionate about her beliefs, but was not a one-issue person. She

chose her "battles" and sought to effect change by joining influential committees. She was an

effective role model for other women who wanted to be more active but were afraid of

stereotypes and backlash. She carved out a role as a leader, which was very effective in the

Stanton environment.

Implication of Student Affairs Professionals

The analyses suggest that women's identity development play a major role in the extent

to which women student feel they belong on campus. In light of the results, this study has four

major implication for student affairs professional and counselors. First, this study suggests that

student affairs professional should encourage women students to reach higher levels of self-understanding and personal acceptance. Therefore, student affairs professionals must first receive proper training on how to interpret women identity theory and learn how best to use the overall theoretical framework in program planning and evaluation efforts. Such students affairs professionals are aware of their own attitudes and feeling toward racial and cultural groups; they are knowledgeable about and sensitive to the worldview of gender and cultural groups; and they have acquired a variety of culturally diverse students. Equipped with this knowledge base, student affairs professionals can then learn how to develop learning and social environments that take into account the potential changing identity that may occur among women student.

Second and approach to develop a better connection to feminism that may be useful is to develop a gender-specific counseling service that speaks directly to issues facing women student on campus. These services might include (a) group meetings (b) establishing an women student "comment-line" so they can anonymously express concerns to trained students personnel, and (c) mentoring programs. In order for these, special counseling services and programs to be effective, individuals who are multicultural competent and who have in-depth knowledge about women's culture, history and experience must staff these programs and service.

Third, this study suggests that institutions must begin to develop assessment procedure that focus directly on women students on campus. Specifically, these assessments must be based on identifying structures, individuals, groups, services, programs, and polices that are viewed by women students as detrimental to their learning and social development in college. The end result of such assessments could potentially produce a document of "best practices "for improving the institutional environment. It should also be noted that the above-mentioned recommendations for improving than campus environment for women students are extremely

important and could be used in tandem to imitate and campus wide efforts to make the learning environment a safe and welcoming place for all students on campus.

Lastly, this study indicate that practitioners who work with women might benefit from being aware of the differences in the developmental tasks for Black and White women. Some Black women may move through the process of womanist identity development more quickly, or even bypass certain stages, given the additional experiences acquired through the analogous process of racial identity development. Others may require assistance in sorting out these two similar, but distinct experiences. Still others may require assistance in coming to terms with yet an additional form of societal prejudice. Administrators may be helpful to their clients by making these connections explicit and by assisting students and co-workers in using insights in one domain to facilitate understanding in the other (at the cross road….).

For White women, on the other hand, it would seem that racial and womanist identity development poses very different sets of challenges, and that the radically different demands entailed in these two processes may even prove highly stressful. In this case, administrators may need to help students hold on to the simultaneous experience of being both the oppressor and the oppressed. Such students might well experience a pull to jettison the tasks of one or the other of these processes (probably racial identity), yet ultimately an individual's psychological health and optimal development would call for her to "own" both race and gender as important dimensions of her personality. The results of this study suggest that even if the issues that are salient for the students seem explicitly focused in one domain, the influence of the other cannot be discounted (at the cross road).

Need for Further Research

This study leaves several unanswered questions to be explored in further research. First, is there a developmental nature to feminism, as proposed by Downing and Roush (1985)? I have proposed a model of four categories of feminism in identity, but have no evidence that this is a developmental model. A developmental process implies hierarchy and that particular events or stages must precede further progression. My model of feminist identity is not intended to be hierarchical. A follow-up study would be required to test this assumption and determine if there are any systematic patterns to movement among categories of feminism.

A parallel study would explore the development of feminist identity. Downing and Roush (1985) propose that a critical event or series of events leads to a "revelation" about gender issues. Although my interviews did include a question about how feminism developed, further exploration or analysis is required to determine more completely if there are patterns of feminist identity development.

This research focused on traditional-aged college students who are still in the process of forming identity. Further study is needed to look at students who are beginning to explore issues of feminism and how feminism relates to other aspects of their developing identity.

Further research is needed both to confirm the findings reported here and to specify with greater precision the exact patterns of the coevolution of womanist and racial identity development in Black women and the nature of the differential effects of these two processes in White women. The relationship between racial identity and womanist identity in Black women may actually be stronger than it appears. The limited number of Black participants many modify the results. Thus, several of the attitudes may or may not be well reflected in this data set. Expanding the data set could strengthen the results.

Finally, this study purposefully ignored the question of feminist men's identity. There are many men who call themselves feminist or who support feminist principles. Are feminist men

any different from feminist women? Do men experience feminism in the same way as women? Similarly, one might wonder how adult men conceptualize their own identities—do men have the same experience of multiple identities as women do? Is this expressed differently in men?

Conclusion

In Chapter One, I posed several questions regarding feminism and college women. First, what is the state of feminism on this college campus? Second, is a lack of support for feminism on campus necessarily a problem? And finally, how has feminism affected these college women?

Feminism is very much a presence on this campus. In addition to an active feminist student group and women's studies program, half of the women in the study considered themselves feminists and many in the "don't know" category were exploring feminism. However, the state of feminism cannot be measured in traditional ways. Rather than counting the participants in feminist organizations and women's studies classes, one must use other methods to uncover the extent of feminism because many of the women in the study were not "active" in traditional ways. Yet they were strong presences as role models to young women. They also challenged the men in their lives to think differently about women.

Instead of asking if the lack of support of feminism is a problem, it may be more appropriate to explore why women reject feminism. In this study, the influence of men, lack of awareness, and misperceptions and stereotypes about the feminist agenda and feminists were significant reasons for rejecting feminism. These reinforce the power of men in influencing women's decisions as well as the lack of education among young women regarding the gains of the feminist movement. There was also an alarming number of women who believed they were immune to violent manifestations of sexism such as rape and battering. Despite the importance

of epistemological development in constructing a feminist identity, many women are making uninformed choices about feminism.

The most important reasons to cultivate feminism among college women were given by the women in the study when asked how feminism had impacted their lives. Regardless of their position on feminism, most of the women believed feminism had a positive impact upon their lives, with the exception of a few who did not know how feminism had affected them. Feminism gave the women confidence and knowledge, provided opportunities they knew their mothers did not have, exposed them to new ideas, and empowered them to claim their place in the world. Since discovering feminism, Lucy was "more outgoing, more confident, more aware, more open to new ideas, more accepting." Feminism gave Linda confidence: "I'm more confident in myself, going out and doing things, not being afraid to do things, learning more about women, it's empowering." Kim thought she "probably wouldn't be here without it [feminism]. It opened doors for education, set the way, broke barriers." Abby found that "feminism has made me better equipped to deal with the whole world." Barbara believed "feminism made me independent and has helped my self-esteem and relationships with men. I'm confident in my experiences and associate with people who respect intelligent women."

LaTayna Purnell

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Appendix A: Cover Story

My name is LaTayna Purnell, and I am a doctoral student in Higher Education

Administration at Indiana University. I am also the Associate Dean of Student Affairs at Mount

Ida College. I am interested in learning more about feminist identity development. I work in

student affairs and am concerned about equity issues for women in higher educations. I hope to

publish my research in a student affairs journal as well as share my finding at a professional

conference to help other benefit from what I have learned about college feminism.

I chose to student women at your college because of the diversity represented in the

student body, the proximity to my home , and a chance to learn more about your college. Study

participants will be voluntarily recruited through signs, notices and personal contact. By

participating in the student, you will have the opportunity to share and discuss your beliefs about feminism. I do not foresee any risk in participating in this study and you are free to withdraw from the study at any point. Your participation in the student is confidential ; pseudonym will be used to identify both the participation and the institution.

You will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire and participate in 2-3 interviews for approximately 1 hour each. I will request your permission to take note during the interview and tape record out conversation. The tapes will be transcribed with all identifying information deleted; than the tapes will be erased.

My purpose in undertaking this study is to learn and understand, not judge your beliefs or statements. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions.

Appendix B:
INDIANA UNIVERSITY – BLOOMINGTON
INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT
College Feminism Study

You are invited to participate in a research study researching the development or rejection of a feminist identity by college women. The purpose of this study is to explore the development of a feminist identity among college women and the role feminism plays in their college experience.

INFORMATION
If you agree to participate in the student, you will be interviewed twice during the 2005-06 academic year for approximately one hour per interview. Interviews will be conducted by a doctoral candidate at Indiana University. In addition, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire called the Measure of Epistemological Reflection which assesses how you acquire knowledge. Your identity and interactions with the researcher will be kept confidential throughout the study. Pseudonyms will be used for both participants and the college. The data collected will be used in a doctoral dissertation submitted to Indiana University.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. You may choose not to participate in the study. You also may withdraw from the study at any point without penalty. If you choose to participate, you will be requested to:
read and sign the participate agreement
participate in 1-2 one-hour individual interviews

complete the Measure of Epistemological Reflection

RISKS
There is no foreseeable risks or discomforts.

BENEFITS
This study can assist higher education administrators in encouraging the full, equal and just development of women college students by adding to the knowledge and theory regarding college women's development. Discussion and exploration of positive and negative attitudes toward feminism may lead to greater understanding of feminism as well as positive and negative attitudes toward women. The nuance of feminist identity development, heard in the voices and stories of the study is the development of a model which will enrich the existing body of student development literature about women.

(Number pages, e.g. 1 of 2)

CONFIDENTIALITY
Describe the extent, if any, to which confidentiality of records identifying the subject will be maintained. OR, If you agree to participate in the study, you will be interviewed twice during the spring semester of 2006 for approximately one hour per interview. Interviews will be conducted by a doctoral candidate at Indiana University. In addition, you will be asked to complete two questionnaires. Your identity and interactions with the researcher will be kept confidential throughout the study. Pseudonyms will be used for both participants and the college. The data collected will be used in a doctoral dissertation submitted to Indiana University. Your name and contact information are requested to assist the researcher in identifying interview participants and will be kept in confidence by the researcher.

CONTACT
If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, LaTayna Purnell at 777 Dedham Street, Newton, MA 02459, (617)928-4047] , and lpurnell@mountida.edu .

If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact the office for the Indiana University Bloomington Human Subjects Committee, Carmichael Center L03, 530 E. Kirkwood Ave., Bloomington, IN 47408, 812/855-3067, by e-mail at iub_hsc@indiana.edu.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may refuse to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

CONSENT
I have read this form and received a copy of it. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction. I agree to take part in this study.

Subject's signature_____ Date _____

I agree to allow my child, _____, to take part in this study.

Parent's signature_____ Date _____

Witness signature_____Date _____
         (required if form is read to subject)
(Number pages, e.g., 2 of 2)

Consent form date: November 2005

Appendix C: Questionnaire

Your participation is requested in a study researching the development or rejection of a feminist identity by college women. If you agree to participate in the study, you will be interviewed twice during the spring semester of 2006 for approximately one hour per interview. Interviews will bee conducted by a doctoral student at Indiana University. In addition, you will be asked to complete two questionnaires. Your identity and interactions with the researcher will be kept confidential throughout the study. Pseudonyms will be used for both participants and the college. The data collected will be used in a doctoral dissertation submitted to Indiana University. Your name and contact information are requested to assist the researcher in identifying interview participants and will be kept in confidence by the researcher.

Name: _____

College address: _____

LaTayna Purnell

Phone Number: _____

Email address _____

1.) Which term best describes your position on feminism:

       I am a feminist

       I am not a feminist

       I don't know

2.) Demographic Data

       Race: African American/Black   Caucasian   Latnia/o

                 Asian/Pacific Islander   Native American   Other

       Age: _____

       Anticipated year of graduation: 2005   2006   2007   2008   2009   Other

       Country of Origin: United States   Canada   Other (name_____)

       If United States resident, please identify your home state: _____

       If Untied States Citizen, please identify your voting affiliation: Republican

                 Democrat   Independent   Other (_____)

3.) Curricular and Extra-curricular activities:

       Major:

       Minor: (if applicable)

       Have you taken any women's studies courses?   Yes   No

       If yes, what course (s)? _____

       Are you involved in any activities/club/organizations?   Yes   No

If yes, what organization(s)

_____

_____

Do you have a leadership role in any of these organizations or elsewhere on campus?

   Yes   No

What is your role? _____

Appendix D: Interview Questions

Initial Interview

      Give cover story

      Review consent form

      Interview Questions:

      Do you define yourself as a girl or a woman? What do these terms mean to you?

      Complete this phrase: Feminism is …

      What do you associate with the term feminist? All feminist are…

      Whom do you identify as a feminist (family, friends, and teachers)? What do you think of them?

      Do you ever discuss feminism with your friends or classmates? Tell me about what you discussed.

Why do you or don't you consider yourself a feminist?

Would you identify yourself publicly as a feminist? Why or Why not?

Tell activities, interests, and me about yourself – major.

Follow Up Interview

Baxter Magolda wrote the following questions (1992, p. 412):

Tell me about the most significant aspect of your learning experience this past year.

As you think about yourself as a learner in the classroom, what role do you prefer to pay to make learning more effective for you?

What do you expect from instructor to help you learn effectively?

What about other students in your classes? What kinds of experience have you had with them that help you learn?

Can you describe an important educational decision you made in the last year and talk about hoe you went about it?

Would you change anything about the learning environment you have experienced over the past yea? If so, what?

The researcher wrote the following questions:

Have you taken any women's studies courses? What made you decided to take a women's studies class? What did you learn from the class? Did this (these) class(es) affect your position on feminism or how your see yourself as a woman?

Are you involved in any women's organization? Issues?

Have you been experience gender discrimination? If so, can you elaborate?

If you identify as a feminist, have you been treated differently from women who do not identify as feminists?

How has being a feminist affected your life?

Because of your position on feminism, what assumptions have been made about you, which are or are not true?

Appendix E: Measure of Epistemological Reflection

Instructions: The questionnaire that follows has to do with your perspective on learning in college. Each of the questions on the following pages asks for your opinion or choices in a given subject, and the REASONS why you have that particular perspective or opinion. We are interested in understanding your perspective as fully as possible. Please give as much detail as you con to describe how you fell about each question. Fell free to use the back of the pages if you need more space. Thanks you?

PLEASE WRITE YOUR REPONSES IN INK

NAME: _____

AGE: _____

SEX: (circle one)   MALE   FEMALE

COLLEGE MAJOR: _____

FATHER'S JOB _____

MOTHER'S JOB _____

TODAY'S DATE _____

CLASS RANK: (circle one) Freshman
Sophomore
Junior
Senior
First year masters
Second year masters
Other: _____

THINK ABOUT THE LAST TIME YOU HAVE TO MAKE A MAJOR DECISION ABOUT YOUR EDUCATION IN WHICH YOU HAD A NUMBER OF ALTERNATIVES (E.G., WHICH COLLEGE TO ATTEND, MAJOR, CAREER CHOICES, ETC.) WHAT WAS THE NATURE OF THE DECISION?

_____

_____

WHAT ALTERNATIVES WERE AVAILABLE TO YOU?

_____

_____

_____

HOW DID YOU FEEL ABOUT THESE ALTERNATIVES?

_____

_____

_____

HOW DID YOU GO ABOUT CHOOSING FROM THE ALTERNATIVES?

_____

_____

_____

WHAT THINGS WERE THE MOST IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION IN YOUR CHOICES? PLEASE GIVE DETAILS.

_____

_____

DO YOU LEARN BEST IN CLASSES WHICH FOCUS ON FACTUAL INFORMATION OR CLASSES WHICH FOCUS ON IDEAS AND CONCEPTS?

_____

_____

WHY DO YOU LEARN BEST IN THAT TYPE OF CLASS YOU CHOSE ABOVE?

_____

_____

_____

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE ADVANTAGES OF THE CHOICE YOU MADE ABOVE?

_____

_____

_____

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE DISADVANTAGES TO THE CHOICE YOU MADE ABOVE?

_____

_____

_____

IF YOU COULD GIVE ADVICE TO ANYONE ON HOW BEST TO SUCCEED IN
COLLEGE COURSEWORK, WHAT KIND OF ADVISE WOULD YOU GIVE THEM?
TALK ABOUT WHAT YOU BELIEVE IS THE KEY TO DOING WELL IN COLLEGE
COURSES.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

DURING THE COURSE OF YOUR STUDIES, YOU HAVE PROBABLY HAD
INSTRUCTORS WITH DIFFERENT TEACHING METHODS. AS YOU THINK BACK TO
INSTRUCTORS YOU HAVE HAD, DESCRIBE THE METHOD OF INSTRUCTION WHICH
HAD THE MOST BENEFICIAL EFFECT ON YOU.

_____

_____

_____

WHAT MADE THAT TEACHING METHOD BENEFICIAL? PLEASE BE SPECIFIC AND
USE EXAMPLES.

_____

_____

_____

WERE THERE ASPECTS OF THAT TEACHING METHOD WHICH WERE NOT
BENEFICIAL? IF SO, PLEASE TALK ABOUT SOME OF THE ASPECTS AND WHY
THEY WERE NOT BENEFICIAL.

_____

_____

_____

WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS YOU LEARNED FROM THE
INSTRUCTOR'S METHOD OF TEACHING?

_____

_____

_____

PLEASE DESCRIBE THE TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP WITH AN INSTRUCTOR THAT
WOULD HELP YOU TO LEARN BEST AND EXPLAIN WHY.

_____

_____

_____

DO YOU PREFER CLASSES IN WHICH THE STUDENTS DO A LOT OF TALKING, OR
WHERE STUDENTS DON'T TALK VERY MUCH?

_____

_____

WHY DO YOU PREFER THE DEGREE OF STUDENT INVOLVEMENT/PARTICIPATION
THAT YOU CHOSE ABOVE?

_____

_____

_____

_____

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE ADVANTAGES OF YOUR PREFERENCE ABOVE?

_____

_____

_____

_____

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE DISADVANTAGES OF YOUR PREFERENCE?
_____

_____

_____

_____

WHAT TYPE OF INTERACTIONS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE AMONG MEMBERS OF A
CLASS IN ORDER TO ENHANCE YOUR OWN LEARNING?
_____

_____

_____

SOME PEOPLE THINK THAT HARD WORK AND EFFORT WILL RESULT IN HIGH
GRADES IN SCHOOL.   OTHERS THINK HARD WORK AND EFFORT ARE NOT A
BASIS FOR HIGH GRADES. WHICH OF THESE STATEMENTS IS MOST LIKE YOUR
OWN OPINION?
_____

_____

_____

IDEALLY, WHAT DO YOU THINK SHOULD BE USED AS A BASIS FOR EVALUATING
YOUR WORK IN COLLEGE COURSES?
_____

_____

_____

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN THE EVALUATION YOU DESCRIBED ABOVE?

_____

_____

_____

PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY YOU THINK THE RESPONSE YOU SUGGESTED ABOVE IS
THE BEST WAY TO EVALUATE STUDENTS' WORK IN COLLEGE COURSES?

_____

_____

_____

SOMETIMES DIFFERENT INSTRUCTORS GIVE DIFFERENT EXPLANATIONS FOR
HISTORICAL EVENTS OR SCIENTIFIC PHENOMENA. WHEN TWO INSTRUCTORS
EXPLAIN THE SAME THING DIFFERENTLY, CAN ONE BE MORE CORRECT THAN
THE OTHER?

_____

_____

_____

WHEN TWO EXPLANATIONS ARE GIVEN FOR THE SAME SITUATION, HOW WOULD
YOU GO ABOUT DECIDING WHICH EXPLANATION TO BELIEVE? PLEASE GIVE
DETAILS AND EXAMPLES.

_____

_____

_____

_____

CAN ONE EVER BE SURE OF WHICH EXPLANATION TO BELIEVE? IF SO, HOW?

_____

_____

_____

_____

IF ONE CAN'T BE SURE OF WHICH EXPLANATION TO BELIEVE, WHY NOT?
_____

_____

_____

Appendix F: Demographic Date on Survey Respondents

feminist	age	race	grad	state	politics	majors	women's studies
don't know	20	C	2008	MA	I	American Studies	no
don't know	20	C	2008	MA	I	Psychology	no
don't know	18	C	2009	NH	D	Math/Computer Science	no
don't know	21	C	2007	CT	I	Psychology/Art History	no
don't know	20	C	2008	MA	D	Biology/Biochemistry	no
don't know	19	C	2008	WI	D	Biochemisty	no
don't know	19	AA	2007	NY	D	Psychology	no
don't know	20	C	2007	PA	R	Bio/Psychology	no
don't know	20	O	2009	NH	R	Bio/Psychology	no
don't know	19	AA	2008	NY		Environmental Studies	no
don't know	19	C	2008	MD	D	Environmental Studies	no
don't know	21	C	2007	VT	I	English/Psychology	no
don't know		C	2006	NY	D	English/Political Science	yes
don't know	19	C	2007	NM	I	Bio/Psychology	no
don't know	21	A/P	2006		R	English	yes
don't know	21	c	2006	MA	D	History	yes
don't know	21	C	2006	NY	D	Political Science	no
don't know	21	C	2006	NH	D	Literary Studies	no
no	20	A/P	2008		D	Psychology	no
no	19	C	2008	NH	I	Psychology/Sociology	no

no	19	C	2009	ME	R	Undecided	no
no	24	H	2009	N/A		Psychology	no
no	20	C	2008		R	Psychology	no
no	20	C	2007	MA	I	Psychology	yes
no		C	2008	NY	R	Political Science	no
no	21	C	2006	NY	R	History	no
no	19	C	2009	VT	I	Undecided	no
no	18	H	2009	NY		Psych./Latin Amer. Studies	no
yes	19	C	2008	NJ	D	Psychology	no
yes	19	C	2008	VT	O	Psychology	yes
yes	20	C	2008	NJ	D	Environmental Studies	no
yes	19	C	2007	CA	D	Geography	no
yes	20	C	2007	NY		Spanish	no
yes	21	C	2007	OH	D	Sociology	yes
yes	21	C	2006	OR	D	Sociology/Anthropology	yes
yes		C	2009	TX	D	History	no
yes	21	C	2006	MT	D	Psychology	yes
yes	20	C	2008	NJ	R	Psychology	yes
yes	19	C	2008	WA	D	Psychology	yes
yes		C	2007	MA	D	Psychology/Spanish	yes
yes	19	C	2007	NH	D	Biology	no
yes	22	C	2007	NY	D	Psychology	yes
yes	20	C	2008	TX	D	Psychology	yes
yes	21	C	2006	ME	D	Am. Hist/Women's Studies	yes
yes	20	C	2008	CA	D	American Literature	no
yes	20	C	2007	PA	D	Psychology/Religion	yes
yes	20	c	2008	ny	I	Physics	no
yes	19	C	2008	MA	I	Political Science	yes
yes	10	C	2008	VT	D	English	no
yes	20	C	2008	CO	O	Psychology	yes
yes	21	C	2006	ME	I	History	yes
yes	18	C	2009	ME	I	Undecided	no
yes	20	C	2007	VA	D	Sociology/Anthropology	yes
yes		C	2006	ME	I	Theater/Spanish	yes
yes	19	A/P	2007			Biology	no
yes		C	2006			Women's Studies	yes

LaTayna M. Purnell

Experience

Dean of Students…. Mount Ida College, Newton, MA

January 2001 - Present

- Directly supervise, train and evaluate Residence Life, Student Activities, Career Services and Civic Engagement Staff
- Collaboration with the Directors of Health and Counseling Services and International Student Services
- Implement and maintain a campus-wide Community Service/Service Learning program
- Chair the Leadership Steering Committee and initiate new co-curricular Leadership Development programs
- Supervise the Emerging Leaders program for first- and second-year students
- Supervise New Student Orientation and chair the Orientation Committee
- Oversee the judicial affairs process and advise the Student Judiciary Board
- Serve on Retention Committee and coordinate co-curricular retention initiatives
- Coordinate Commuter Affairs and advise Commuter Council
- Serve on Alcohol Commission and represent the College at the Higher Education Task Force
- Chair the Multi-cultural Education Task Force and implement approved recommendations
- Supervise Student Assistant and work-study students
- Serve on appropriate College-wide committees
- Head Coach for NCAA Men's and Women's Cross Country Teams

Residence Manager…. Indiana University, Bloomington, IN
July 1997 – January 2001

- Oversaw day-to-day operation of 1100 bed and 1500 bed university residence halls
- Trained, supervised, and evaluated 7 full-time and 40 part-time staff members
- Maintained and administered $4.3 million and $3.4 million budget
- Selected, trained, supervised and evaluated 25 Resident Advisors, 3 Graduate Supervisors, and 2 Professional staff members
- Promoted and developed educational programming utilizing the Wellness model
- Coordinated facilities management aspects of residence halls
- Advised residence hall student government and judicial board
- Provided initial intervention for counseling, advising, judicial concerns

- Assisted with the development & enforcement of residence life polices & procedure for the campus

Graduate Assistant of Campus Living…. University of Maine, Orono, ME
August 1996 - May 1997

- Served as a resource to hall staff and Hall Governing Boards for programming and community development
- Developed and coordinated faculty involvement in the halls
- Served as a resource to special lifestyle committees in the halls
- Assisted with Resident Assistant and Resident Director selection and training
- Assisted with special events, such as Family and Friends Weekend, Room Personalization Week, MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY

Greek Affairs Consultant…. University of Maine, Orono, ME

August 1996 – May 1997

- Advised 14 National Interfraternity Council and 7 National Panhellenic Council organizations
- Planned and designed educational programs for Greek leaders
- Planned and implemented philanthropic projects

Student Affairs Intern.… University of New England, Biddeford, ME
May 1996 - August 1996

- Evaluated factors which contributed to retention and success of students pursuing a medical degree
- Planned and designed orientation programs for medical, other graduate, and undergraduate students
- Developed time table and solicitation process for fund raising
- Coordinated with pharmaceutical and medical supply houses

Resident Director…. University of Maine at Machias, Machias, ME

August 1994 - May 1996

- Selected, trained, supervised and evaluated 13 Resident Advisors
- Promoted and developed educational programming utilizing the Wellness model
- Coordinated facilities management aspects of a 150 bed residence hall
- Advised residence hall student government
- Provided initial intervention for counseling, advising, judicial concerns
- Assisted with the development & enforcement of residence life policies & procedures for the campus

Alcohol and Drug Educator…. University of Maine at Machias, Machias, ME
August 1994 - May 1996

- Planned and implemented alcohol and drug education programming for the campus
- Provided oversight to and prepared reports on the University's current student alcohol and drug usage and opinion status
- Communicated the policies, benefits and assessments of the Alcohol and Drug Education Program to the campus community
- Selected, trained, and co-advised the peer-counseling program, PEAK (Prevention, Education, Alternatives, and Knowledge) Peer Leaders
- Served as the chairperson of the Alcohol and Drug Education Committee

Intramural Director…. University of Maine at Machias, Machias, ME

August 1994 - May 1996

- Developed campus intramural/recreational programs for a diverse student population
- Recruited, trained, and supervised officials for intramural and recreational sports events, tournaments, and leagues
- Maintained and updated competitive sports and club sports rules and regulations
- Coordinated all club sports
- Selected, hired, trained, supervised, and evaluate equipment room work-study students including Equipment Manager
- Coordinated and scheduled all intramural activities including individual/team sports, special events, & outdoor recreation activities
- Advised the Intramural Sports council
- Supervised Intern for Intramural Sports Program
- Conducted internal evaluation of gym usage, policies, and procedures

Coordinator of Summer Programs…. University of Maine, Machias, ME
May 1995 - August 1995

- Coordinated special summer programs and projects for Residence Life and Student Orientation
- Coordinated Residence Advisor training and development
- Integrated fall housing assignment needs
- Recruited, trained, and supervised summer janitorial work-study students
- Developed Residence Advisors Manual

Education

Doctorate of Philosophy, Indiana University-Bloomington
October, 2006
Dissertation Title: *I Think I am a Feminist: A Study of Feminist Identity Development of Undergraduate College Women*
> Higher Education Administration
> Gender Studies Minor

Master of Education, University of Maine
June 1997
> Student Development in Higher Education

Bachelor of Science, University of Texas at San Antonio
May 1993
> Kinesiology and Health

Committees

- Multi-cultural Education Task Force Co-Chair, Mount Ida College
- First-Year Experience Task Force, Mount Ida College
- Leadership Steering Committee Chair, Mount Ida College
- Executive Committee of the College Planning Committee, Mount Ida College

- Campus Activities Network Co-Chair, Mount Ida College
- Retention Committee, Mount Ida College
- Black Leadership Conference Chair, Indiana University
- Sexual Assault Prevention Committee, Indiana University
- Residential Operations Goals and Directions Committee, Indiana University
- Minority Achievers Program Mentor, Indiana University
- Graduate Student Involvement Committee, Indiana University
- Student Leadership Development Committee, Indiana University
- Delta Zeta Alumni Academic Chair, Indiana University
- Conduct Committee, University of Maine
- Student Development Association Co-Chair, University of Maine
- African-American Association, University of Maine
- Sexual Assault Advisory Committee Member, University of Maine at Machias
- Health and Safety Committee, University of Maine at Machias
- Epsilon Sigma Alpha International Sorority Advisor, University of Maine at Machias
- Orientation Committee, University of Maine at Machias

Affiliations

National Association of Student Personal Administrator
1996-1997 Region 1 State New Professional Graduate Student Representative
2000 Local Arrangements Committee
American College Personnel Association
2002 Mid-Level Management Institute Graduate
Association of College and University Housing Officers International
1996–2001 Program Committee
2000-2001 Programming Committee Sub-Chair
2000-2001 Placement and Staff Development Chair

American Educational Research Association

Presentations

National Association of Student Personal Administrators Region 1
Fall Conference 1996
Graduate Student Round Table
Fall Conference 2002
Thinking about Pursuing your Doctorate?
Diversity and the New Millennium

North East Association College and University Residents Hall
Spring 1996
Recognition

You Mean I Could Do This For A Living?: Careers in Student Affairs
Spring 2003
Leadership and Diversity

American Educational Research Association 2000
A Historical Look at People of Color in Higher Education

Teaching/Classroom Experience

Indiana University

- Student Developmental Theory, Spring 1998
- Developmental Theory, Fall 1999, 1999, Spring 2000
- Film in Higher Education, Spring 1998
- Social Justice Movement of the '60's, Summer 1999

Mount Ida College

- Leadership Development, Fall 2001, 2003