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A Collective Pedagogical Narrative of African American Male Counselor Educators

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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

A COLLECTIVE PEDAGOGICAL NARRATIVE OF
AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE
COUNSELOR EDUCATORS

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

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College of Education and Behavioral Sciences
Department of Applied Psychology and Counselor Education
Counselor Education and Supervision

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This Dissertation by: Reginald Andre Moore

Entitled: *A Collective Pedagogical Narrative of African American Male Counselor Educators*

has been approved as meeting the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in College of Natural and Health Sciences in Department of Applied Psychology and Counselor Education, Program of Counselor Education and Supervision

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ABSTRACT

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This study examined the experiences of African American men within the counselor education and supervision profession. The men self-identified as adhering to a self-defined African-centered worldview. This investigation was undertaken to determine how participants expressed African-centered cultural values within their classroom, supervision, and professional experience. This study investigated the commonalities of the participants' unique stories and individual experiences. The literature review for this study focused on aspects of a traditional African-centered worldview and emphasized affective symbolism and call and response pattern.

A narrative approach and the communal validation strategies of an Afrocentric research methodology were used for this investigation. Six participants took part in the focus group, first and second individual interviews, and artifact submission activities for this study. The six remaining participants elected to take part in smaller portions of the study. The data for the study were coded, member checked, and reviewed by an auditor to ensure its trustworthiness.

The results of this study were presented using the literary device of the African tortoise and hare race story and in a strengths-based manner. The participants lauded the efforts of their ancestors and elders within counselor education. They indicated

that counselor educators have left much undone in their efforts to achieve their multicultural and social justice aims. Implications for the profession are presented prior to a discussion of ideas and suggestions for future research. This study adds to the scant literature on the experiences of African American men within the counselor education professorate.

This study provides critical insight and information into the attitudes, atmospheres, and supports necessary for the recruitment, retention, and advancement of African American men within the counseling education and supervision profession as expressed in their own words. Their stories are necessary and should be heard by counselors, educators, supervisors, and administrators to ensure the continued diversification of the counseling and counselor education and supervision professions.

Keywords: African American, Afrocentric, classroom; counselor education and supervision, cultural values, pedagogy, pedagogical, male, narrative, storytelling, teaching, worldview

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CHAPTER I

OVERVIEW OF STUDY

Introduction

I am aware of you, though you are not yet born and though I will be living dead or ancestor before you arrive from your mother's womb. I write to you from us. (Reggie Moore)

Over 511 master's and doctoral counseling programs exist in the United States today. Most of these programs are disproportionately populated with White female students and faculty (Schweiger, Henderson, Clawson, Collins, & Nuckolls, 2008). The faculty objective of these programs is to teach, supervise, and mentor students for the counseling profession, including equipping them with multicultural awareness and competencies. Additionally, counselor education and supervision (CES) doctoral students are required to receive training in "pedagogy relevant to multicultural issues and competencies, including social change theory and advocacy action planning" (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs [CACREP], 2009, p. 56). These issues and competencies are noteworthy in light of the increasing diversification of the United States population.

Counselor education programs focus on preparing the adult learner for entrance into the counseling profession. These programs develop the professional identity of counseling students through a process which emphasizes didactic, experiential, and theoretical learning. However to date and in my search of the literature, I found that there is no agreed upon approach as to what constitutes the best

approach to instruct the professions theoretical domains to counseling students (Sexton, 1998).

To date, there are few qualitative or quantitative studies which have been conducted to demonstrate the efficacy of training multiculturally competent students and client outcomes (Atkinson, Bui, & Mori, 2001). There is also little to no evidence documenting the client outcomes associated with the efforts of culturally competent counselors overall (Worthington, Soth-McNett, & Moreno, 2007). These findings are noteworthy since leaders in the counseling profession espoused their commitment to the multicultural counseling competencies over 20 years ago (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). Counselor education professionals need to investigate the relationship between our multicultural training efforts and client outcomes and to add additional voices and narratives to ensure the professions' fulfillment of this commitment.

Educational Background and Reflection

As a Black male I, who was schooled in a central Kansas city from 1966 until 1980, had only two African American teachers during that time. I missed the era of the all-Black Dunbar schools, and my family lived too far away from the elementary school which had Black teachers. I had wonderful educational experiences in eighth grade history class under the tutelage of Ms. Daniels, a Black woman from St. Louis. I also had a Black physical education teacher, Mr. Thompson, in the eighth grade. Both were role models.

I had no teachers of color in my undergraduate work at a Midwestern university in the 1980s. I presently have been educated by two women of Latino

descent in my doctoral program at a western university. Thus in my 27 years of schooling, I had only four teachers of color and approximately 130 instructors from the dominant culture. I recall only two teachers from the dominant culture discussing their assumptive or cultural worldview and how it was evident in or impacted their teaching and classroom presence. In this regard and through lack of declaration, I have been indoctrinated into Eurocentric thinking. Similarly, I have, in ignorance, unwittingly cooperated in perpetuating cultural values, which were of the dominant paradigm and not necessarily values I purposefully chose to perpetuate. Sadly, I (a) was unaware of the importance of my worldview as I taught, (b) had been trained and indoctrinated to dismiss or diminish such, and (c) therefore, out of a sense of dislocation did not disclose my worldview, values, or cultural assumptions. As a result, I offer this project as an opportunity to learn, grow, and share with others.

Professional Background and Student Evaluation

As a teacher for the last 20 years, I greatly love and benefit from teaching master's level counseling students. I taught at a Christian university for 15 years and currently teach at a seminary. Both institutions are located in a western state. I attended the university for two years after I earned a master's degree in counseling from there prior to the start of my teaching career. Well over 90% of the students I have been privileged to instruct have been from the White and European culture. My teaching experience has been very positive, especially in regard to the multicultural learning. Over 95% of the student evaluations of my teaching style and emphasis have been very positive at both institutions. However, that is not to say all of the comments related to my teaching style and approach have been positive, as I have received

several criticisms and constructive comments, which indicate that there remains much room for continued growth or improvement in areas of my teaching style and classroom approach, emphasis and structure.

On a recent evaluation a student wrote “I come from the business world and your teaching style is unprofessional.” On another occasion, a White, male student publicly indicated he felt the entirety of the socio-cultural class was a waste of time and money and that he had consulted with other students who felt likewise. On still yet another occasion, a White, male student commented that he “had to learn how to learn from me.” Needless to say, I was particularly caught off guard by the blunt nature of the second comment, especially as it was stated openly during class. I found relief when another student, who happened to be White and male, openly responded that he had successfully discussed a similar concern with me earlier in the semester. Still and despite his defense, I found myself pondering the following questions: What made my teaching approach appear unprofessional to the student? What was behind the student’s statement about the business world and his perception of my class as unprofessional? What lay behind the student’s statement of the class being a waste of his time and money? What caused another student to indicate he had to learn how to learn from me? What could I do differently?

Personal Reflection and Response

A colleague who had sat in my classes shared his opinion that the students and their statements reflected levels of privilege and stemmed from their dominant cultural perspective and worldview. I found rest in the reframe that the students’ statements and challenges, although possibly infused with entitlement, privilege, and oppression, represented my responsibility to further engage the multicultural competencies of the

profession. I chose not to interrogate the students or their questions in a reactionary or defensive manner. I appreciated the honesty and courage of the students as their comments invited me to an ongoing process of self-examination and growth. I strongly believe students have the right to express themselves in class and greatly valued the student feedback and comments about my teaching style and approach. Overall, students have reported that I welcome all student identities, worldviews, and feedback.

Given student feedback has been more than largely positive, I take special note of those comments that are less than positive, as these comments are constructive gifts that hold special value for me. I now e-mail current students only the constructive gifts of students from previously completed courses. I do so at the beginning of the semester to link current students to previous generations of the course and to demonstrate my ongoing awareness, transparency, growth, and journey as their professor. I now also create anonymous feedback loops to gain real-time course feedback from students. This improves course instruction and ensures a responsive and collective learning environment.

Internalization, Identity, and Gratitude

Today, the core meaning I have gleaned from the student comments and from subsequent conversations with the two available students is that they would have benefitted more had I surfaced the cultural values and assumptions which were beneath my teaching approach and course format. In fact, our dialogue piqued and sustained my interest in this research effort. These student comments, and others like them, were pivotal gifts which positively impacted and increased my personal and professional awareness, reflection, and understanding. As a result, I began to realize

how African-centered cultural values were core to my teaching style and presentation and benefit my teaching and openness to diverse others. Sadly, I had been largely schooled and trained to ignore and overlook these values and their contributions and as a result acknowledge and utilize this learning within this investigation.

In retrospect, I confess that I have taught from a cultural perspective, which either lacked cultural congruence or which was congruent but remained unexamined and therefore undeclared. I believe education and the learning environment are fundamentally altered and lessened when the assumptive worldview and values of the teacher are not known or declared. Personally, I can now see why I struggled with many aspects of my schooling, as the values espoused often had little to do with the reality of my lived experience. As a professor, I have been diligently working to correct such oversight in my teaching approach with current students and take these evaluations as gifts which led to an awareness of my preferred way of being and my emergence as an African American counselor educator who embraced an African cultural worldview. The awareness gained during this discovery has been liberating and central to my personhood, professional identity, and teaching practice. This awareness also gave me an opportunity to contribute to the profession I love and the students to whom I have become indebted.

Statement of Opportunity

There was an inherent invitation in the lack of information and research on the impact of cultural values of an African American counselor educator on the preparation of counseling students. This lack was also true of counselor educators who are members of Latino, Asian, or other diverse population. Many aspiring counselors and counselor educators have been schooled through the lens of a singular story of an

invisible, dominant, cultural perspective. Without additional lenses or perspective, this hegemonic story and perspective, while possessing validity for some, will continue to be exaggerated and impoverished, making other cultural stories and worldviews invalid by discrediting additional perspectives and lenses (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Such schooling potentially silences students and faculty and subordinates and pathologizes their cultural values and worldviews, resulting in an indoctrination that is akin to subjugation and depleted educational environments (Freire, 1990; hooks, 1994).

The counseling and counselor education professions interact with an increasingly diverse and rapidly changing demographic in the United States, and the profession itself is becoming more diversified (Sue & Sue, 2012). As the counseling profession emphasizes a commitment to multiculturalism in its ethical codes (American Counseling Association, 2014) and training standards (CACREP, 2009), this study, and others like it, are logical and necessary extensions of our profession's commitment to, and promise of, ensuring multicultural counseling competence. This study in part adds to the promise of multiculturalism within counselor education by examining the link between cultural values and pedagogical expressions in the stories of professors of African American descent. This examination is necessitated by our commitment and responsibility to educate our students in as well rounded a fashion as possible and to uncover our blind spots.

As early as 1999, the United States Surgeon General emphasized the need for a commitment to ensuring culturally responsive counseling services to an increasingly diversified population (United States Department of Health and Human Services). This report (a) documented disparity in the utilization of mental health services by

people of color; (b) discussed the historical, and often healthy cultural mistrust, of people of color with respect to mental health services; (c) highlighted the prevalence of misdiagnosis and under-diagnosis of clients of color; and (d) alerted counselors, counselor educators, and the mental health profession at large to the pressing need for training which truly encompasses diversity and equips clinicians for work with diverse populations. Our failure to equip students and to conduct such training will result in a continuance of “unwarranted hopelessness about the opportunity for recovery from mental illness” (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 1999, p. vi.), which is a disservice to our students and those we and they serve, resulting in lost societal potential and opportunities.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its emphasis on the multicultural aspects of training of master’s and doctoral level counselors as they relate to the stories of male, African-centered, or Afrocentric, professors engaged in such education. Given the current state of underrepresentation and the traditional lack of voice afforded to counseling faculty of African American descent, this work aims to amplify these representations and voices and advances multiculturalism within the CES field. The ultimate goal of this work is to stimulate the awareness of additional and equally valid voices in counselor training, be they African-centered, Afrocentric, or otherwise diverse.

This study speaks to the need for diversification of CES pedagogy and greater awareness of the voices of African American male counselor educators. Greater awareness and appreciation are necessary extensions of the profession’s commitment to prepare culturally competent counselors and to provide culturally sensitive and

responsive mental health services (Sue & Sue, 2012) to all clients and specifically to African American/Black male clients. This study is also important as 20.95% of students currently enrolled in CACREP master's counseling and doctoral counselor education programs are reported to be African American (CACREP, 2013). These students are primarily located in universities in the southern United States (Johnson, Bradley, Knight, & Bradshaw, 2007). More specifically, 5.53% of the 1,467 doctoral students enrolled in CACREP programs are reported to be African American/Black males (CACREP, 2013).

Guiding Questions

There were two guiding question for this study:

- Q1 Is there a common narrative among male, African American, African-centered, or Afrocentric counselor educators?
- Q2 How can this narrative inform counselor education, specifically in terms of multicultural competencies and teaching praxis in general?

As I considered the experiences of male, African-centered or Afrocentric counselor education professors, I found myself curious as to how these men carry out counseling instruction with respect to their cultural identity and worldview. I wondered what stories they would tell of how their worldview informs their classroom pedagogy and praxis. I wondered about their awareness of their cultural values and how such values relate to the teaching praxis and classroom experience. Additionally, I wondered how each man expressed his Afrocentric identity in educating counseling students.

I believe these men story their visibility, stimulate our awareness of them, and invite our continued and collective celebration of their professional achievements and contributions. If we as a profession do not hear their stories and other unique or

unheard voices, then our commitment to diversity, multiculturalism, and social justice is simply a feel-good platitude and substanceless ruse. If we as a profession mute their stories and other unique voices, then the counseling and counselor education professionals are, in fact, essentially “‘handmaidens of the status quo’ and ‘transmitters of society’s values’” (Sue et al., 1992, p. 79), irrelevant lackeys, and purveyors of the dominant, exclusive story mentioned above (hooks, 1994).

Rationale

Counseling professionals stress the importance of counselors acquiring the requisite competencies (e.g., knowledge, skills, and awareness) to work with diverse populations (American Counseling Association, 2014; CACREP, 2009). This responsibility is a life-long endeavor and applies not only to counselors in training but to counselor educators, supervisors, and professional counselors as well. Given such emphasis, it is imperative that counselor educators, counseling supervisors, and counseling professionals demonstrate continued competence with respect to the diverse members of our field and those we serve. Thus, we must be open to the stories and experiences of the varying members of our professional constituency to avoid professional hypocrisy and serve as role models for our students.

This investigation examined the lived experiences and reflections of African-centered, male, counselor educators. These men were colleagues. Their stories are important. They are part of the CES professional family. In this light, the participant stories and our hearing of them is analogous to a healthy family system or a family reunion of sorts. In contrast, our deafness to the participant stories is akin to the dysfunctional cut offs in families that we so often work to stem and repair, compromises our professional strength and standing, and is symptomatic of a deeper

issue—our refusal to heal ourselves. This study recognizes and amplifies the voices of male, African-centered counselor educators; increases our awareness of their experiences in the CES classroom and training; and furthers our collective advancement towards social justice and a diversified, whole profession.

Delimitations

For this study, I chose to focus on Black or African American, male, counselor educators who self-identify as African-centered or Afrocentric in terms of their cultural values and worldview. The primary focus of this investigation was to invite and represent the stories of these men as it relates to their teaching and cultural values in CACREP accredited programs. While there were many other factors which may contribute to the identities and experiences of these men (e.g., socioeconomic status, tenure status, region, etc.), this study had at its core the specific and definitive expression of an African-centered or Afrocentric cultural identity. One can be of African descent and not African-centered or Afrocentric because such identity is both process and choice. This study did not focus on the career experiences of African American women in the CES as their experiences have been the focus of a previous and recent multicultural study (Bradley, 2004; Hall, 2010).

Definition of Terms

Affect. Refers to “to that unique part of one’s self that is actively engaged in experiencing a specific phenomenon holistically (i.e., mentally, physically, and spiritually). Affect personalizes the phenomenal world by helping one to participate in the experience” (Moore, 1996, p. 445). Affect is often behavioral, emotional, and visceral. For example, affect is the enjoyable feeling a person has when engrossed in a

book that he or she does do not wish to put down or to the sadness felt when the books ends.

Afrocentric. “The Afrocentric idea rest on the assertion of the primacy of the African experience for African people” (Mazama, 2001, p. 388). Afrocentricity challenges European nationalism and hegemony, with its universal claims of normalcy and posits the centrality of an African worldview for the interpretation and investigation of matters related to those in the African diaspora (Asante, 1987; Asante & Asante, 1985; Mazama, 2001).

Call and response. A participatory form of communal, reciprocal, and rhythmic communication style that is rooted in traditional African culture and is also a prominent feature of African American culture and communication (Asante & Asante, 1985; Myers, 1987). The style involves dynamic interaction between the speaker and audience.

Center/location/place. “To practice one’s culture and to apprehend oneself in a manner that is consistent with one’s history, culture, and biology is to be centered or to proceed from one’s center” (Mazama, 2001, p. 397). For example, the logical center from which people of African descent should view themselves is the African culture and ideas.

Communalism. “Refers to the individuals becoming conscious only in terms of other people, of his own being, duties, privileges and responsibilities towards himself and others. ‘I am, because we are; and since we are therefore I am’” (Dixon, 1976, p. 63). Communalism implies cooperation, interdependence, mutual concern, and reciprocity.

Diunital logic. A form of reasoning which is often expressed as both/and, rather than either/or, logic and is reflective of a holistic rather than dichotomous worldview (Carroll, 2010). Proponents of diunital logic often emphasize harmony and similarities.

Spirituality. The belief that all things are connected by and comprised of a universal and invisible substance (Myers, 1985, 1987). This belief is the basis for African religious beliefs and is a foundation for its emphasis on harmony with nature

Symbolic imagery. An object or interaction which can convey or represent multiple meanings and non-material reality (Moore, 1996, p. 445). For example, the flag of a country can evoke feelings of pride within its citizens and fear within its adversaries.

Summary

Counselor Education professionals are making significant commitment and strides towards social justice, multiculturalism, and culturally responsive services. Our profession is becoming more diverse in ranks and constituency, serving and learning from increasingly diverse populations, and developing to become a diverse and mature profession. I believe that these strivings, internal discourses, and “squabbles” are necessary conversations and events which ensure ongoing integrity and evidence of the inclusiveness proclaimed and sought. As stewards of the counseling profession and on behalf of future generations of counselor educators, it is my hope that the particularities and the uniqueness of the stories presented contribute to corporate awareness, respect for each other, and a positive legacy to future generations.

While there are many audiences who may read this work (e.g., you, my dissertation committee, colleagues, and long-suffering family members), I am mindful

to speak to unique audience members—a person of African American descent who is as of yet unborn to life and to this field. By the time that you arrive at the gates of this profession, I hope that much will have changed and that the many diversities that are currently entering this profession will more than likely be plethora upon your arrival. As such, our commitments to welcome, to social justice, to multiculturalism, and to culturally responsive services will have to accommodate new considerations and realities, many of which we are not yet aware of; nor for which do we have the language.

I hope your traverse into this field meets welcome, appreciation, and support, though I cannot be certain of what the future holds. What I am certain of, and want you to know, is that other men and women of African descent have gone before you and made significant contributions to this CES profession. There are a number of ancestors and forbearers, some of whom participated in this study. I made the mistake of not seeking them out earlier in my CES journey and prior to this work which represents, for me, a correction of sorts. I intentionally sought the participants out with the hopes of hearing both individual and communal stories; to pass along their wisdom, knowledge and understanding; and to ensure future sustenance and mooring for your journey.

The African-centered worldview and cultural values, which I discuss in Chapter II, will be recognizable, congruent, and useful in your time. The individual stories and the story of our collective, both of which are presented in Chapter IV, will nourish your spirit, support your struggle, and sustain your contribution in the CES profession. I end the summary of this chapter in the manner in which I began, with a direct statement to you.

Children, Lay hold of your fathers' story. This story of his journey, though very brief, reflects the fulfillment of his specific promise to you. Embrace also your mothers' story with all diligence and gain her wisdom. You, your sisters, and your brothers reflect the best of all that is good in us. You are our hope.
(Reggie Moore)

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE AND SYMBOLS

Introduction

A single tree cannot withstand a storm. (Yankah, 1989, p. 326)

The above Akan proverb set the stage for the review of literature that follows in that African cultural values and their expression are expected to frame the experience of my potential participants. I sought to study the experiences of African cultural values as perceived and expressed by African American male counselor educators in their teaching and professional experience. It was my hope that the stories, observations, and remembrances that arise from this work would result in a communal and collective story that reflected and honored the voices of our African American ancestors and elders within counselor education and supervision (CES). Further, I hoped that this work would serve those who are currently within (and those who are as of yet unborn to) this field, provide them with a portion of our history, and sustain their presence and future within the CES and counseling professions.

In the following pages I describe how traditional African cultural values are inherent and embedded within the culture's symbols, art, rituals, and proverbs. I use an African American novel to evidence the inherency, continuity, and synthesis of traditional African cultural values within the contemporary diaspora of African American culture. This use of the novel is, generally speaking, an exemplar and is not

intended to account for the many and varied expressions of traditional African cultural values within contemporary African American culture. This discussion of traditional African cultural values, and the contemporary African American expressions of those values, is foundational to this investigation of the perceptions and experiences of counseling professors of African American descent who self-identify as African-centered. The investigation explores their experience and perception of traditional African cultural values within their pedagogical expressions and professional experience.

Affective–Symbolic Imagery Cognition

From an epistemological and research perspective, the African way of knowing involves the rejection of the notion of “empty perceptual space” (Dixon, 1976, p. 68) and stresses the relationship, interaction, and interdependence which exists between the researcher and the participants or phenomena being studied. This rejection is consistent with African cultural values of holism, spirituality, and communalism. In essence, the African way of knowing results from (a) an emphasis on symbolic imagery or material expressions, (b) the affect of the participants or researchers in response to the subjects and their symbolic expressions, and (c) the synthesis stemming from the participants’ or researchers’ affect and the symbolic imagery (Carroll, 2008). Moore (1996) wrote:

Affect is related is to that unique part of one’s self that is actively engaged in experiencing a specific phenomenon holistically (i.e. mentally, physically, and spiritually). Affect personalizes the phenomenal world by helping one to participate in the experience. In African/African American culture, symbolic imagery can be exemplified in handshakes, personal greetings, and improvisational language styles. A symbol is a one-to-one correspondence, whereas a symbolic image conveys multiple meanings. The multiple ways of expressing phenomena allow for the use of metaphors and proverbs to convey reality. (p. 445)

My intent in writing about the African way of knowing is to inform, invite, and support the reader's consideration and awareness of his or her personal affective response during the reading of this work. My hope is that this work, itself, serves as a symbolic representation of African cultural values. Further, I hope that the resulting synthesis and understanding of this symbol, which stem from the reader's affect and experience, serves the mutual knowing and awareness that are so highly valued within African culture.

Categorization of African Cultural Values

The two most frequently cited umbrella categories of the African-centered worldview are spirituality and an extended sense of self (Cartman, 2011). From my perspective and for this presentation, I will discuss African cultural values under two broad categories: Communalism, which in essence, governs interpersonal interactions, and Holism, which governs the African sense of being. The representation of these values into two categories is not meant to imply these values are distinct or separate from one another or form a dichotomy. A dichotomous categorization is problematic in that African cultural values are fundamentally intertwined and inherently interdependent. As such, it is important for the reader to consider these values as a greater whole and unified tapestry.

Each value described includes a description of its pro-social nature. I use the present tense to discuss these values as this is consistent with the African emphasis on being and a past/present time focus (Asante & Asante, 1985). Although the values are described in aspirational terms, the limits and unintended consequences of each value are also included to provide a balanced representation and recognition of human

experience. The discussion of the potential limits of the communal values occurs at the end of each value discussion. Because of the nature of holism, the potential limits of these values are summarized at the end of its section.

African Communalism

Typically, authors agree that traditional African cultures prize, value, and emphasize communalism (Dixon, 1976; Gyekye, 1996; Mbiti, 1969). Communalism is defined as a strong, mutual, and interdependent devotion and connection to the interests and values of one's family, group, and society. Dixon (1976) illustrated this by stating,

Communalism refers to the individuals becoming conscious only in terms of other people, of his own being, duties, privileges and responsibilities towards himself and others. "I am, because we are; and since we are therefore I am." Thus he suffers and rejoices not alone but with kinsmen. (p. 63)

In African contexts, individual identity is best emphasized within the context of communal identity, and it is anathema, arrogant, unwise, and risky to emphasize extreme individuality apart from community (Gyekye, 1996). Similarly, Akbar (2002) stated, "African-centered ideology sees people as interconnected with a built-in commitment to preserve and cultivate those ties. This value of mutual and generational responsibility would supersede any individualistic imperatives" (p. 35). While it is possible for a communal society to bind or constrain an individual and to overlook his or her personal identity, aspirations, and goals, Asante (1987) indicated that, for African culture, communalism or corporate identity is the necessary foundation that ensures the welfare of each societal member and the fulfillment of personal aspirations. Thus, the traditional African cultural value of communalism requires that individuals and communities maintain an orientation towards: (a) interdependence and

reciprocity, (b) interpersonal harmony and respect, (c) honor and mutual social obligations, and (d) brotherhood. A brief discussion of each communal orientation follows.

Interdependence and reciprocity. Inherent in the African culture value of communalism is the belief that the psychological wellness, physical safety, identity, and the well-being of the individual is simultaneously intertwined, maintained, and enhanced by fulfillment of his or her communal identity (Nobles, 1978). An individual's wellbeing, in the African mindset, is best satisfied as he or she fulfills communal obligations and responsibilities (Gyekye, 1996). In this sense, individuals are considered whole and fulfilled when they are interdependent with others and responsible for the well-being of the larger collectives of family, tribe, and community (Montgomery, Fine, & Myers, 1990). The community, in reciprocal fashion, is also at its best when it affords an individual the opportunity to fulfill communal obligations in a manner consistent with the uniqueness and temperament of that individual. The lack of such affordance may result in a communal hegemony that restricts individual identity, uniqueness and preference.

Interpersonal harmony and respect. In the African view and consistent with interdependence and reciprocity, human relationships are enjoyed and valued versus exploited and devalued in a utilitarian manner (Nobles, 1978; 1980). Miahouakana Matondu (2012) illustrated this point by citing the Yoruba proverb, "The fingers of a man who has only nine are not counted in his presence" (p. 40). The proverb indicates that Africans go to great lengths to avoid embarrassing others whenever possible and to emphasize interpersonal regard. Such deference and regard are consistent with Dixon's (1976) observation that a core emphasis of African worldview and culture lies

in the high value placed on harmony and esteem in interpersonal relationships; people are to be treated as subjects rather than depersonalized as objects of utility. This is not to say that African society and culture is not capable of depersonalization or using others; one need only consider the complicity of Africans in enslavement and internecine wars to understand such capability (Gyekye, 1996). Rather, Gyekye (1996), Mbiti (1969), and Montgomery et al., (1990) consistently noted that in African culture high value and emphasis are placed upon interpersonal harmony and respect.

Honor and mutual social obligations. Kanu (2010) indicated that the respecting and honoring of elders and their collective wisdom is a prevalent value of African cultures. Elders, within African cultural traditions, are valued as bearers of collective ancestral wisdom, transmitters of culture, and purveyors of moral and communal authority (Gyekye, 1996). Mbiti (1969) noted that elders are lovingly cared for by the family and community within traditional African cultures and that nursing or caring facilities are largely absent within an African context. As such, elders and the aged remain central to the life of the community in African communities, and the fulfillment of their vital responsibilities ensures healthy and vibrant communal life. As they provide elders material, esteem, and emotional supports, African families and communities correspondingly benefit from elders who are free to fulfill the honored and crucial roles of intergenerational child rearers, keepers of historical memory and ancestral connection, and moorings that provide social guidance, continuity, and stability. The high esteem given to the words of an elder is reflected in the Efik saying, “The words of one’s elder are greater than amulets” (Miahouakana Matondu, 2012, p. 42) and in the Ibo saying that “He who listens to an elder is like one who consults an oracle” (Kanu, 2010, p. 156). In the absence and disregard of elders and their wisdom,

the African community lacks integrity, unity, and continuity and tends towards dissolution, fracture, and chaos.

Brotherhood. African societies and cultures place great value and emphasis on the brotherhood of humanity. While tribal, racial, and national categories exist in African societies, Gyekye (1996) insisted that such categories do not obliterate the perspective that there is one human family. His insistence is consistent with and reflective of the Montgomery et al. (1990) observations on the interconnection of all living things based upon the similarity of their essence and being. Since these authors emphasized that all human beings are one family, it is incumbent upon individuals and societies to respectfully consider and interact with each other from a perspective of warmth, hospitality, and openness. However, just as family members can forget their commonality and fight, tribes, races, and nations can also forget and create injustices and inhumanities which sever realization of this shared brotherhood.

African Holism

The African cultural value of holism reflects the belief that all things are interconnected. Holism, as an African cultural value, is an overarching construct that is pervasive, visible, and inherent in most all other African cultural values and sensibilities (i.e., spirituality, diunital logic, communalism, and extended self). Generally speaking, African holism posits that there is no separation between the material and spiritual worlds. All things are connected within traditional African societies, and the highest value is placed upon spiritual or non-material reality (Asante, 1987). This unity and interconnection of the spiritual and material worlds is the basis for the African preference for harmony with (versus mastery over) nature and for interpersonal harmony (brotherhood) with family, tribe and, others. In fact, as will

be discussed later, harmony with nature informs and educates African sensibilities, aesthetic and art (Gyekye, 1996). Thus, the traditional African cultural value of holism results in and informs individual and communal ways of being that include (a) a sense of an extended self, (b) spirituality, (c) diunital logic, and (d) sense of rhythm. A brief discussion of the ways of being associated with African holism follows.

Extended self and spirituality. The sense of extended selfhood is a prominent feature within the African worldview. The African sense of extended self implies that communities and individuals are timelessly and simultaneously connected to the spirit, to the ancestors, to each other, and to those yet unborn (Mbiti, 1969). The extended sense of self is expressed in the spiritual, ancestral, and eldership orientations of African cultures and in the correspondingly high regard, emphasis, and esteem placed upon children, the unborn, and life itself (Asante, 1987; Gyekye, 1996). This orientation informs the African individual's senses of location and agency in history (Asante & Asante, 1985), and personal actions are greatly informed and contextualized by these high regards (Reviere, 2001). In terms of spirituality, the African worldview posits that all things are connected by and comprised of a universal and invisible substance (Myers, 1987).

Diunital logic. The African sensibility of holism informs its diunital logic. Diunital logic is a form of reasoning which requires the union, interplay, and synthesis of diametrical opposites to arrive at a holistic conclusion, resolution, and life potentiality (Dixon, 1976). This logic implies that (a) a thing can be itself and its opposite at the same time, (b) that neither thing can exist or be understood without the other, and (c) that the creative and dynamic tension between these opposite things is required to synthesize wholeness and aesthetics (Dixon, 1976). Diunital logic is often

expressed as “both/and” versus “either/or” logic and is reflective of a holistic versus dichotomous worldview (Carroll, 2010; Dixon, 1976). This form of inclusive and complementary logic is expressed in African cultures in a variety of ways ranging from (a) the high value placed on the unity of the male and the female as the basis for social order (Akbar, 1976); (b) the simultaneous attempt to honor and facilitate both communal and individual aspirations (Gyekye, 1996); and (c) the usage of proverbs and symbolic imagery as concrete or material representations to convey, represent, and transmit spiritual reality, history, and cultural values (Moore, 1996). Diunital logic informs the African sensibilities and preferences for unity, harmony, openness, and inclusiveness.

Sense of rhythm. The African way of being is informed by its sensibility of rhythm. Rhythm herein is defined as a sense of movement, timing, and verve. Rhythm in the African sense is inherent in both the natural and spiritual worlds. Rhythm is fundamental to all aspects of African aesthetics, communal, participatory, and invitational in nature. Rhythm facilitates symbiotic and reciprocal movement, feeling, and affect between the artist, audience, and community (Asante & Asante, 1985). For example, a dancer’s movement is seen not only as a response to the catalytic, rhythmic beat of a drummer but also as a form of reciprocal rhythm which, in turn, adds to a sense of rhythm projected by the drummer. Likewise, the timing and use of proverbs, storytelling, and rituals within African culture are highly dependent upon context and are considered as necessary rhythmic events which restore and ensure communal harmony, equilibrium, connection, and continuity (Asante & Asante, 1985; Gyekye, 1996).

Potential limits of African holism. Gyekye (1996) offered a critique of the ancestral worship that may be associated with various forms of African spirituality. His critique implies that ancestral wisdom and orientation may at times be antiquated and lack relevance for present situations and opportunities. Gyekye also posited that the lack of economic and material progress in Africa stems from an overemphasis on the harmony with, rather than mastery over, nature. Additionally, the African cultural emphasis on the unity of the male and female as the basis of social order and procreation may stand juxtaposed to and stigmatize those who choose to remain unmarried, do not bear children, or have a differing sexual orientation. These critiques are certainly worthy of further emphasis and investigation; yet, they are beyond the scope of this work. The potential limits of these values are offered here to create a sense of balance and to recognize and honor the variations of human experience.

Symbolic Representations of African Cultural Values

As previously mentioned, African cultural values are intertwined, interdependent, and form a whole. African cultural values are symbolically and visibly represented in, and distinguishable features of, African art forms, interactions, and proverbs (Asante & Asante, 1985; Moore 1996). These representations, features, and forms (artifacts) are discussed in this section as a basis for understanding how African cultural values may be visibly expressed in the material and social worlds. Dzobo (1992) wrote,

All over Africa, visual images and ordinary objects are used *symbolically* to communicate knowledge, feelings and values. As symbols play such an important role in the African conception of reality, a sound understanding of African patterns of thought and feeling requires an appreciation of the nature and function of symbolism as a medium of communication in African culture. (p. 89)

However, Nobles (1978) stated that “the African roots of Black culture are not, as many believe, the retention of African artifacts, but the retention of an African attitude based upon a belief system that everything in the universe to be endowed with Supreme force” (p. 684). As such, I invite the reader to consider my discussion of the symbols as an illustrative reflection of African cultural values and beliefs in their elemental forms. Consistent with Nobles’ (1978) statement, I do not intend my discussion to be reductionist or essentialist, and I ask the reader’s patience and openness as this matter is furthered herein.

A discussion of the symbolic representations of African cultural values is relevant because they may be pedagogical expressions of the potential participants in this study. This discussion is also relevant as the African way of knowing, or epistemology, arises and results from an interaction with the symbolic representation, the affective response to and with the symbolic representation, and the meaning and understanding synthesized and derived from the interaction (Dixon, 1976). This discussion is based upon Bangura’s (2001) mention of an analogical symbols theory which states “that African symbolism was based on finding the similarities between things and representing those things incomprehensible, abstraction, by that which is comprehensible” (p. 117).

I, at times, reflect, offer, and write on my own emotions and sensations in this writing as this is consistent with an African way of knowing and affective-symbolic cognition (Dixon, 1976; Moore, 1996). Such reflection is also consistent with the participatory, call, and response style of communication that exists within African culture (Asante & Asante, 1985). In the paragraphs that follow, I discuss three symbolic representations (i.e., a unity sculpture, Kente cloth, and proverbs), their

relationship to the traditional African cultural values that are described above, and my affective response to each representation.

Unity Sculpture

A West African (Ghanaian) unity sculpture is depicted herein as a symbol which represents a variety of the above discussed African cultural values (see Figure 1). This unity sculpture is not attributed to a particular artist but emerges from the Ghanaian culture, and thus no individual artist is recognized. The sculpture is carved from a single piece of wood and consists of seven, distinct and interdependent figures that form a unified circle or community. Each figure faces inwards and upwards towards each other and the center of their circle. The arms of each figure are open and expansive as they reach both outward and downward. Each of the figures has only one leg, and the arms and foot of each joins together to form an oval hole.



Figure 1. West African (Ghanaian) unity sculpture.

The opening or hole is located where the torso or trunk of a body could exist. The arms of each figure simultaneously rest upon, and provide support to, the shoulder and arms of the immediately adjacent figure; this support empowers each figure to stand on one foot. The foot of each figure points upward and outward as if the figure is both walking out of, and coming into, the circle from a particular direction. The facial expression of each figure is similar, and the position of each figure's head is offset so that the head and face of the figure looks between the heads of the two opposite facing figures.

Generally speaking, the sculpture symbolizes or communicates a whole whose sum or collective, in this case, is greater than the sum of the parts and of the individual figures should they be separated. Of particular note, the position of the heads, eyes, and mouths of the various figures are such that each figure in this circle simultaneously faces the others, can appreciate and add to the viewpoints of the others, and needs the others to see and speak to the respective blind spots. Lastly, although each figure is separate, its movement similarly affects the movements of the other six members in direct and equal proportions. As one unity figure rises, the other unity figures must also concurrently rise. However, the lateral movement of each figure is very much prescribed, restricted, or limited by the necessary presence and required support, both to and from, the other figures. It would take considerable and concerted agreement for this unity or circle to move in a particular direction in light of the differing vectors of their respective feet. Any movement beyond the required prescriptions, restrictions, and limitations, as well as beyond that of a concerted and collective effort, will result in the fracture and breaking of both the individual figures and the community, as both the individual, and the collective, cannot stand alone or

apart from the other. From my perspective, the unity sculpture visibly represents the following African cultural values and sensibilities: (a) interdependence and reciprocity, (b) interpersonal harmony and respect, (c) honor and mutual social obligations, (d) brotherhood, (e) spirituality, and (f) sense of rhythm.

Unity sculpture as symbolic of interdependence, reciprocity, honor, and mutual social obligations. The interdependent nature expressed within the unity sculpture depicts the African cultural value and sensibility of communalism. Each of the sculpture's separate figures is intertwined and interdependent. Each figure requires a concurrent contribution of support, both to and from, the whole in order to stand. The sculpture communicates that, consistent with African sensibilities, the fate of the individual is tied to that of the collective whole and that an individual cannot stand above or apart from the community. The tranquil, facial expression of each figure illustrates and suggests that an individual who honors and purposes communal interdependence enjoys the mutual safety, satisfaction, support, and well-being which are valued within African society and which are described by Asante (1987), Dixon (1976), and Mbiti (1969).

Unity sculpture as symbolic of brotherhood, interpersonal harmony, and respect. The physical dimensions of each figure (inseparable and carved from single piece of wood) imply a commonality and sameness of origin that are consistent with the interpersonal harmony that is valued within African culture (Gyekye, 1996). This sameness implies a sense of brotherhood and extended family. Mbiti (1969) best reflects the idea of brotherhood that is suggested by this particular unity sculpture when he stated:

The kinship system is like a vast network stretching laterally (horizontally) in every direction, to embrace everybody in any given local group. This means that each individual is a brother or sister, father or mother, grandmother or grandfather, or cousin, or brother-in-law, uncle or aunt, or something else, to everybody else. This means that everybody is related to everybody else, and there are many kinship terms to express the precise kind of relationship pertaining between two individuals. (p. 104)

The sculpture's circularity, openness, and extension are reflective of the African cultural values of harmony and hospitality in that the figures are welcoming, accommodating, and supporting of each other. Likewise, the upward gaze and the outward stretch of each figure's face and arms imply welcome, embrace, and hopefulness.

Unity sculpture as symbolic of spirituality. The collective in the unity sculpture is leaning backwards and upwards. The gaze of each figure appears to look both forward and upward at the same time. Taken together, this upward leaning and gaze suggests that the figures are simultaneously beholding, revering, or respecting something that is both greater than, yet uniquely and commonly inherent in, each other. The synchronicity of the postures and gazes of each figure suggests that the sculptor who carved this unity sculpture may have had in mind the African cultural value of spirituality.

Consistent with African holism and spirituality, the intertwined and curvilinear nature of the separate figures herein suggests the interlaced reality and interconnection of all peoples and systems. The curvilinear form also suggests spiritual power and alludes to the African creed of "Let the circle be unbroken" (Asante & Asante, 1985, p. 75). That the unity sculpture is carved from one piece of wood reflects the African value of spirituality and the unity of all things. Spiritual holism is clearly implied as the unity depicted by this natural wooden object is isomorphic and inherently stands in

as a symbolic representation of the African worldview which stresses the unity of spiritual and natural elements and which is described by Montgomery et al. (1990).

Unity sculpture as symbolic of rhythm. The regular, repetitive dimensions of the figures in the unity sculptures, in terms of equal heights, common facial expressions, similar widths and open postures, suggest the African culture value the sensibility of rhythm. The even distribution of these proportions and the equal distance between the respective figures also suggests that repetitive spatial distance, gaps, or pauses are necessary to the African sense of harmony, continuity, and rhythm (Asante & Asante, 1985). An extended sense of self or being is implied by this sculpture as portions of each individual figure appear to flow into the others. This flow suggests the interdependent, participatory, and communal nature of the African sense of being. The supports that each figure provides, and simultaneously derives, suggest that mutuality and immediacy of presence are necessary foundations of African communal systems.

Personal response to the unity sculpture. Consistent with call and response in African culture, I offer my affective response to the unity sculpture. The unity sculpture presented earlier is the call in the call and response communication pattern. And I now present my affective understanding as the response to this call.

I feel calm and settled as I view and interact with the depicted unity sculpture. My eyes are naturally drawn to the circular, open, and downward extended arms of the figures; my eyes naturally trace the curved and intertwined support that the figures offer each other. Upon touch, I further experience the communal and interdependent nature posited by the African worldview. As I lift only one of the sculpture's figures, I find that, as I lift the one, I also lift each of the other figures and the whole sculpture as

well. This corporate lifting occurs even though I have no direct interaction with the untouched figures. I also find that, as I lower the one, I also lower the whole without my direct intervention upon any of the other untouched figures or the sculpture in its entirety.

This experience of my eyes, hands, and emotions illuminates Mbiti's (1969) words that "Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say: 'I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am'" (p. 108). This awareness stimulates personal reflection upon my communal interconnectedness, and I feel an appreciation for the reciprocal, relational supports that exists within my/our lives.

I also find myself wondering about the artist who carved this sculpture. I appreciate the artist's care, patience, and skill. I imagine that my interaction with this work results in a conversation between the artist and myself. I believe that our conversation is communal and spiritual in that, as I am impacted by this work, the artist similarly and simultaneously enjoys my felt appreciation and observations. I believe this is true, regardless of whether the artist is living or dead and despite the fact that we have never physically met. Our imagined conversation is real to me and reflective of my understanding of the African cultural values on the unity of all things and extended self (Mbiti, 1969) and Dixon's (1976) emphasis on affective-symbolic cognition. I continue this emphasis on affective symbolism and cognition in the following discussion of Kente cloth.

Ghanaian Kente Cloth

A West African (Ghanaian) Kente cloth is depicted herein as a symbol which represents a variety of the above discussed African cultural values (see Figure 2). There are five distinct or individual patterns and four colors (i.e., green, black, yellow, and white) displayed within this specific cloth, and the distinct individual patterns are interwoven and united to form a whole. The whole or united patterns form a cloth of great tensile strength and incredible beauty. The unified patterns, like the unity sculpture, form an imaginative whole whose sum or collective is either greater, or something other, than the sum of the individual patterns or parts. Each unique pattern compliments and adds to the aesthetic of the other four patterns, and each pattern's aesthetic and distinctness is enhanced by its proximity to and with the other, adjacent four patterns.



Figure 2. West African (Ghanaian) Kente cloth.

When viewed in its entirety, the cloth and the patterns suggest unity and strength through uniqueness, interdependence, and complementariness. The depicted Kente cloth is not attributed to a particular weaver but emerges from the Ghanaian culture, and thus no individual weaver is recognized. From my perspective, this Kente cloth most readily and visibly represents the following African cultural values and sensibilities: (a) interdependence and reciprocity, (b) spirituality, and (c) diunital logic.

Kente cloth origin story. Kente cloth is not solely considered as a beautiful fashion item, though it may be worn at African celebrations and is reported to have been first worn by African royalty (Musgrove, 2001). Rather, Kente cloths are representations of unique, Ghanaian historical events and symbolic expressions of African cultural values. While the history or story represented by this particular cloth is not known, considerable meaning, in general, is found in the origin story of Kente cloth. According to a 17th century Ghanaian legend, a pair of brothers, Nana Koragu and Nana Ameyaw, discovered Ananse the spider making a web on a hunting trip in the forest (Musgrove, 2001). Marveled by the spider's graceful weaving dance, the brothers are inspired—upon return to their village—to create, in parallel fashion a cloth that reflects the natural beauty, balance, harmony, intricacy, and symmetry of the spider's web. This story reflects the African cultural sensibility of harmony with nature. I find it noteworthy that my overly simplistic retelling of the Ananse, Kente cloth, origin story herein affects in me an appreciation of the natural environment and a willingness to humbly learn from and exist within its confines.

Symbolic meaning of the Kente cloth colors. The colors of Kente cloth are symbolic (Musgrove, 2001), and green, black, yellow, and white fabrics are featured in the depicted cloth. Green is symbolic of growth, renewal, vitality, and fertility.

Black is symbolic of spiritual maturity and connection with the ancestors. Yellow is symbolic of sanctity, high social standing, wealth, spirituality, vitality, and fertility. White is symbolic of contact with ancestral spirits and deities, and when used in combination with black, green, or yellow (all of which are present in the case of the depicted Kente cloth in Figure 2), white symbolizes balance, spirituality, and vitality. The cloth's colors are reflective of spirituality and an extended self that is capable of connection, continuity, and harmony with the Divine and ancestors.

Symbolic representations within the Kente cloth patterns. The zigzag patterns of the green, black, and yellow fabrics flow into each other and are suggestive of interdependence and reciprocity. The parallel patterns of the green, yellow, and black stripes flow alongside each other and are suggestive of differentiation within a collective unity. The colored patterns highlight, accent, and complement each other, and unity and harmony are implied by the meeting of various patterns at the center of a cloth strip. No colored patterns or geometric formation appears dominant with respect to the others, and due to the alternating and juxtaposed presentation of the patterns, a sense of balance, rhythm, and harmony pervades the whole cloth. The small white stripe which delineates and joins the separate patterns is a delicate reminder of the African spiritual and cultural imperative of appreciating, acknowledging, and maintaining communal balance and life.

Personal response to the Kente cloth. The Kente cloth creates and arouses in me a variety of sensations, emotions, and thoughts. I offer my response in the tradition of call and response that is valued within African culture. The depicted cloth evokes a sense of calmness in me, and my eyes follow the distinctive patterns of the cloth with ease. The individual threads of the cloth are so tightly woven that light does not easily

pass through the cloth. I notice that that the cloth is smooth, as I run my fingers over the various patterns and over the boundaries between the patterns. This sensation of smoothness causes me to reflect on and connote the aspect of harmony that is valued within African cultures. As I attempt to stretch the cloth, I am impressed by its unyielding tensile strength. This strength is suggestive of the inherent inseparability of the individual and community and reflects the interdependent and communal nature of the societal bonds existing in traditional African cultures (Mbiti, 1969).

The united, opposite patterns depicted in this cloth suggests the diunital logic that is a prominent feature and value of African culture. For example, while my eyes are drawn to both of the yellow and green zigzagged patterns in one of the cloth panels, I also simultaneously view the black center that is created between these patterns. The union of the zigzagged patterns is suggestive of Dixon's (1976) thought that a thing can be itself and its opposite at the same time. Taken together, these opposite patterns yield or cause my awareness of the unifying spaces between them.

A sense of the both/and inclusivity that is consistent with African diunital logic is suggested by the corresponding presence of the opposing yet united patterns in all of the varying panels of this cloth. This inclusivity provides potential insight into the African emphasis on holism and complementariness because one pattern cannot exist without the other. Further, the patterns of this cloth suggest that each pattern and panel only holds significance and meaning within the context of its opposite and within the larger context of the entire cloth itself.

Given the tautness and density of this cloth, I imagine the weaver took great care to infuse within it the African cultural sensibilities concerning the interconnected and interdependent nature of all things. It is as if the weaver and I are in a

conversation with each other. Though we never have met, the weaver and I communicate with each other through the African symbolic system woven into the cloth as if a call and response is occurring (Asante & Asante, 1985). The above statements reflect my understanding of the affective symbolic cognition and the personal involvement and experiencing that are central to the epistemology espoused by Dixon (1976).

Description of African Proverbs

Proverbs are also symbolic representations within traditional African culture (Moore, 1996) and reflective of the African storytelling emphasis and orality (Jones & Campbell, 2011). Many scholars agree that proverbs are a prominent feature within traditional African culture (Asante & Asante, 1985; Gyekye, 1996; Yankah, 1989). Proverbs are concise or short sayings which reflect the collective wisdom of a culture's lived experience over time (Yankah, 1989). Balogun (2006) wrote, "For African proverbs are seen as a cultural heritage, which is held in high regard since it is generally believed that philosophy, values system wisdom and knowledge of the society are embedded in them" (p. 97). Asante (1987) also indicated that proverbs are symbolical representations of the communal and historical experiences of Africans, ensure cultural survival, and are central to the African pursuit and maintenance of harmony, justice, and truth. Similarly, Gyekye (1996) stated proverbs are central to the transmission of cultural values and create a sense of cultural continuity across generations. Proverbs often serve societal functions (i.e., ritual, entertainment, and education), and the use of proverbs may be highly contextualized (Boateng, 1985). Yankah's (1989) compared African proverbs to food by stating,

Among the Somali it is said that proverbs “put spice into speech.” The Igbo say, “The proverb is the broth of speech,” broth referring to the nicely flavored water in which meat has been broiled. They also add that, “the proverb is the palm oil with which words are eaten,” implying that words without the ornament of proverbs are hard to swallow. (p. 328)

Clearly, Africans view proverbs as a source of social nurturance, useful for difficult situations, and best when used with a correspondingly high regard for relationships and contexts. African proverbs are also useful to stimulate the critical thinking abilities and social development of children (Asimeng-Boahene, 1999).

Generally speaking, proverbs reflect African cultural values and sensibilities, and there exists a great multitude of proverbs. In the following paragraphs, I present a very brief sample of African proverbs that reflect the African cultural values of (a) interdependence and reciprocity, (b) brotherhood, and (c) spirituality. The proverbs are not herein identified with a particular country, tribe, or societal context. I ask the reader to reflect on the previously discussed unity sculpture (see Figure 1) and Kente cloth (see Figure 2) while reading the following section on proverbs as there is a great deal of similarity and overlap between these discussions. Such similarity and overlap is reflective of holism and the recursive, intertwined nature within the African axiological perspective.

Interdependence and reciprocity. The following proverbs symbolically represent the cultural values of interdependence and reciprocity esteemed within traditional African cultures.

- “A man must depend for his well-being on his fellow man” (Gyekye, 1996, p. 45).
- “A single tree cannot withstand a storm” (Yankah, 1989, p. 326).

- “The left arm washes the right arm and the right arm washes the left arm” (Gyekye, 1996, p. 37).
- “One head does not exchange ideas” (Asimeng-Boahene, 1999, p. 63).
- “If you want to go fast go alone, if you want to go far go with others” (Asimeng-Boahene, 1999, p. 63).
- “Go the way that many people go; if you go alone, you will have reason to lament” (Miahouakana Matonde, 2012, p. 39).
- “The tortoise says, ‘The hand goes and a hand comes’” (Gyekye, 1996, p. 64).
- “If someone looks after you to grow your teeth, you must look after him [or her] to lose his [or her] teeth” (Gyekye, 1996, p. 89).

Each proverb stresses the mutual dependence and fulfillment of an individual within a communal context. Taken together, these proverbs connote strength in numbers, unity in the face of adversity, and reciprocal concern. The collective message of these proverbs implies both the depth of an individual’s need for community and an individual’s concern for others in that context. The proverbs also indicate it is impossible for an individual to exist and thrive outside of the communal context. This impossibility directs individuals to strive for harmony and reciprocity, and simultaneously and implicitly warns the individual and community of the dangers that exist in forgoing unity and cooperation.

The last proverb is unique in that it reflects the African sensibility that children are to care for their parents just as their parents had cared for them when they were young. Thus, this proverb highlights the African emphasis on familial and intergenerational reciprocity. As previously mentioned, it is an African elder’s

responsibility to use proverbs to transmit cultural values and ensure cultural continuity (Asante & Asante, 1985). Here, the last proverb connotes that children are morally responsible to reciprocally provide for, fulfill, and support their parents.

Brotherhood. Familial sensibilities are also prominent features of the following proverbs. These proverbs demonstrate the African sensibilities of a high regard for brotherhood and the divine imperative of responsibility to others.

- “When a person descends from heaven, he [or she] descends into human society [or human habitation]” (Gyekye, 1996, p. 36).
- “Man’s brother is man” (Gyekye, 1996, p. 28).
- “A person is a person through persons” (Asimeng-Boahene, 1999, p. 59).
- “It is the human being who counts. Call on gold, gold does not respond. Call on clothes, clothes do not respond. It is the human being who counts” (Dzobo, 1992, pp. 89-100).
- “The poor kinsman does not lack a resting place” (Gyekye, 1996, p. 45).

These proverbs stress a high regard for human life and the imperative of human kindness, both of which are values featured in traditional African cultures. The African perspective, that all are fundamentally interconnected, is strongly implied by these proverbs. A sense of the sacredness of human life is declared by the first proverb which emphasizes the divine and common origin of all human beings. The third proverb also implicitly stresses the inability and incapacity of inanimate objects to support or impact human well-being.

As a whole, these maxims imply that high regard, a welcoming attitude, and accommodating behavior are to be extended to and among all people. In the absence

of these, the final proverb warns that the Divine withholds assistance or salvation, in a direct and reciprocal manner, from the individual or community who severs the bond of brotherhood. Conversely, the last proverb posits that an individual or community gains harmony with the Divine through a high regard and respect for others.

Spirituality. Proverbs provide insight into the prevalence of spiritual values within the African worldview and culture. The pervasiveness of the Divine and spirituality is highlighted within the following proverbs.

- “No one shows the Supreme Being to a child” (Gyekye, 1996, p. 7).
- “As you speak to the wind, you speak to God” (Yankah, 1989, p. 326).
- “When a person dies, he is not [really dead]” (Gyekye, 1996, p. 13).
- “I am doing the *good* [thing] that my way to the world of the spirits may not be blocked” (Gyekye, 1996, p. 19).

The African value and perspective of the extended sense of self is prominently featured in these proverbs. These proverbs state that an individual is connected to the Divine, to spirits, to the ancestors, and to nature. The first proverb connotes the Africans’ belief that spirituality is an inherent and expected reality in life. The first two proverbs describe that the Divine reveals and is readily accessible. The third proverb illuminates the ancestral orientation of Africans and the belief that family members who are deceased continue on as the living dead (Mbiti, 1969).

The final proverb emphasizes good behavior as the foundation of successful relationships, and the focus on good human behaviors and interactions to gain access to the spirit world is the injunction of the last proverb. The proverb yields insight into the belief that well-being, eventually in and from the spiritual world, is the highest

African reality and ethic. From my vantage point, this ethic is fundamentally dependent upon and intertwined with the requirements of reciprocal obligation, mutual concern, and participation in communal or familial contexts.

Personal response to African proverbs. Proverbs, in and of themselves, invoke a mental image within the minds of the listeners (Dzobo, 1992). For example, a depiction similar to the unity sculpture (see Figure 1) arises in my mind as I read/hear “the left arm washes the right arm and the right arm washes the left arm” (Gyekye, 1996, p. 37). Or, as in the case of the above maxim which stresses the safety of a collection of unified trees, the proverbial usage of a concrete and natural reality abstractly connotes the strength derived from interdependent people. My understanding is arrived at by accessing prior experiences and observations of both trees and people. I cannot be passive as I understand the meaning of these proverbs (Moore, 1996), and each proverb requires that I draw and reflect upon my experiences with others and in isolation. Each proverb also requires that I access, and to some degree re-experience, the prior emotions, feelings, sensations, and outcomes that arose during my interactions with others and in solitude. The brilliance of these particular proverbs lies in their ability to reinforce or teach anew the necessity of individual safety through communal interdependence. The above mentioned proverbs create an internal sense of agreement and harmony through their evocative appeal to my sensibilities, past experiencing, and heritage.

These proverbs require my access to prior experience in response to the call heard and inherent within these proverbs or “word pictures” (Dzobo, 1992, p. 89). I invite the reader to recall, revisit, and consider what, if any, picture or mental representation emerged or emerges in his or her mind upon reflection of the proverb

that began this chapter. Your prior or current consideration may evoke a sense or scenes of familiarity as the mental image emerges. Though our images may vary, I ask for your thoughtful and honest consideration on how your mental image developed. I believe your mental representation is most certainly derived from your access of prior experiences and frames of reference and is accompanied by some sort of affective awareness. The synthesis or union of your mental image and corresponding affect results in the meaning and understanding that you ascribe to, and derive from, the proverb. I am hopeful that this short discussion and process demonstrates how the African participatory system of knowing is based upon both affective symbolic imagery (Dixon, 1976; Moore, 1996) and call and response sensibility (Asante & Asante, 1985). I hope this discussion will serve as the basis for our mutual understanding and further conversations.

Call and Response Communication

Call and response is a participatory form of communal, reciprocal, and rhythmic communication style that is rooted in traditional African culture and is also a prominent feature of African American culture and communication (Asante & Asante, 1985; Myers, 1987). Foster (2002) defined call and response as

a type of interaction between speaker and listener(s) in which the statements (“calls”) are emphasized by expressions (“responses”) from the listener(s), in which responses can be solicited or spontaneous, and in which either the calls or responses can be expressed linguistically, musically, verbally, nonverbally, or through dance. (p. 1)

Foster’s (2002) definition implies a mutual, democratic, fluid, and reciprocal relationship between the speaker and the audience. Such relationship is spontaneous, open, and reflective of the African cultural sensibilities and orientation towards community, reciprocity, and interdependence (Asante & Asante, 1985). Further,

Boone (2003) indicated that call and response communication provides emotional connections and affirmations between the speaker and listeners and involves both verbal and non-verbal behavior. She wrote,

The defining criterion, of course, in call–response is the active participation of the audience members. This particular speech pattern not only invites but expects expressiveness and emotional reaction from the audience. Regardless of the phrasing or the verbal and nonverbal behaviors, it is as evident in both secular and nonsecular call–response sequences that the audience response serves to let the speaker know that the audience is following him or her. Furthermore, call–response establishes a bond between the interactants, thus serving to establish community. (p. 214)

The emotional, responsive, and participatory nature of call and response communication is also similar to Dixon’s (1976) description of African epistemology or knowing through symbolism and affective response. Boone’s (2003) emphasis on the expectation of audience interaction and responsiveness is also consistent with the mutual and cooperative value preferences inherent in the African axiological and

Consistent with the narrative in this chapter, I have developed this work to align with Dixon’s (1976) emphasis on affective symbolic cognition and epistemology and Moore’s (1996) emphasis on symbolic imagery. I intended this work to be a symbolic representation of the African cultural values discussed above and presented this discussion to the community for call and response. To accomplish such, I asked a small group of African students to review my descriptions of African cultural values. These individuals were students who attend a local institution where I am a professor. At the time of this work I had no personal or professional interactions or relationship with these students. I sought their voluntary participation with the assistance of the institution’s admission and student life departments. The departments provided me with the e-mail addresses of prospective participants. I contacted the students via e-

mail, informed them of my research effort, and requested their assistance on a portion of my literature review. Three students responded to my invitation. I spoke with each student independently and discussed the content of this chapter to gain their feedback. Their feedback was invaluable and, generally speaking, substantiated the literature review regarding African culture values and worldview.

I met with each student for two hours over a meal. I began our conversations by asking them to describe their reactions to the pages they read. I listened to their statements and replies as if they were direct responses to the call of my work. I did not record the dialogue or collect data; I did enter my felt or affective reactions and understanding into my researcher journal. Their responses and feedback served as a communal response, became their call which elicited my responses of refinement of the cultural values, and resulted in our collective description of African cultural values as discussed above.

This interaction foreshadowed the process I intended to use with participants during the data collection phase. Our (i.e., the African students and myself) reflection of African cultural values was (a) grounded in the experiences of the community (Reviere, 2001; Tillman, 2002); (b) allowed participants to define their own reality and experiences (Asante, 1987); and (c) reflected the interdependent, reciprocal, and communal nature of the African worldview and peoples (Mbiti, 1969). Finally, this process and interaction was my response to the call of the African proverb which opened Chapter II: “A single tree cannot withstand a storm” (Yankah, 1989, p. 326).

African American Expressions of Traditional African Cultural Values

I do not consider oppression or racism as central foci of this work; though these are certainly real, tragic, and worthy of continued exploration. I do not intend to be dismissive of the historical exploitation of African Americans or of the contemporary, ongoing realities resulting from a cultural sense of dislocation (Asante & Asante, 1985). Rather, my perspective reflects the belief that the many, varied, and historical indignities of Africans in the North American context did not eradicate or obliterate African cultural values. I agree with Richards' (1985) analysis that faced with the threats of cultural annihilation, subjugation, invalidation, and oppression, African Americans experienced a spiritual miracle and continual rebirth in the varied re-enactments of the African cultural values. These re-enactments are essentially African in nature and continuances of African cultural values, ways of being, ways of knowing, communication styles, symbolic forms, and rituals.

Richard's (1985), "Essay on the Implications of African American Spirituality," analysis is an effective lens through which one can gain insight and clarity into the presence of traditional African cultural values in contemporary African American culture. Her words and descriptions focus on the enduring presence and reinvented expressions of African cultural values (i.e., spirituality, the synthesis of affect, and cognition, rhythm, harmony, and the centrality of communal life) by African Americans within the context of the North American diaspora. Nobles (1978) advanced a similar analysis when he stated "that Black culture in the United States is the result of a special admixture of a continued African world-view operating with another cultural milieu" (p. 683). I resonate with, and am heartened by, the harmony

of their descriptions and emphasis on the resilient nature and corresponding presence of African cultural values in the varied cultural expressions of the African American experience. These expressions include the many forms, expressions, and rituals which exist within African American churches, community, music, and dance (Asante & Asante, 1985).

As such, I submit for the reader's consideration Richards' (1985) and Nobles' (1978) perspectives concerning the resilient, enduring, and inviolable nature of African cultural values within contemporary African American culture, aesthetics, and symbolic expressions. To illustrate the corresponding nature of their perspectives, I present a brief synopsis and discussion of Toni Morrison's (1987) novel, *Beloved*. The novel reflects the indestructible nature of African cultural values within an oppressive, North American construct. From my perspective, the novel and its Clearing and Exorcism scenes are symbolic and evidence that traditional African cultural values, sensibilities, and forms are foundational to and inherently embedded within contemporary African American culture. These values, forms, and sensibilities are also inherent and foundational in other contemporary African American forms and expression such as family reunions and church services (Asante & Asante, 1985; Boyd-Franklin, 2010).

Toni Morrison's (1987) novel, *Beloved*, is situated after the end of the Civil War and is primarily situated in both rural Ohio, near Cincinnati, and on the—ironically named—Sweet Home plantation which is located in Kentucky. The novel is fraught with considerable tension and pain. Sethe, a slave woman, manages to escape the Sweet Home plantation and settles in Ohio with her husband's mother (Baby Suggs) and her children (Howard, Buglar, an unnamed child, and Denver). Halle, her

husband, did not manage to escape; rather, he appears to have been driven insane by his wife's (Sethe) rape and humiliation by the School Teacher's nephews.

In love, fear, and protection, Sethe attempts to kill her children when she sees her former slave master School Teacher, arriving at her rural Ohio home, seeking to reclaim his property—she and her children. She is able to kill one child, whom Morrison (1987) does not name, by slitting her throat. Upon witnessing such, the shocked School Teacher returns to Kentucky without his chattel/property. The bereaved Sethe, due to a lack of resources, sells her body in exchange to have the seven letter word “Beloved” inscribed on the tombstone of her dead child.

Beloved, or the spiritual infant manifestation, returns to the rural Cincinnati home. But with the arrival and flight of Paul D, a slave Sethe formerly knew in Kentucky, the baby disappears. Eighteen years later, Beloved (or her spiritual manifestation) reappears as a grown woman, befriends her sister (Denver), seeks to be nurtured and mothered by Sethe, seduces Paul D, and becomes pregnant with his child. Isolated from the nearby, wary, and judgmental African American community, Beloved's presence, pregnancy, and growing demands threaten Sethe's life, drive Paul D away, frustrate Denver, and foreshadow a heretofore, unseen, unholy event—a ghost giving birth to a human/ghost. In essence, it appears that chaos, unrest, disharmony, and discontinuity exist and promise to ensue if Beloved's baby is born.

Though fictional, the novel is based upon the actual story of an African-American slave, Margaret Garner (Mobley, 1990). Mobley (1990) reported, “When she realizes she is about to be recaptured in accordance with the Fugitive Slave Law, she kills her child rather than allow it to return to a ‘future of servitude’” (p. 193).

Margaret killed her 2-year-old daughter rather than allow her to be captured and repatriated to a life of slavery in Kentucky.

The brilliance of the novel lies in Morrison's appropriation of this actual account to "re-memory" (Morrison, 1987) how enslaved Africans in the United States survived the Maafa, terrible misfortune or holocaust (Ani, 1998). This survival was fostered by African American slaves' reliance upon, and reappropriation of, traditional African cultural value and expressions. These values and expressions never left their spirits though their bodies had been physically and forcibly removed from the African continent. African cultural values, and African American expressions of such values, are prominent features and aspects of the Clearing and Exorcism scenes of Morrison's (1987) *Beloved*. I discuss these two scenes to demonstrate the continuity of traditional African cultural values and expressions within this symbolic African American cultural exemplar.

African Cultural Values Reflected in the Clearing Scene

In *Beloved* (Morrison, 1987) Baby Suggs, a woman preacher, invites the gathered community into the Clearing to experience a freedom that is nearly impossible under the conditions of oppression. In a cleared area, amongst the safety afforded by a secluded forest of trees, Morrison's (1987) Baby Suggs invites the community to love their bodies, and she, in doing so, calls forth, affirms, and blesses their humanity.

In the Demme et al. (1998) movie, *Beloved*, Baby Suggs invites the children to let their mothers hear them laugh, and the children respond with a full-bodied, all-encompassing laughter. She invites the men to dance, and the men respond with a

powerful, foot stomping, arm swinging, and counterclockwise dance. She invites the women to weep and cry for both those living and deceased, and the women keenly, loudly wail and lament with all entirety of emotion, voice, and body. As the scene draws to a close, and with all of the various responses of dance, crying, and weeping simultaneously, interchangeably, and exhaustingly occurring around her, Baby Suggs atop her stone pedestal gazes into the distance both at, and beyond, the distant and watching Sethe. Though Demme et al. do not expressly state such, it seems that Baby Suggs, from an African perspective, is also welcoming the arrival of the Spirit and the ancestors and longs for Sethe's participation within the communal circle. Such arrival and visitation of the Spirit and ancestors brought relief and sustenance to those gathered.

Overall, I believe the Clearing scene reflects the enduring nature of African spirituality in African American slaves and the liberating, transcending ability, and impact of such spirituality. It is interesting to note that Morrison's (1987) commotional Clearing scene (a) occurs within a natural setting; (b) involves simultaneous, communal catharsis, and the experiencing of laughter (joy) and crying (sorrow); (c) uses call and response communication; (d) involves a rhythmic, counterclockwise, circular, and communal dance; and (e) ends with the Baby Suggs' concern for Sethe and her welcoming gaze.

Morrison's (1987) use of the natural setting of trees and the stone pedestal (Baby Suggs' pulpit) reflects the traditional African sensibility of harmony with nature. Likewise, her interchange and juxtaposition of the gathered community's emotional and physical expressions of joy and sorrow connotes the African value preferences of holism, affect, harmony, and union of opposites. Similarly, I believe

Morrison's (1987) use of call and response in the *Beloved* Clearing scene honors the interdependent, participatory, and symbiotic sensibilities inherent within African call and response communication.

The Demme et al. (1998) visual depiction of the rhythmic, unified, and communal dance is moving. The circular and counterclockwise movement of the dance alludes to the past/present time orientation and spirituality that Mbiti (1969) described as prominent features of the African worldview. Through her call and the community's response, Baby Suggs initiates a sense of spiritual harmony and human validation for those gathered. In my opinion, the anticipated arrival of the ancestors also reflects and suggests the African worldview of community, unbroken circle, and extended self which are discussed by Asante and Asante (1985), Gyekye (1996), and Mbiti, (1969). Those gathered and participating in the Clearing scene (Demme et al., 1998; Morrison, 1987), are depicted as human subjects rather than as useful objects. This emphasis is consistent with the traditional African cultural values of brotherhood and harmonious human relationships. Just as the absence of these values within the larger, oppressive, society serves as a back drop within the novel, it is the presence of these values which facilitates the novel's climatic resolution of its haunting ghost narrative.

African Cultural Values Reflected in the Exorcism Scene

“Who would have thought that a little old baby could harbor so much rage?” (Morrison, 1987, p. 5). These words foreshadow the intense rage, depletion, and bind that Sethe and others will experience when her grown and growing daughter, Beloved, returns. Both Morrison (1987) and Demme et al. (1998) illustrate that Beloved's

determination—to experience the life that was forfeited by her mother’s protective act—is costly. Beloved’s growth occurs at Sethe’s expense, causes Denver’s maternal isolation, and results in Paul D’s withdrawal. Beloved’s intrusive presence is a vexation to her family, and her growth is based upon the manipulation and usury of others. This vexation is especially true of her destructive and parasitic relationship with Sethe and her seductive and parasitic relationship with Paul D. Beloved’s vexation results in Sethe’s despondent fugue and in Paul D’s exile.

Denver’s courageous reascension and venture into community sets the stage for the novel’s exorcism scene. Through her alliances with the African American women, Denver receives food, aid, and work. It is the aid and support of the women, physical and otherwise, that leads to the decisive emotional and spiritual battle needed to exorcise the parasitic Beloved. In the Demme et al. (1998) depiction, Beloved disappears/vanishes during the commotion and upheaval that involves Sethe’s triggered memory and the concurrent presence of the gospel-singing, community women. From my perspective, it is important to note that Beloved is exorcised through human compassion, spiritual vitality, and empathetic community. The process of her timely departure and the redress of Sethe’s trauma are facilitated by Denver’s courage within the context of communal support. It is the felt presence, unity, and harmony of the community that allows Beloved’s spirit to depart to rest.

Denver’s courage to seek help outside of the Beloved, tyrannized home affects her reception by the larger community and the eventual return of Paul D. Consistent with the traditional African cultural imperative and emphasis on interconnectedness, the arrival and aid of the African American women is reflective of extended family and of the fulfillment of communal obligations to the individual. As such, it is clear

that communal effort, harmony, and spiritual intervention affect Beloved's disappearance and Sethe's reconnection to community. Sethe's reconnection, the community's assistance, and Beloved's departure are completely consistent with the African emphases of community, interdependence, harmony, and extended self which are described by Asante and Asante (1985), Gyekye (1996), and Mbiti, (1969).

Through *Beloved*, Morrison (1987) depicts the advantages that may occur when traditional African cultural values are present and honored by contemporary African American community. I believe *Beloved* (Morrison, 1987) is a teaching that concurrently encourages and celebrates the presence and reliance upon traditional African cultural values as an antidote for traumatic isolation and oppression.

Personal Response to Morrison's *Beloved*

Taken together and consistent with African holism and the diunital emphasis of the African worldview (Dixon, 1976), *Beloved* (Morrison, 1987) becomes a teaching which simultaneously warns/laments the absence, and encourages/celebrates the presence, of traditional African cultural values within contemporary African American culture and community. This teaching elicits a resounding Yes! within me as I ponder its implications and revisit sad and joyous scenes in my life. My emotional responses fluctuate with Morrison's varying scenes which depict the presence or absence of African cultural values. My exuberant Yes! and emotions are my response to the call (lessons) inherent in *Beloved* (Morrison, 1987).

Morrison's (1987) *Beloved* connotes that cultural values are inherent within pedagogy. Further, her novel suggests that when such values are enacted or esteemed in an appropriate manner, liberation and actualization may occur. The novel also

suggests that bondage or fracturing may result when cultural values are neglected or devalued. I discuss the liberatory nature of an African-centered pedagogy after a brief discussion on the role of cultural values in pedagogy in the next section.

Pedagogy and Cultural Values

Pedagogy is synonymous with the teaching and transmission of cultural values (Hilliard, 2002; hooks, 1994). This is true as people are inherently teachers and learners by nature. Used sensitively and wisely the transmission of cultural values provides a society homeostasis, a sense of stability and order, and growth possibilities (Shujaa, 2003). Used insensitively and unwisely the transmission of cultural values within a society provokes chaos, instability and disorder, and decreasing possibilities. Such provocation occurs because the teaching and its embedded cultural values lack inclusivity and maintain societal order at the expense of those it indoctrinates, subjugates, and deems profanely other (Freire, 1970). This is especially true when the cultural values of the pedagogue remain undisclosed and are alien to those he or she teaches. The inculcation of alien cultural values creates within its recipients (learners) an existential dilemma or crisis (Nobles, 1978). This dilemma occurs as the newly received and teacher-centered, cultural values attempt to cover and eradicate the cultural values which naturally existed, and are embedded, within the learner.

From my perspective, this dilemma occurs far too often, and the inevitable transmission of cultural values often results in a non-benign and hegemonic education. Since it is impossible to divorce pedagogy from cultural values, there continually exists the very real possibility of a teacher delivering a malignant, dominant, and foreign education to students. As such, I believe it is the teacher's responsibility to surface his or her cultural values and to inform his or her students as to how those

values influence the instructor's pedagogy. This responsibility implies a teacher possesses and is continually developing (a) a growing assessment and awareness of his or her cultural values; (b) an introspective sense of how his or her cultural values inform his or her pedagogy; (c) insight into how his or her pedagogy impacts students; (d) a retrospective, affective, and cognitive ability to examine how his or her cultural values were honored or dismissed by previous educators; (e) the ability to transcend his or her cultural encapsulation (Wrenn, 1962); and (f) a willingness and ability to appreciate and actively learn from the cultural uniqueness of students. This responsibility is fundamental, fosters teacher humility, invites the students' worldviews and perspectives, and prevents the hegemonic educational interactions that were described by Hilliard (2002).

A teacher's position necessitates a posture of humility, inquiry, and informed consent as teachers are persons with power, prestige, and positions of implied trust (Z. Carr, personal communication, August 28, 2012; hooks, 1994). In the absence of these three postures and attributes, I believe that a teacher (male or female) indoctrinates and impregnates students (either subtly or forcibly but definitely without consent) with his or her cultural values. The resulting pedagogy and classroom experience binds students into a form of tertiary self-oppression (Hanna, Talley, & Guindon, 2000), and the resulting learning conceptions and deliveries to and from students are alien, foreign, dislocated, and demonic (Asante & Asante, 1985; Hall, 2010; Hilliard, 2002).

I intentionally emphasize the words alien, foreign, dislocated, and demonic to evoke the reader's memory of *Beloved's* presence, *Sethe's* agony, and *School Teacher's* cruel and self-serving objectivity (Morrison, 1987). *School Teacher*, in this light, is a symbolic allegory or metaphor reflective of what comes into existence when

a teacher imposes, through neglect or agency, cultural values upon students: a closed and oppressive educational environment of teacher self-propagation, isolative fear, and student alienation from self. In this educational environment the emphasis on teacher expertise results in arrogance, in the banking system of education described by Freire (1970), and in propagative knowledge that selfishly replicates in students the teacher's assumptive worldview and values. In essence, the students in such teaching environments may eventually experience a haunting analogous to the ghost in *Beloved* (Morrison, 1987). In this regard Morrison's (1987) ghost, as metaphor, reflects the valid and legitimate quest for the re-emergence, acknowledgment, and honoring of the students' natural worldviews and values.

Alternatively true and correspondingly hopeful, Morrison's (1987) School Teacher, as a symbolic metaphor in abstentia, suggests what can exist when a teacher is invitational, self-discloses his or her cultural values, and welcomes the cultural values and sensibilities of students: an educational environment of reciprocity, mutual liberation and collective advancement. In this educational environment the emphasis is on teacher humility, mutual discovery and co-created learning, teacher/student and student/student interdependence, and communal/individual liberation (hooks, 1994). In essence, this learning environment resembles or becomes the communal experience associated with the Clearing in *Beloved* (Morrison, 1987). In this regard Morrison's (1987) Clearing, as symbolism, reflects a learning place where the quest, affirmation, and legitimization of the students' natural beings, worldviews and perceptions are celebrated, honored, expected, and validated.

The process and fulfillment of this quest brings to reality that which Morrison's (1987) Baby Suggs (as pedagogue) longs for, creatively supports, and

convokes: a welcoming, encompassing, affirming, celebratory, harmonious, and liberatory spirit of communal interdependence, reciprocal existence, mutual support, and submitted, surrendered, shared learning. This synchronous congress of presence, process, and affect culminates in experience that is consistent with African life and holism (vitality) and approximates the best of an African-centered identity and pedagogy (Rueben Moore, personal communication, October 13, 2013).

African-Centered Identity and Pedagogy

African-centered lifestyle and identity are the focus of many scholars and writers (Carroll, 2008; Jones, 2002). In this section, I focus on the challenges and outcomes of having an African-centered identity in an American context. Additionally, I present a brief review of African pedagogy as this is a focus in the previous section. This discussion is relevant as the pedagogical expressions and experiences of potential participants in this study are believed to be derivatives of their cultural identity. I acknowledge the concepts and contributions of varied authors as such citation keeps with the African sensibility of giving honor and respect to elders and others. I invite the reader to consider reading the works mentioned herein for a more extensive and detailed understanding of African-centered identity and pedagogy.

African-Centered Identity

Many authors have discussed the challenge of maintaining an African-centered identity. For instance, Du Bois (1903) wrote about the African American dilemma of possessing two differing cultural worldviews in his work, *The Souls of Black Folk*. He stated,

After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world,—a world which yields him no true self-

consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (pp. 2-3)

Du Bois' (1903) statement described the dilemma of African Americans “double-consciousness” (p. 3). Such consciousness results from African American encounters with alien, Eurocentric, cultural lenses. In this specific observation, Du Bois indicated that such encounters often left African Americans with a lack of self-consciousness, distorted image, and internal disharmony. Du Bois' emphases of a “peculiar sensation” and “a world that looks on with amused contempt and pity” (p. 3) reflects the bind inherent in African American identity: one is irreconcilably both Negro (African) and American. Clearly, his work shows the existential and ontological quagmire often felt by African Americans (i.e., an internal cold war, stand-off of two opposing and exclusive worldviews) and the strengths needed to forge a viable identity.

Other authors agree with Dubois' (1903) depiction of the identity conundrums of African Americans. Woodson (1969), in his work entitled, *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, advanced that African Americans are forced to value and elevate their American identity and to devalue and eradicate their African identity. Still further, as his protagonist retreats to an underground existence and covert subterfuge, Ellison (1952) illustrated the difficulty African Americans have had in forming or maintaining a healthy identity within the unrelenting, oppressive, American context. These authors provide insight into the identity struggles of African Americans and they militate

against the forces which pushed them to embrace a foreign and dislocating identity (Asante, 1987, 1988).

Nobles (1978) provided redress to the existential tensions and duality lamented by Du Bois (1903), Ellison (1952), and Woodson (1969). He stated “that Black culture in the United States is the result of a special admixture of a continued African world-view operating with another cultural milieu” (p. 683). From my perspective, Nobles’ (1978) reference to the continuance of an internal African worldview within the context of American life substantiates the lessons of *Beloved* (Morrison, 1987) discussed herein, alludes to the need for a cultural reclamation and recovery process for African Americans and agrees with and esteems the African-centered identity which is discussed by others such as Akbar (2002), Asante (1987, 1988), and Hilliard (2002).

Like Nobles (1978), Hilliard (2002) advocated African American focus on African cultural values and heritage as the most promising, productive, and responsible bulwark and remedy to present, prevalent provocations, and oppressive circumstances. Specifically he stated,

However, I want to be very clear, while oppression has been and still is a major problem, for us, opposition to oppression in no way constitutes the most important part of our concerns. Understanding our essence as a people and understanding our purposes, content, and methods of achieving excellence in higher education/socialization throughout the millennia must be the base from which we attack our current problems and determine our future course. (Hilliard, 2002, p. 47)

This shift in focus is the essence Baby Suggs’ activities and affirmations which were discussed in the above section regarding Morrison’s (1987) Clearing scene. The shift also points to the efficacy of African cultural values, the need to embrace such values, and the resultant impacts when such values are embraced: the physical, emotional,

psychological, and spiritual symbiotic reintegration of the individual and community (see Figure 3).

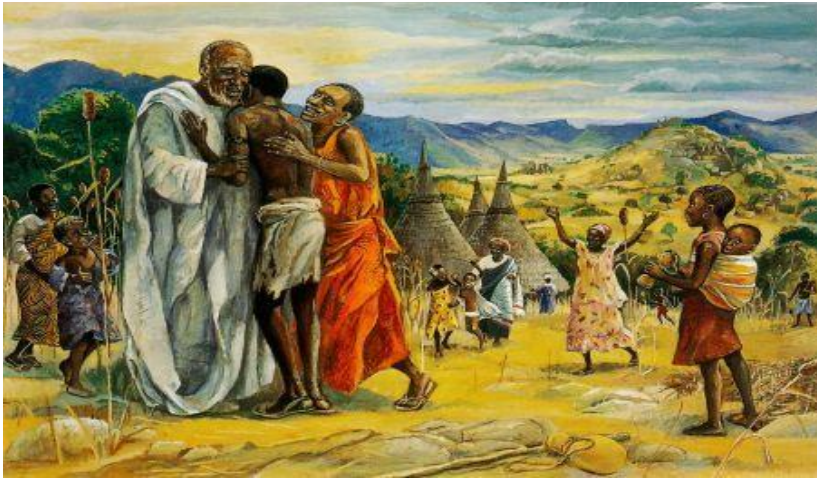


Figure 3. African version of the return of the prodigal son. African Depiction of the Prodigal Son (postcard), by J. Mafa, 2012 (http://www.mlive.com/living/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2009/01/calvin_college_exhibit_centers.html). Copyright “Life of Jesus Mafa© Editions de l’Emmanuel.” Reprinted with permission (see Appendix A).

From my perspective, the development of an African-centered identity is a journey, and the journey and its end are ever mutually, synonymously, and recursively occurring. This journey involves (a) a commitment to the collective advancement of Africa peoples (Asante, 1987, 1988; Hilliard, 2002); (b) a determination to view African history and culture as the starting point for the discussions, definitions, and solutions to the concerns of African people, including Africans in the Diaspora (Hilliard, 2002); (c) an ability to examine one’s action both introspectively and retrospectively to determine if such actions are consistent with and honoring of African people, worldview, and culture (Asante, 1987, 1988; Reviere, 2001); and (d) the ability to appreciate, respect, and learn alongside other worldviews and cultures, as

long as this process is consistent with African well-being and the collective advancement of all peoples, African and otherwise (Asante, 1987, 1988; Myers, 1987). Finally, given the many obstacles arrayed against it, the journey and maintenance of an African-centered identity requires psychological strength (White, 1970).

African-Centered Pedagogy

As previously mentioned, it is impossible for a teacher to divorce himself or herself from his or her cultural identity. Since the healthy praxis of education flows from a healthy cultural identity (hooks, 1994), a healthy African-centered teaching stance flows from a healthy African-centered identity. An African-centered teaching stance is both concurrent journey and destination and involves (a) a commitment to the educational and collective advancement of Africa peoples (Asante, 1987, 1988; Hilliard, 2002); (b) the determination to view African history and culture as the referent for the historical framework, definitions, accomplishments, and solutions to the concerns of African people, including Africans in the diaspora (Hilliard, 2002); (c) an ability to examine one's teaching and praxis (both introspectively and retrospectively) to determine if such are consistent with and honoring of African people, worldview, and culture (Asante, 1987, 1988; Reviere, 2001); and (d) the ability to appreciate, respect, and learn with other worldviews and cultures, as long as this is consistent with African well-being and the collective advancement of all peoples, African and otherwise (Asante, 1987, 1988; Banks, 1992; Myers, 1987). In coming full circle, the journey towards an African-centered pedagogy is communal, involves ontological harmony, values multiple perspectives, and esteems spirituality (Jones, 2002; Mbiti, 1969; Myers, 1987). As the purpose of this investigation was to

examine the specific experiences of African American, male, counselor educators, I focused on literature related to teaching within the CES field prior to a specific focus on African American, male, CES professors.

Counselor Education and Supervision Pedagogy

Within CES, the development of an agreed upon pedagogy for the training of counselors is a continual work in progress (Granello, 2000). Nelson and Neufeldt (1998) investigated and critiqued the pedagogy of counselor education and advanced the need for the CES field to articulate distinct pedagogical approaches. Their work also mandates that any CES pedagogical mold must address issues of instructor/student power dynamics, honor student experience, and foster student awareness and humanness and posited the benefits of a constructivist approach to counselor education. In this approach, “meaning is determined through a social context, rather than by a professor handing down ‘truth’ to his or her students” (Granello, 2000), and students are expected to be active learners.

Granello and Hazler (1998) developed a rationale for the sequencing of master’s level counseling courses based upon counselor education goals and adult learning developmental models (Knowles, Swanson, & Holton, 2011). In general, within the field of counselor education it is suggested that as trainees develop they gain confidence, increase in cognitive complexity, and acquire more complex skills. As such, teacher instruction, style, and support should vary along with the student’s development growth. The adult learning models, in general, (a) view and respect adults are self-directed learners, (b) view teachers as facilitators, (c) welcome the past learning and life experiences of each student, and (d) focus on problem solving, immediacy, and real-life applications (Granello & Hazler, 1998). Taken together,

these two models provide the foundation for the course sequencing and instructor style posited by the authors.

Granello (2000) focused on a contextual teaching and learning approach to counselor education. This approach emphasizes learning and knowledge construction that are associated with real life contexts, problems, and “situated learning which helps students bridge the practice-theory gap” (Granello, 2000, p. 273). Granello highlights the benefits of a contextual approach to train counselors through the use of roles plays, immersion in community settings, group and supervision work/assessment, and problem-based learning. Additionally, her work sheds light on the basic pedagogical assumptions of teaching constructivist and contextual teaching methods.

Generally speaking, the constructivist (Nelson & Neufeldt, 1998) and contextual (Granello, 2000) CES pedagogical approaches, with their emphases on instructor humility, the honoring of student experience, and focus on co-created discovery/learning, appear anecdotally consistent with an African-centered pedagogy. From my perspective, this is encouraging. However, these articles lack explicit reference to the underlying worldview assumptions or cultural values of these approaches. These articles and counselor education, in general, lack specific discussion on the teleological focus of advancing African American (Banks, 1992) causes or the causes of other diverse population’s causes. As such, I wonder about their actual correspondence and usefulness as descriptive analogs for an African-centered CES teaching approach.

As Wrenn (1962) highlighted, counselors can be culturally encapsulated. It is also possible for an instructor or a teaching approach to be culturally encapsulated.

Nelson and Neufeldt (1998) illuminate this truth by stating, “traditional pedagogical models are no longer adequate to accommodate the rapid growth and change in cultural systems in the United States” (p. 78). That said, the humility of the constructivist and contextual pedagogical approaches, in and of themselves, is welcome and consistent with African sensibilities.

The need for the openness of such approaches is resonated by Schiele (1994) when he stated, “Although there appears to be considerable diversity in the knowledge base of higher education in the United States, the philosophical assumptions [i.e., cosmology, epistemology, logic and values] of higher education are shaped primarily by one dominant worldview” (p. 150). His observation supports the basis of this work. It is my hope that this examination and the varied voices, reflections, and representations of African-centered, male, counselor educators lead to a discussion which further expands the philosophical foundations of CES pedagogy.

Invitation to African American Male Counselor Educators

An inherent challenge to the diversification of the philosophical assumptions of CES from an Afrocentric, male perspective lies in the relatively few numbers of African American men within the CES profession. Brooks and Steen (2010) wrote,

For nearly 30 years, scholars have debated the reason for the low number of Black male faculty members in counselor education and have offered several explanations. The most supported reason for the sparse numbers is the low graduation rates for African Americans in high school and, subsequently, college. (p. 38)

Further challenge lies in the conspicuous absence of current or past literature related or devoted to the specific pedagogical reflections and expressions of African-centered men within CES. Such absence is not to suggest that there is or has been no significant

presence of African American men within the CES field. As noted in Chapter I, where present, these men are and have been formidable educators and significant contributors to the CES profession. Rather, I am suggesting that there remains much room for a consistent and sustained focus on the significant contributions of African American men to the CES field. Among these contributions is the creation of a space which invites the stories and reflections of African American male CES professors on their experience of African-centered cultural values and sensibilities in their classroom presence, teaching methods, assignments, and pedagogy. More importantly, this study echoes, and is my response to the invitational and convocational call of Brooks and Steen in their article entitled “Brother Where Art Thou?”

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

I had a deep concern about presenting my understanding of an African-centered worldview. To be sure, a portion of my concern stemmed from this writing being my first real foray and involvement into the formal presentation of such. Another portion stemmed from my hope to avoid a presentation which fostered a dichotomous, hierarchical, and isolative attitude rather than an inclusive, egalitarian, and collective understanding of the uniqueness of African-centered worldview. I entered this discussion with gratitude towards the cited authors and a sense of responsibility and trepidation. I wanted to honor the cited authors and their works in this description of an African-centered worldview. This description served as the basis of this research effort, impacted my interactions with the participants, and influenced the telling of their collective story.

Just as Creswell (2007) wrote that “qualitative research is legitimate in its own right, and does not need to be compared to achieve respectability” (p. 16), it was my belief that an African-centered worldview and Afrocentric paradigm were likewise legitimate and needed no comparison to other worldviews. For me, to entertain the contrary belief of the necessity of a comparative legitimacy was nothing short of catastrophic. Such entertainment was unacceptable and disagreeable. My past

adherence to such entertainment and belief had resulted in personal abnegation, communal disdain, disharmony, dislocation, disorientation, disrespect, illegitimacy, incongruence, incontinence, inhospitableness, insecurity, isolation, and lifelessness. My adherence to such thought led to self-denigration, fear, irrationality, irresponsibility, insecurity, servility, and trifling behaviors. In contrast, my current adherence to the inherent worth and incomparable legitimacy of African-centered belief, identity, thought, worldview, and paradigm has resulted in greater senses of centeredness, grounding, location, and life fullness. My present conviction and growth in an African-centered identity has produced within me coherence and an awareness of self and others that is confident in our similarity, uniqueness, responsibilities, and spiritual possibilities.

Comparison of an African-Centered Worldview and Afrocentric Research Paradigm

Modupe (2003) indicated a distinction between an African-centered worldview and Afrocentricity. The former suggested adherence to the previously described African cultural values. Afrocentricity, on the other hand, does not claim to be “a worldview nor does it claim an African worldview as framework” (Modupe, 2003, p. 67). Rather, “in a global context Afrocentricity must be understood as a robust response to exclusion, western hegemony and anti-egalitarian structural, institutional and systemic practices” (Tillotson, 2001, p. 158). Thus in the absence of such robust response it remained possible for an individual to be African-centered in terms of worldview yet not be Afrocentric in terms of philosophical perspective (Tillotson, 2001). That said, I used both an African-centered worldview and an Afrocentric

paradigm as the basis of this research effort and referred to and used them interchangeably throughout this investigation.

Philosophical Assumptions of an African-Centered Worldview

In this section I briefly revisit and discuss the philosophical underpinnings and elements of an African worldview. Modupe (2003) wrote, “As a phenomenon achieved by a people over time, in response to nature and their physical environment, world view is for a people a way of making sense of the world based upon a people’s particular historical and cultural development” (p. 67). The following discussion describes the African worldview in terms of its ontology, axiology, epistemology, and teleology. I consider such discussion as foundational to this investigation and as central to any research effort on African-centered phenomena.

African-Centered Being

Ontologically and axiologically speaking, the African way of life is communal, spiritual, and holistic (Gyekye, 1996; Mbiti, 1969). In African cultures, an individual and society best function when interdependence, mutuality, cooperation, respect, and communal obligations are preeminent and take precedence over gross forms of individuality (Mbiti, 1969). Additionally, the African way of life and being emphasizes spirituality and advances the fundamental interconnectedness of all things, both spiritual and material (Myers, 1985, 1987). Such interconnectedness or holism is the basis for the African ways of thinking, logic, and wisdom (Dixon, 1976; Mbiti, 1969).

Communalism. In African philosophy, an individual is an extended self and communal being. Nobles (1980) indicated that the African concept of an extended self

means a person is continuously and simultaneously connected to nature, the ancestors, the community, and to those yet unborn. Further, Myers (1985) indicated that such interconnectedness is the basis of the African way of being. She wrote, “In other words, they believed, ‘I am because we are; we are, therefore, I am.’ Holonomy, the whole being somehow contained in each of its parts, may be a universal property and is characteristic here” (Myers, 1985, p. 35).

African people place high emphasis upon the cooperation and unity between male and female members of a society, and this emphasis reflects the African emphasis of harmony, communal order, and societal advancement (Hilliard, 2002). The ancestors, elders, and those yet unborn are part of the community, and children are highly esteemed (Gyekye, 1996; Mbiti, 1969). Lastly, mutual cooperation, interdependence, regard, respect, and communal identity are prominent features of African interpersonal relationships (Gyekye, 1996).

Spirituality. As mentioned in Chapter II, the African perspective assumes that humanity is essentially spiritual, everything is inter-connected, and everything is made up of the same invisible substance (Myers, 1987). “The African is at once seeing herself or himself as one with Infinite Consciousness and yet individually, a unique part of that consciousness manifesting” (Myers, 1987, p. 77). Generally speaking, African individuals and community emphasize the spiritual aspects of a matter more than the material ones, and spirituality is afforded highest value in African cultures (Gyekye, 1996; Mbiti, 1969). A belief in a supreme God or a Creator, lesser deities and the idea of the self as an extension of God, nature, and others, is pervasive and prevalent in African societies (Gyekye, 1996; Mbiti, 1969; Myers 1987).

Holism. African descended people are holistic and perceive in themselves and each other both spiritual and physical material aspects (Myers, 1985). As such, African people value harmony with nature and others (Gyekye, 1996; Mbiti, 1969). This emphasis yields insight into the African senses of an extended self (Asante, 1987; Gyekye, 1996; Mbiti, 1969), diunital logic (Dixon, 1976; Nichols, 1976), and the rhythm inherent in all spiritual, natural, and human relationships and phenomena (Akbar, 2002).

African-Centered Knowing

An African individual conceives or knows reality through affective-symbolic imagery and cognition (Dixon, 1976; Moore, 1996; Nichols, 1976). This conception and knowing require symbolic imagery (i.e., art forms, proverbs, or social interactions), involves affective response to symbolic imagery, and arises from the synthesis of the affective and cognitive responses to the symbolic image (Carroll, 2008). Moore (1996) described symbolic images as a representation of a phenomenon which has multiple meanings. Affect, according to Moore, “personalizes the phenomenal world by helping one to participate in the experience” (p. 445). A participant’s affective response (i.e., mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually) stems from his or her active engagement with, and experience of, the symbolic expression (Moore, 1996; Myers, 1985). Finally, knowing (e.g., wisdom, knowledge, and understanding) is derived from the synthesis of personal affect and symbolic imagery (Dixon, 1976) and is achieved in the union of rational (cognitive) and arational (e.g., emotional, intuitive, and spiritual) process and experience (Akbar, 1984).

An African descended person understands through diunital logic (Dixon, 1976). This logic asserts that a thing can be itself and its opposite at the same time (Dixon, 1976). For example a room can be considered empty, yet simultaneously, and full of air. Myers (1985) stated “knowing is a form of indwelling . . . is perceived to be both spiritual and material at once . . . speaks to a type of logic that emphasizes the union of opposites, diunital logic” (p. 36). In sum, the African way of logic and knowledge construction requires openness to experience, an ability to appreciate and interact with differences, and mutual awareness of self and others. Finally, as all aspects of reality are inter-related within the African conceptual system, self-knowledge is considered to be the highest form of knowledge (Myers, 1985; Nobles, 1978, 1980).

African-Centered Purpose

Banks (1992) and Mazama (2001) asserted the teleological emphasis of knowledge production and stress that knowledge, in the African-centered view, must not exist for its own sake but for the communal good of African people. As such, the African-centered worldview advances knowledge for the following purposes: (a) African self-determination, including the right and imperative of African descended people to define their own reality and experiences in a manner consistent with an African worldview (Akbar 1984, 1989, 2002; Asante, 1987, 1988; Banks, 1992; Carroll, 2010; Hilliard, 2002; Mazama, 2001); (b) the central placement of the African worldview as the basis for defining and describing what is normal for African people (Akbar, 2002; Asante, 1987, 1988); and (c) the liberation of homeland and diasporic Africans (Asante, 1987, 1988; Banks, 1992; Carroll, 2010).

Philosophical Assumptions of an Afrocentric Paradigm

Mazama (2001) wrote that “Afrocentricity indicates that our main problem as African people is our usually unconscious adoption of the Western worldview, perspectives and their attendant conceptual frameworks” (p. 387). She posited that this adoption assigns African people “to the periphery, the margin, of the European experience, to use Molefi Asante’s terms—spectators of a show that defines us from without” (Mazama, 2001, p. 387). Such adoption effects/affects the forfeiture of African identity due to the inculcation of foreign, Eurocentric ways of being, knowing, and purpose. Mazama (2001) advocates the rescinding of this adoption and its replacement with natural and historical African referents. Such referents, as call, require the needed response of describing African phenomena from the frameworks of African cosmology, ontology, epistemology, and teleology.

Afrocentricity (a) “stresses the importance of cultivating a consciousness of victory as opposed to oppression” (Mazama, 2001, p. 389), (b) places Africa and African history and worldview as the center for the issues of African descended peoples, and (c) advances the right and perspective for all people to live from their respective centers (Asante, 1987; Mazama, 2001). Afrocentricity challenges European nationalism and hegemony with its universal claims of normalcy (Asante, 1987; Mazama, 2001). Afrocentricity results in an African consciousness which is defined by victory: the centering, defining, grounding, and locating of African phenomena in the African worldview, belief system, and historical experience (Akbar, 2002; Asante, 1987, 1988; Banks, 1992; Carroll, 2008, 2010; Hilliard, 2002; Nobles 1978; Pellerin,

2012; Reviere, 2001). In considering Afrocentricity as an academic paradigm, Mazama, (2001) advanced that:

The Afrocentric idea rests in the assertions of the primacy of the African experience for African people. Its aim is to give us our African, victorious consciousness back. In the process it also means, viewing the European voice as just one among many and not necessarily the wisest one. (p. 388)

Mazama (2001) expanded upon Kuhn's (1962, 1970) definition of a paradigm and added to it a functional aspect. She stated, "From an Afrocentric perspective, where knowledge can never be produced for the sake of it but always for our liberation, a paradigm must activate our consciousness to be of any use" (Mazama, 2001, p. 392). Her emphasis, on the necessary purposes of African agency, consciousness, well-being, and liberation is consistent with the teleological emphases espoused by other African-centered researchers and social scientists (Akbar, 2002; Asante, 1987, 1988; Banks, 1992; Carroll, 2008, 2010; Hilliard, 2002; Nobles 1978; Pellerin, 2012; Reviere, 2001). Such emphasis and purpose produce within me great pause as I ponder the methodological implications for this study and the varying criticism of the Afrocentric paradigm.

Prevailing Criticisms of an Afrocentric Philosophical Perspective

Generally speaking, there are four prevailing criticisms of Afrocentricity. Afrocentricity and the Afrocentric paradigm are criticized as being (a) essentialist and restrictive in nature, (b) cathartic and therapeutic, (c) pseudo-historical and pseudo-scientific, and (d) reactionary and hegemonic. In response to the first criticism and in light of historical oppression and continuing dismissal, Asante's (1987, 1988) ideas of African-centered location and agency are logical and plausible moorings, albeit possibly provisional (Merry & New, 2008), for the respective and varied self-

definitions of African descended people. It is ironic that such mooring, which challenges dominant hierarchy and discourse, is often dismissed as essentialist and restrictive by the same subjugating hierarchy and discourse (Asante, 2003). I agree with the criticism of Afrocentricity being cathartic and therapeutic. However, I reframe such critique as an accurate, valid, or trustworthy observation of the possible health, emotional, and spiritual benefits of Afrocentric praxis (Akbar, 1984; Schiele, 2003).

Alkebulan's (2007) linking of the pseudo-historical and pseudo-scientific critiques to a continuation of Western ideology is also logical as such ideology often diminishes African reality, history, and contributions. Finally, the Afrocentric emphasis of victorious consciousness expands and grounds the awareness of African descended people in a history which is larger than, yet encompasses, western cultural oppression (Mazama, 2001, 2003). Rather than reactionary and hegemonic, I believe such expansion and grounding are consistent with the wisdom and advocacy of the Afrocentric perspective which affirms the right of all people and individuals to define themselves from their respective histories and centers (Asante, 1988; Mazama, 2001, 2003).

Paradigmatic Analogs of an Afrocentric Paradigm

As a paradigm, social constructivism contains elements analogous to or consistent with an African-centered worldview. "Generally speaking, social constructivism posits that what is known or understood derives from communities of understanding rather than an individual operating as an isolated 'psychological' entity" (Cottone, 2007, p. 193). This emphasis on "communities of understanding" and

“the social process of consensualizing” (Cottone, 2007, p. 195) parallels African-centered communal values and sensibilities. Similarly, the advocacy/participatory paradigm, with its emphases on action agenda, emancipation, and marginalized voice (Creswell, 2007), is consistent with the Afrocentric paradigmatic emphases of purposive knowledge, liberation, and self-knowledge (Mazama, 2001). Finally, the critical theory paradigmatic stance which sees “researcher objectivity as impossible and subjectivity something that should be readily acknowledged and valued” (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 41) is harmonious with the ideas of researcher subjectivity and the rejection of an empty perceptual space posited by Dixon (1976) and Mazama (2001)

Research Implications of an Afrocentric Paradigm

The African-centered emphasis on community necessitates individual awareness and communal involvement in research efforts. Banks (1992) wrote,

Insofar as that reality is the collective experience of African peoples, the ultimate description will never spring from the mind of any intelligent scientist. Rather, it will spring from the collective wisdom and sensitivities of the community whose interests may be served by the collective intelligence of all its members. (p. 270)

From a communal vantage point, the researcher who is studying African phenomenon must possess a sense of humility, reject individualistic interpretations, involve community members or representatives as experts in all phases of the research effort (Reviere, 2001), and serve the greater good and interests of those being researched (Banks, 1992; Carroll 2010; Reviere, 2001). He or she, as a researcher, must be willing to view, and welcome, participants and the community as the final arbiters and interpreters of their reality and as architects and directors of the research effort itself. Such welcome and deference are consistent with the African-centered

communal values of (a) interdependence and reciprocity, (b) interpersonal harmony and respect, (c) honor and mutual social obligations, and (d) brotherhood.

The African-centered epistemological stance of affective-symbolic imagery cognition (Dixon, 1976) posits that the feeling and experiencing of a phenomenon is central to its understanding. Carroll (2010) wrote that the “African epistemological assumption, states, ‘I feel phenomena; therefore I think; I know’” (p. 115). From this view, a researcher must (a) value feelings as responses of non-material and subjective reality preceding thoughts; and (b) embrace the knowledge arises from within, as he and she is an open, active, affective, reflective, and immersive participant with research subject(s) and phenomena. From this epistemological stance, a researcher understands through the rejection of the dichotomous notions of empty perceptual space, spiritual/non-material versus physical/material reality, and researcher/participant separation (Dixon, 1976; Reviere, 2001). He and she must continually demonstrate or generate the highest form of knowledge: self-knowledge (Myers, 1985; Nobles, 1978; Reviere, 2001; Tillman, 2002). From an African-centered perspective, the researcher who refuses to reject dichotomies is arrogant and deeply offends the African sense of spirituality. This spirituality stresses the inherency of an extended self, interconnectedness, interdependence, sameness, and unity (Akbar, 1984; Mbiti, 1969; Myers 1985).

Z. Carr (personal communication, August 28, 2012) frequently emphasized the saying “the thinnest piece of paper has two sides.” She stresses this maxim to caution against the premature foreclosure or interpretation of a matter prior to hearing, experiencing, and considering alternate viewpoints. Her emphasis illustrates, resonates, and connotes the African sensibility of diunital logic espoused by Dixon

(1976). Dixon's espousal mandates that in the quest for justice, truth, and harmony (Asante, 1987) an investigator must be open to and willing to examine opposing or differing thoughts, understand and respect the concurrent validity inherent in each of multiple perspectives, and discern interrelated and complementary matters. These requirements are essences of African holism.

The African-centered values of communalism, spirituality, and holism are conceptually satisfied in the qualitative research process through the inclusions of the community and the affective and participatory researcher stance (Reviere, 2001; Tillman, 2002). As a researcher of African-centered phenomena I must become known and impacted by the research subjects and their symbolic imageries if this research effort and its outcomes are to be considered trustworthy. I must become immersed in the community being researched through constant examination and re-examination of the data resulting from this study and openness to the participants' constructed meaning and perspective. Such immersion mitigates or lessens the possibility of a solely individualistic interpretation which is an anathema to the African idea of community. One might even say that the research process, which includes communal interpretation and which honors individual perspective, generates a circular end which is, in and of itself, reciprocal in nature. From my perspective, I must patiently purpose communal involvement and record my affective responses. This requires my humility and consistent choice to value the overarching African sensibilities of communalism, spirituality, and holism. I believe that I will personally benefit from these sensibilities in the research process.

Consistent with the above descriptions of an African worldview and with the varying descriptions of an Afrocentric research paradigm and approach, I as a

researcher must (a) reject the notion of empty perceptual space between myself and the participants (Carroll 2010; Dixon, 1976; Reviere, 2001), (b) acknowledge how I am subjectively and affectively impacted by subjects of the research process and their symbols (Dixon, 1976; Reviere, 2001), (c) open myself to the process of critical examination by self and others during the research process (Reviere, 2001), (d) acknowledge and accept participants and community members as the ultimate authority and experts of what is true and valid in their own lives, and (e) ground the research effort in the experiences of the community to advance communal interests (Mazama, 2001; Reviere, 2001).

Symbolic Imagery and Story as Guidance

In keeping with a focus on affective symbolic imagery, call and response communication, and storytelling, the unity sculpture and the African rendition of the tortoise and hare story (see Appendix B) provide a useful framework or analogy for the presentation of the individual and collective narratives of this study. From my perspective, the unity sculpture reflects the individual and collective stories of seven individuals who are intertwined and bounded together in a particular context. The African rendition also illustrates a bounded and communal context. In this tale (Gyekye, 1996), the tortoises agree to run individual sections of the race against the hare, triumph through communal ingenuity and cooperative effort, and expose the hubris and limitation of the hare's individual effort and singular imagination. Woven together the unity sculpture and the African tortoise and hare tale form a tapestry which adorns and stories African-centered communalism, spirituality, and holism.

Taken together sculpture and story, as symbolic and corresponding call, invite affect and thought which guide (a) personal responsiveness and openness to communal

involvement in this research endeavor; (b) the telling of both individual and collective stories which arise from participant uniqueness, commonality, and inter-relatedness; and (c) a celebration of the specific contributions of each individual to the corporate victory and collective narrative. This approach is in keeping with the first- and second-order narrative descriptions (Creswell, 2007) and African communal sensibilities (Mbiti, 1969). It is also in keeping with Polkinghorne's (1995) descriptions of the processes of narrative analysis and analysis of narratives, both of which are discussed below in the methods and procedures section.

In response, I anticipated interviewing and interacting with a minimum of seven participants to represent their stories and experience in this investigation. These stories rose through my relationship with these men, individually and collectively, existed within the bounded context of the counselor education classroom and participants' professional experiences; and centered on African cultural values and strengths. Participant narratives add a clear voice and to the multicultural and social justice emphasis within the counselor education profession.

Carroll (2008) indicated seven central questions for an African-centered research inquiry and methodology. While he advanced these questions for the specific context and discipline of Africana studies, his questions are useful foundations and evaluative criteria for this investigation, methodology, and representations. His questions are as follows:

- How does this research project reflect the interdependent nature of the universe?
- How does this research project compensate for the spiritual and material nature of reality?

- How does this research project reflect the communal nature of Afrikan people?
- How does this research project access non-material reality?
- How does this research project reflect both/and logic?
- How does this research project advance the interests of the Africana community?
- How does this research project contribute to the liberation of Africana people? (Carroll, 2008, p. 19).

Carroll's (2008) questions encompass the whole and various components of an African-centered worldview and serve as meta-guides or companions in this research effort. I believe that, like each figure in the unity sculpture, all of my research interactions, interpretations, and representations are bound within these questions. I endeavored to honor and faithfully adhere to these boundaries and respond to these guides. I would break with community and myself in doing otherwise.

Narrative Approach

A narrative approach was adopted for this investigation as this approach values interpersonal relationships, keeps with African-centered communal and relational emphases, and has storytelling at its core. Consistent with the narrative paradigm, individuals' stories were the foci of study. Creswell (2007) indicated that,

In a narrative study, one needs to find one or more individual to study, individuals who are accessible, willing to provide information, and distinctive for their accomplishments and ordinariness or who shed light on a specific phenomenon or issues being explored. (p. 119)

Narrative research may focus on a culture-sharing group and have an ethnographic component (Creswell, 2007). Merriam (2009) wrote, "narratives are stories of lived experience" (p. 33). Narratives are not "a product of an individual, but as a facet of relationship, as part of culture, as reflected in social roles such as gender

and age” (Creswell, 2007, p. 119). In this study, the professional experiences of male, African-centered, counselor educators were explored. In this regard, the narrative research tradition and approach were an appropriate and coherent choice for this investigation since they could best provide insights to the related questions (Hays & Singh, 2012).

The narrative approach honors individual uniqueness and allows the inclusion of personal, individual, and collective narratives. “In first-order narratives, individuals tell stories about themselves and their own experiences, while in second-order narrative researchers construct a narrative about other people’s experiences (e.g., biography) or present a collective story that represents the lives of many” (Creswell, 2007, p. 119). In light of such, this study had three main sources of voice and story: the individual interviews with participants regarding their unique professional experiences, including the classroom; the personal narrative of the affect and self-knowledge which I gain from my interaction with participants, in our relationship, and from my observations; and the interrelatedness and similarities of the individual stories as a basis for a collective narrative.

I also chose a narrative approach as I best experience the world through contemplation, experience, and story. I enjoy the narrative emphasis on self-reflection and the experiencing of experience. From my perspective, narrative’s three-dimensional emphasis on the personal and social, temporal, and place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) highly correspond with the Afrocentric concepts of self-knowledge and interpersonal relationships, past-present time orientation, and locational emphasis (Asante, 1987, 1988; Mazama, 2003). Since story is central to the narrative approach, it was suited for my research as I sought to honor participants’ experiences and to

construct a narrative of our communal experience. Additionally, I chose a narrative approach for this study as I believe it is best suited to honor the primacy of the oral tradition within African cultures.

Narrative has often been criticized as either too personal or subjective. However, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) stated that “to dismiss the criticism that narrative is overly personal and interpersonal is to risk the dangers of narcissism and solipsism” (p. 181). Additionally, personal affect and subjectivity are central features of African-centered and Afrocentric perspectives. I believe the apparent tension between these two diverging perspectives herein was reconciled through the processes of member checks, auditor reviews, and researcher journal. These processes were consistent with the African-centered and Afrocentric research methodological approaches voiced by Pellerin (2012), Reviere (2001), and Tillman (2002). Finally, qualitative researchers embrace “the rhetorical assumption that the writing needs to be personal and literary in form” (Creswell, 2007, p. 18).

Narrative was also criticized as a simple telling or re-telling of stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). While this criticism was valid for some, I believed that the rigorous process of narrative data collection and interpretation, use of member checks, and auditor review uncovered such simplicity and lessened the chance of potential reductionism. Most importantly, a narrative approach was chosen to honor the central prominence of oral history in African culture. The use of a narrative approach was consistent with the transmission of knowledge through story (Asante, 1987, 1988; Reviere, 2001).

Methods and Procedures

I originally sought to investigate the classroom and professional experiences of male, African-centered counselor educators to expand the literature in the counselor education field. As you will read in Chapters IV and V, my original conceptualization of this inquiry was much too narrow. The narratives collected and shared focus on these men's professional and personal struggles and triumphs in counselor education. These experiences undoubtedly were synthesized and amplified into the instruction and learning they offered their students. The original questions that guided this study were: What is the classroom experience of professors of African American descent who profess or express African-centered cultural values? What story do student evaluations tell about their professors' cultural values and sensibilities? What environmental variables support or impede African-centered values and sensibilities in the classroom? What stories does the participants' experience tell? Although many of these questions emerged in the individual interviews, the reader will find less a focus on the classroom and a greater focus on the stories of these remarkable educators.

Participant Selection Criteria

The participants for this study were male counselor educators who self-identified as African American, held self-defined African-centered or Afrocentric values, and possessed a doctoral degree from a Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) institution. The CACREP accredited doctoral degree was an organizational central criteria for this study in that the degree provided a sense of consistency in participant training. Purposeful criterion and snowball sampling were utilized for this study to gain access to information rich individuals, insight into what occurs, the implication of these occurrences, and the

relationships embedded in the occurrences (Merriam, 2009, p. 77). I sought to interview a minimum of seven individuals for this study or until saturation occurred (Hays & Singh, 2012). Saturation, for this study, was defined as the point in the data collection and analysis processes when additional participants would yield no new information and further interpretations seemed complete and redundant (Hays & Singh, 2012).

Participant Invitation

Institutional review board approval (see Appendix C) of the interview protocol, questions, and consent form was obtained prior to announcing this study to potential participants. A recruitment e-mail was sent to the Counselor Education and Supervision, Counseling for Social Justice, and Association of Multicultural Counseling and Development listservs. The recruitment e-mail announced and described the investigation, described the participant selection criteria, and invited e-mail responses from those interested in participation. These discrete populations of these listserv exceeded 7,500 individuals. These listservs were purposefully selected since some of their members met the study criteria, to gain a wide and broad announcement audience, and as the listservs may not be populated by the same audience. Potential participants responded via e-mail and included the following information in the response: name, age, current professional occupation, phone number, e-mail, Skype® address, and the best time to contact them. Each respondent was called within one week of the e-mail response.

During the initial call, I described the study and its intent, personally invited the respondent's participation, and thanked him for his interest if he did not meet the stated criteria or declined participation. I described my interest in the research as such

disclosure was consistent with an Afrocentric relational perspective and the negotiation process of entry into relationships (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). I sent an informed consent form (see Appendix D) via e-mail to those respondents who agreed to and met the study criteria one day after our phone conversation. The informed consent included an overview of the study, a review of the participant's rights, and the information concerning the protection of individual privacy. I asked him to return a the signed informed consent form via e-mail within one week and to designate at least three times over the following two weeks when I could contact him by telephone or via Skype® for an interview.

During the initial phone invitation, a potential participant was asked to identify others who were a good fit for or interested in this study. Such query and referrals were consistent with the process of “snowball, chain, or network sampling” (Merriam, 2009, p. 79). I also asked each potential participant to identify elders within the counselor education and supervision (CES) field who might have been interested in this study. Eldership in this context was not necessarily age dependent. Rather, given that an elder had at least (a) two years of experience in a master's level counseling training program, (b) three to seven years of experience in a CES doctoral program, (c) five years of experience as a counselor educator and supervisor, and (d) professional publication and/or presentation experiences, prolonged experience, and engagement within the CES field were the paramount features of eldership in this study. The choice and adherence to an African-centered identity and worldview were also inherently embedded in this definition and selection.

Each participant was asked to provide the contact information (i.e., name, phone number, and e-mail) of their respective referral, to make contact with the elder,

and to inform him that I would like to contact him for this study. I asked each referral source to contact the elder within one week prior to my contact. I sent an e-mail invitation to each elder one week after his referral. The e-mail also contained mention of the phone call that I had with his referral source. This interactive and relational approach to participant recruitment was consistent with African-centered cultural values and Tillman's (2002) culturally sensitive research perspective. My research advisor and dissertation chair also provided me with the names of potential elders and participants for this study.

During the initial call to an elder, I described the study and its intent, personally invited his participation, and thanked him for his interest if he declined participation. I described my interest in the research as such disclosure was consistent with an African-centered relational perspective and the negotiation process of entry into relationships (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Elders were given the option to participate in the full study, yet were specifically requested to participate in the focus group at a minimum. This request was made as each elder, due to his prolonged engagement within the CES profession, was considered a rich source of information. The day after our phone conversation I sent an informed consent form via e-mail to those elders who agreed to participate in the full study and included an overview of the study, a review of the participant's rights, and information concerning the protection of individual privacy. Participants were asked to return the signed informed consent form via e-mail within one week and to designate at least three times over the following two weeks when I could contact him by telephone or via Skype® for an interview. I sent an e-mail to each elder who agreed to participate in the focus group and indicated the tentative dates and times.

Participant Inquiry and Field Text Generation

A focus group, open-ended individual interviews, participant artifacts, and student evaluations were used to interact with the participants, gather information of their respective journeys, and to generate field texts related to their experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The field texts were the records “created, neither found nor discovered, by participants and researchers in order to represent aspects of field experience” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 92). Field texts included journal entries, field notes, transcriptions, and participant correspondence and often recorded place, personal and social, and temporal issues (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The usage of differing data strategies and multiple field texts increased this study’s trustworthiness and provided items for triangulation purposes (Merriam, 2009). The sequence of the data collection events is described in Table 1.

Table 1

Data Collection Event Sequence

Data collection event	Participants <i>n</i>	Member checks <i>n</i>
Focus group	7	6
1 st Interview	11	11
Symbolic representations	10	Not applicable
2 nd Interview	11	10
Student evaluations	7	Not applicable

Focus Group

The focus group was originally intended to follow the completion of all of the first individual interviews, yet was rescheduled, with the permission of my research committee to October 2013 to coincide with the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision conference that was held in Denver, Colorado. This modification in the original research design allowed me to make contact with seven participants, all in one setting, and face-to-face. The focus group provided a platform to interact with participants and to see how they interacted with each other. The focus group provided valuable insight into the participants and myself.

All of the focus group participants, with the exception of two who were recruited onsite during the conference, received an e-mail invitation to the focus group 10 to 30 days prior to the conference. The invitation contained the date and time of the focus group. Participants returned e-mail responses indicating their plan to attend. I thanked those who declined participation by sending them an e-mail response within two days of their response. I called those participating to thank them for their willingness to participate and to provide them with a specific date, time, and room location for the focus group. Six of the focus group participants also took part in the subsequent first and second interviews.

The focus group lasted for approximately two hours and was held in an enclosed and quiet room at the conference site. The focus group was held in the late afternoon so as to not compete with or be distracted by other conference events. I arrived at the focus group room one hour prior to its commencement and ensured that the room lighting and environs were amenable. Light refreshments were served to

convey a sense of warmth and hospitality. The refreshments consisted of assorted fruits, cheeses, and breads and non-alcoholic beverages.

Participants signed informed consent forms at the beginning of the focus group. The informed consent form included an overview of the study, a review of the participant's rights, and information concerning the protection of individual privacy. Given the nature of groups and the associated challenges of discretion and privacy, each participant also signed a confidentiality agreement at the beginning of the group. Group confidentiality was made overt to ensure participant safety and a relaxed environment. The focus group was digitally recorded.

This focus group was open-ended and emergent in terms of its process and structure. There was no formal agenda for the focus group. Rather the group was allowed to naturally unfold and became a collective gathering of connecting, experiencing, and knowing in relation to the topic under study. Each participant introduced himself and spoke about his professional setting and experience. As introductions occurred, I listened to gain a sense of who was in the room and welcomed each accordingly. The focus group questions are contained in Appendix E.

The focus group members freely entered into our discussion. The senior elder commenced our meeting and such initiation was consistent with African tradition. I did not take notes during the focus group so as to honor participants and remain fully present. Journal entries were written immediately following the group to record my feelings, thoughts, and experience of our collective process. The senior elder also adjourned our meeting in the manner of his choosing. I thanked each participant for his time at the end of the focus group experience.

A copy of the coded, focus group transcription was e-mailed to each participant as part of a member checking process (Merriam, 2009). Each participant reviewed the transcript and commented upon the codes which represented the experience and interactions. Generally, the participants returned their comments and responses via e-mail within six weeks. The intervening time was used to listen and re-listen to the focus group tape recording and to write notes in this process. I also simultaneously read and re-read the transcript to insert any emphases, intonations, or other verbal expressions. The focus group transcript, notes, and e-mail correspondence served as field texts for this investigation (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Interview Format

Two telephone interviews were conducted with each participant at one of his previously designated times. The interviews elicited the participant's experience, feelings, reflections, thoughts, and perspectives on his classroom and professional experience. A semi-structured interview process and an initial open-ended question were used to stimulate a conversational tone, approximate natural expressions, and elicit "spontaneous incidents of storytelling" (Creswell, 2007, p. 131). The unstructured and open-ended interview process was useful and allowed the "participants to tell their own stories in their own way" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 111). A total of 11 men partook of the first and second interviews.

The interviews were conducted via telephone in a quiet and secured room. Telephone interviews were advantageous for this study, reduced logistical and other travel related expenses (Hays & Singh, 2012), and provided audio contact between the participant and myself. Participants selected an alias to maintain their anonymity, and the actual or true identities of the interviewees were known only to this researcher. I

interviewed only one participant per day. This allowed sufficient and undistracted time to record my feelings, observations, reflections, and thoughts in a researcher journal on the day of the interview. The researcher journal was kept to record personal thoughts and also was useful for auditing purposes (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

First interview. Each participant was reminded that our conversation was being digitally recorded at the beginning of his first interview. An open-ended question started the interview. The question was “tell me about your classroom experiences and instruction.” Subsequent questions were asked depending on the nature and flow of our conversation (see Appendix F). As I listened to the interviewee, I took field notes of those things which I produced affect or were thought provoking. These interview field notes served as field texts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). I kept track of the time during the conversation, informed the participant when 10 minutes were left for the interview, and thanked the participant for his time at the end of our interview.

The first interview lasted approximately 60 minutes and was tape-recorded for later transcription by a transcription service. This transcriptionist signed a confidentiality agreement for each interview to ensure participant confidentiality. The digital recording of the interview was submitted to the company for transcription within three days of the interview using Dropbox. The company transcribed the digital recording and returned an electronic copy of the transcription within one week after its receipt. Each transcription served as a field text (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

A copy of the transcribed and coded interview was e-mailed to the participant approximately two weeks later as part of a member checking process (Merriam, 2009). Each participant reviewed the transcription to determine how well it represented him

and commented on the transcription and codes to better convey his intended meaning. Each participant returned the reviewed transcription via e-mail, designated potential times for a second interview, and included a symbolic representation in spoken or digital form of his teaching approach, classroom identity, or overall counselor education experience. Participants returned their comments via telephone or via e-mail.

I used the intervening time between the first and second interviews to listen and re-listen to our first conversation and to record notes in the process. I read and listened to each transcript and inserted any emphases, intonations, or other verbal expressions. The notes written during the first interview, the transcribed interview, the participant comments to the transcription, and the notes written while re-listening to the first interview served as field texts for this investigation (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). I revisited each field text immediately prior to the second interview or conversation with the respective participant.

Second interview. The second interviews were conducted approximately 120 days after the first interview. Participants were called and e-mailed 10 days prior to the interview to confirm the designated date and time. Generally speaking, these interviews were scheduled to last for approximately 90 minutes. Each participant was reminded of his informed consent and that our conversation was digitally recorded prior to the start.

During the second interview, participants were asked to talk about their recollection and perspectives of their first interview. This allowed each participant to further review the accuracy of his statements and to clarify or amend them to better represent his intended meaning and identity. It also allowed me to clarify and gain

further understanding of the first interview and participant. This process was consistent with member checking as a strategy to increase the trustworthiness of this study (Merriam, 2009).

The second interview contained five open-ended questions (see Appendix F). Given the potential of expansive answers to open-ended questions, I was mindful that a participant could fill the entire allotted time with a storied response. As such I knew it would not be possible to pose all of the questions in the allotted time. No participant was rushed, and each individual's pace and direction were honored. Subsequent questions were asked depending on the nature and flow of the conversation as time allowed. I took notes of those things which I found affective or thought provoking. These notes were considered field texts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Each participant was informed when 10 minutes were left for the interview and thanked for his time at the end of our interview. The procedures for transcription and member checking followed the same pattern as the first interview.

Symbolic Artifacts

Participants either verbally relayed or e-mailed a copy of the representation or symbol which best exemplified his teaching style, cultural values, or professional experience. Their symbols ranged from published stories, to Afrocentric literature, to family pictures, and to depictions of an extended hand and fork in the road. The symbols were acquired to triangulate participant interviews and to increase the study's trustworthiness (Merriam, 2009). Each symbol served as the basis for a field text (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

I recorded my thoughts about each participant's symbolic representation in my field notes or research journal immediately upon its receipt. I did not make any inquiry

into the participant's symbol, his meaning, or his selection process. Rather, in keeping with affective-symbolic imagery cognition (Dixon, 1976) and for later comparative purposes, I recorded my affective responses and corresponding thoughts for each representation in my researcher journal. When possible, I asked each participant about his symbol and its meaning during the second interview. Ten participants returned symbolic representations.

Student Evaluations

Each participant was asked to provide electronic copies of recent, institutionally generated student evaluations of his choice (quantitative and qualitative) within two weeks after the second interview. The student evaluations were acquired to triangulate participant interviews and used as a strategy to increase the trustworthiness of this study (Merriam, 2009). Each participant had been informed that his student evaluation would remain confidential, be stored in a secured place, and not to be quoted in any of the written study materials.

The student evaluations provided general insight into student perspectives and valuations of the participant's teaching style. Generally speaking an evaluation was perused for information which yielded insight into the participant's cultural values. The student evaluations were read and reread, and field notes were written in response to the evaluations. These notes served as a field text (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Six participants provided student evaluations.

Trustworthiness

It was important to use strategies that increased the trustworthiness of this study. Four criteria of trustworthiness were sought: credibility, transferability, conformability, and ethics (Hays & Singh, 2012). Attempts made to satisfy these

criteria included: reflexive journals, field notes, member checking, prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, simultaneous data collection and analysis, thick description, audit trail, and auditor review (Hays & Singh, 2012). The trustworthiness of this study was also increased through ethical validation.

Credibility

Credibility is related to the reality and believability of the research findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009). To increase credibility it was important to take field notes while participating in research events (i.e., interviews, artifact review, and focus group). Multiple data collection methods were used to increase credibility of the research findings through triangulation (Hays & Singh, 2012). These methods included the first and second interviews, the collection of symbolic artifacts and student evaluations, and the focus group. Participants were pursued using these methods until saturation of primary themes occurred (Merriam, 2009).

Triangulation and increased credibility were also achieved through interactions with multiple individuals who shared similar perspectives and values (Hays & Singh, 2012). Additionally, field texts were simultaneously generated, collected, and analyzed to enhance credibility and to demonstrate researcher responsiveness to emerging issues (Hays & Singh, 2012). Thick description or “inferences into the meaning of present data” (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 213) was also used as a credibility strategy.

Finally, the maintenance of an audit trail and the use of an auditor to review the reflexive journal and field texts increased the credibility of this study. The audit trail was used to keep a record of research activities and to record the decisions made in this research effort (Creswell, 2007). The auditor used the reflexive journal, field

texts, varying transcriptions, and email correspondence to detect and correct researcher bias in the resulting research texts, interpretations, and representations (Merriam, 2009).

Audit trail. All events and decisions related to this study were documented in the audit trail process. The audit trail detailed the data collection, coding, and member checking processes of this study (Hays & Singh, 2012). I kept a research journal to record (a) these processes; (b) the date, time, and location of my interactions with participants; (c) my feelings, thoughts, and reactions to the interactions and study events; and (d) the procedures and decisions made during this study (Creswell, 2007).

Auditor. An auditor was used in this study to increase its credibility. The auditor was an African American, male, doctoral student in the CES program at my university. He received training from my research advisor in qualitative methodology and auditing. I recruited the auditor based upon his interest in this study, our collegiality, and as part of a collective mentoring process. The auditor was recruited due to (a) his integrity; (b) his ability to offer trustworthy, discerning, and differing data interpretations; and (c) the similarity of his journey and experience with the participants and myself (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The auditor independently reviewed my research journal; four individual interview transcriptions; the focus group transcription; data codes; and themes to discern any threats to credibility and researcher bias (Hays & Singh, 2012). After his review, I consulted with the auditor via telephone to discuss his evaluations and to account for and amend any issue of bias, over-representations, and under-representations.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the provision of a detailed description of the research process which enables its readers to generalize the findings to other contexts and people (Hays & Singh, 2012). The transferability of this study was increased through persistent observation of the participants in the multiple contacts and contexts of the interviews and focus group activities (Hays & Singh, 2012). Triangulation occurred through the use of multiple methods with multiple units of analyses (i.e., participants) and increased transferability (Hays & Singh, 2012). Thick descriptions of the field texts and observation settings were also used to increase the transferability of the research findings.

Confirmability

The confirmability of the research findings was increased through the use of member checks (Hays & Singh, 2012). Confirmability reflects the genuineness of the research findings as related to actual participant experience (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Participants were asked to review their respective interview transcriptions and the transcription of the focus group as part of the member checking process. Participants also reviewed the codes and themes to ensure accurate representation and reflection of their experience, identity, and voice (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Prolonged engagement, triangulation, simultaneous data collection and analysis, and thick description were other strategies used to increase the confirmability of the research findings.

Ethical Validation

Informed consent and confidentiality agreements were used throughout this study to address ethical concerns and ensure participant safety (Merriam, 2009).

Ethical validation of the research findings was also achieved through the use of the reflexive journals, auditor review, and member checking (Hays & Singh, 2012). The use of culturally sensitive research approaches and frameworks (Pellerin, 2012; Reviere, 2001; Tillman, 2002) also addressed ethical and multicultural concerns. I as a researcher endeavored to consistently acknowledge and fulfill ethical responsibilities throughout this study. Each participant was informed that they could exit the study any time he chose.

Security Measures

All data for this study were kept in a secure manner to ensure the confidentiality of the participants. The auditor and transcriptionist(s) for this study signed confidentiality agreements to ensure they were aware of their responsibility for the confidentiality of the participants. My personal computer was used to keep track of and organize the field texts, codes, and categories. All data from this study were stored in either a secured, password protected electronic files or locked file cabinet in my home office.

Thematic Analysis

“Qualitative data analysis involves categorizing text or keywords that are similar to one another (i.e., coding), as well as connecting text of keywords that influence one another (i.e., relationships among codes)” (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 295). Hays and Singh (2012) indicated that a “code is a label or tag that ‘chunk’ various amounts of data based on the defined unit of analysis” (p. 299). For this investigation, I used the eight African-centered precepts described by Harvey (2003) and as pre-determined starting points, categorical frameworks, or guides (Hays & Singh, 2012) in

my researcher journal entries, field note recordings, and overall interpretive processes.

Harvey (2003) listed these precepts as follows:

- Consubstantiation...the notion of all elements (human, animals, inanimate objects) being of the same substance.
- Interdependence...idea of all elements in the universe being connected.
- Egalitarianism...nature of relations being harmonious and balanced.
- Collectivism...codes of conduct based on the idea of group and/or collective survival/advancement.
- Transformation...change in movement towards a higher level of functioning.
- Cooperation...the way things function is based on mutual respect and viability.
- Humanness...behavior is governed by the sense of vitalism and viability.
- Synergism...notion that the sum of complementary actions is greater than the total efforts of individuals. (pp. 119-120)

These precepts were harmonious with and consistent with Carroll's (2008) seven guiding research questions, Reviere's (2001) five Afrocentric research canons, and Pellerin's (2012) emphasis on communal research. These precepts were also consistent with Tillman's (2002) discussion of culturally honoring research approaches. While these precepts or potential categories may have biased interviews, coding, and interpretations, they also created an awareness of what may have existed in participant stories. As such the precepts were helpful research companions and supported a sensitive listening to the participant's stories, interactions, and values. I used member checks, peer review, and an auditor to detect and correct interpretive bias, misrepresentation, or overrepresentation.

The various field texts of each participant (i.e., interview and focus group transcripts, student evaluation, and symbolic representations) were openly coded line

by line as part of a thematic analysis process (Creswell, 2007). I read and re-read each field text multiple times to immerse myself in the words, sentences, phrases, and its possible meanings. I wrote preliminary descriptive codes of the emergences which arose as I listened. The preliminary codes were entered into the research journal, written or typed in the margin of the field text, and revised or finalized during successive field text readings and reviews. The finalized field text codes were combined to form categories and labels through an axial coding process (Creswell, 2007). These combinations were based upon the similarity of the codes to each other (Merriam, 2009) and their relationship to the research questions (Polkinghorne, 1995).

This process was used to increase an understanding of the field texts and to bring a sense of chronology to the field text itself (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Hays & Singh, 2012). I developed overarching themes for each field text by combining similar axial codes, categories or labels in a selective coding process (Creswell, 2007). Additionally, notations were made on each field text to describe participant references to person/social, place and temporal issues (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). These notations were useful in locating the field text within the three dimensional space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Each coded field text was returned to its respective participant via e-mail upon its completion as part of a member checking and trustworthiness strategy (Hays & Singh, 2012). Participants were asked to review the codes and themes and to provide input on them. All participants returned their comments via email within two weeks.

Story Representations

The results of this investigation are presented in both individual stories and one overall collective story. This dual and storied presentation reflected the individual and

collective nature of African communal values. It also reflected the principles of holism, cooperation, and interdependence that are expressed by the unity sculpture and African tortoise and hare story (Gyekye, 1996). Finally, the collective story illustrated aspects of the previously discussed African symbols of clearing, circle, and sculpture.

Narrative Analysis Representation

The various field texts of a specific participant, excluding the focus group, were read and re-read together to gain an aggregate sense of his voice and story. Axial coding was used on the entirety of a participant's field texts to uncover the plot, audience, continuities, discontinuities, and themes that were present in and across the various texts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Polkinghorne, 1995). This process was used to develop an interim research text or preliminary individual story which consisted of a beginning, middle, and end. The development of an interim research text was consistent with the narrative analysis which stressed the particular uniqueness of an individual story and differentiates it within its collective context and reference (Polkinghorne, 1995). The final stories or representations of the individual interviews are presented in the findings section.

Analysis of Narratives Representation

The field text of the focus group was read and re-read to gain an aggregate sense of the collective voice and story. I listened to the focus group each time it was read and re-read. Axial coding was used on the entirety of the focus group field texts to uncover the plot, audience, continuities, discontinuities, and themes that were present in and across the various texts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Polkinghorne, 1995). This process was used to develop an interim research text or preliminary

collective story which consisted of a beginning, middle, and end. The development of an interim research text was consistent with an analysis of narrative perspective which stressed the commonality of individual stories to create a collective story, context, and reference (Polkinghorne, 1995). The final story or representation of the focus group is presented and discussed in the findings section (Chapter IV).

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Introduction

I am thankful for the stories, openness, and kindness participants extended to me during this process. I have come to love these men and esteem them greatly. I am grateful for their trust in my ability to represent their individual and collective stories. Gratitude withstanding, I have one sadness. I wish that my father and mother could have been physically present during our conversations for they, too, would have loved them. As it is, I heard their voices of approval throughout this process. The time, energy, and sacrifice of the participants has encouraged my heart and fed my spirit. I was initially nervous at the start of this study.

My anxiety was due, in part, to the lack of previous connection with those I encountered. While I had been in my doctoral process for approximately seven years, I had not established any real meaningful connection with any of the participants or with any other African American men within counselor education and supervision (CES) beyond the other African American male students within my institutional context. In this sense, I was afraid and deeply concerned that I would be viewed as an outsider.

I hoped participants would articulate Afrocentric values as described in the literature review and express how these values impacted their classrooms, professional

identities, and institutional contexts. My initial desire for this study was to amplify the voices of these men. I desired such an emphasis and it was largely absent in my CES training and literary exposure. The silence of these men, or rather my lack of exposure to their voices and stories, was beyond deafening. I felt alone and as if something extremely important was missing.

When I found Brooks and Steen's (2010) article, I was intrigued by the authors' invitation and their topic piqued my imagination and hope. Perhaps, I thought, their invitation applied to me and they wanted to meet me. Yet, I was also intimidated by my ignorance of our collective history within the CES profession. However, my fears dissipated almost immediately at the start of the focus group as the initial warmth, ease, and openness of those present told me I was more than welcome.

Twelve men, recruited from across the continental United States, comprised the participant pool of this study. I met and interacted with seven of the men during the focus group held in October 2013 at the national disciplinary conference in the Rocky Mountain region. Two subsequent semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with each six focus group member as well as five additional participants. Finally, I had a third casual meeting with one participant during an annual state counseling conference.

Sources of Data

Participants and participation. All 12 participants self-identified as a Black or African American, male, counselor educator, and held a self-defined, Afrocentric identity and core values of communalism, holism, and spirituality. The men ranged from 37 to 70 plus years of age. Eleven of the men were teaching in either at a master's level only or at the master's and doctoral levels of a Council for

Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)-accredited institution. One participant had retired after a 35-year career in the counseling and CES professions. Three participants reported that they had been working in the counseling and CES professions for over 20 years. Four participants reported that they had been working in the counseling and CES professions between 11 and 18 years. The remaining four participants reported that they had been working in the counseling and CES profession between five to seven years. Three participants indicated that they currently worked in the counseling program of a historically Black college or university.

Participants for this study were recruited in a variety of ways as noted in Chapter III. Two participants were recruited from a list provided by my dissertation chair; eight participants were recruited electronically via e-mails to the Counselor Education and Supervision listserv and via subsequent telephone calls, and two participants were recruited onsite during the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision conference. Participants selected their level of study involvement based upon their availability and personal preference. Seven participants took part in the focus group. Of these seven participants, one partook solely in the focus group and the related member-checking.

The remaining six members of the focus group, along with five additional participants, completed the two semi-structure interviews, artifact submission, and member-checking. Eleven participants selected a pseudonym of his choice to protect his identity during the data collection, analysis, and reporting processes. One participant declined self-selection and in doing so asked that I assign him a pseudonym. All e-mails regarding scheduling, general correspondences, and the

conveyance of member checks and triangulation items were sent through secured e-mail. Table 2 contains information related to the data collection events and types of data which was collected from the participants in this investigation.

Focus group. The focus group was conducted on October 18, 2013, during the national, disciplinary-based, annual conference. The conference theme was, “Promoting Unity While Affirming Diversity.” Focus group members either signed and returned their informed consent paperwork in advance of the conference or signed and returned it immediately prior to the start of the focus group. The focus group lasted 124 minutes. Due to conference obligations, three focus group members missed approximately the last 40 minutes of the discussion.

Individual interviews. Questions for the first and second interviews were sent to the participants in advance of the interview to provide participants time for consideration. The first individual interviews ($N = 11$) were conducted between October 17, 2013, and December 13, 2013. The interviews lasted between 57 and 83 minutes and had a median time of 66 minutes. Second interviews ($N = 11$) commenced 120 days after the final participants’ first interview and occurred between April 12, 2014, and April 28, 2014. Second interviews lasted between 48 and 149 minutes and had a median of 68 minutes.

Artifact submission. Ten participants returned a symbolic artifact (see Table 2) and professional vitae, and eight participants returned student evaluations or an equivalent. Although student evaluations were requested of all participants, three participants chose not to share and did not provide a rationale for their omission. The remaining participant indicated his discomfort with such disclosure and did not provide an evaluation.

Table 2

Participation Level

Pseudonym	Focus group	1 st Interview	Symbol representing classroom identity	2 nd Interview	Evaluation
Art	No	Yes	Depiction of an outstretched hand (cooperation; outreach)	Yes	Yes
DM	Yes	Yes	Picture of welcome; (hospitality; excellence)	Yes	Yes
Brown Hornet	No	Yes	Depiction of dishes and setting of table (honor; invitation; welcome)	Yes	Yes
Huntstone	No	Yes	Personal medallion (humility; integrity; self-knowledge)	Yes	Yes
Imam	Yes	Yes	Autobiography of Malcolm X (courage)	Yes	Yes
James	No	Yes	Picture of Afrocentric books (advocacy)	Yes	Yes
Kevin	Yes	Yes	Depiction of a fork in the road (choices; freedom; self-determination)	Yes	No
Kirk	Yes	Yes	None submitted	Yes	No
Kosugi	Yes	No	None submitted	No	No
Maxwell	Yes	Yes	Extended family picture (nurturance; possibility)	Yes	Yes
Noel	No	Yes	Jewish biblical narrative (integrity; spirituality; transformation)	Yes	No
Raymond Key	Yes	Yes	Career retrospective (respect; honor)	Yes	Yes

Measures to Control for Researcher Bias

A researcher journal was kept to account and control for researcher bias. An auditor, described later, examined the journal to detect researcher bias. Participant member checks were used to control researcher bias and to review transcripts for accuracy.

Researcher journal. A researcher journal was maintained to document and discover my biases. The journal entries reflected my research activities, affective responses to my immersive research experience, and my initial thoughts of the various interviews and participant contacts. Interpretive notes and memos of the interview transcripts were also recorded to track emergent codes and themes and to document these for member check and auditor review purposes.

While I believed all participants would story Afrocentric concepts, I was hopeful that their stories would not center solely on reactions to White supremacy or oppression. I hoped such, as I believed that there were other ways to define the African American experience. I also expected that the participants would quote or cite African-centered or Afrocentric authors and articulate values beyond the generic labels of communalism, holism, and spirituality. When participants did not articulate such, I was required to pay deeper attention to their words, intonations, contexts, and our interactions.

Auditor. An African American, male, doctoral student in the CES program of my institution served as the study's sole auditor. His audit training was conducted by my research advisor. The training provided information on audit protocols and promoted auditing consistency. The auditor examined the focus group transcript; two

first-interview transcripts; two second-interview transcripts, and the associated codes, coding documents, and themes. The auditor provided written feedback after each review and returned his comments via e-mail. The auditor's feedback and comments contained minor clarifications or amplifications of the codes and themes. The auditor did not mention any concerns with respect to the over or under representation of participant voice, themes, or codes. However, the auditor did provide feedback as to the lack of information on the varying intersections of a participant's identity (i.e., sexual orientation or socioeconomic status). This feedback revealed potential biases or limitations to the analysis, interpretation, and representation of the data, as Afrocentric identity was the primary lens for this study.

Member checks. Member checks with all 12 participants occurred in three distinct phases. In the first phase, participants ($N = 6$) examined the focus group transcription for accuracy, meanings and interpretations, and a sense of adequate representation within the derived codes. Participants suggested minor changes (i.e., dates and name spelling) in their reviews, and their changes did not alter or affect the preliminary codes, themes, or interpretation.

In the second phase, each participant ($N = 11$) examined the coded transcript of his first interview for accuracy, meaning, interpretation, and an adequate representation of his thoughts as expressed by the derived codes. Participants suggested minor changes (i.e., dates and name spelling) in their reviews, and their changes did not alter or affect the preliminary codes, themes, or interpretation.

Lastly, in the third phase, each participant ($N = 10$) examined the coded transcript of his second interview for accuracy, meanings, interpretation, and an adequate representation of his thoughts as expressed by the derived codes. Participants

suggested minor changes (i.e., dates and name spelling) in their reviews, and their changes did alter or affect the preliminary codes, themes, or interpretation.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data for this study included the focus group ($N = 7$), first and second interviews ($N = 11$), member-checking feedback for the focus group ($N = 6$), member-checking feedback for the first interview ($N = 11$), member-checking feedback for the second interview ($N = 10$), participant vitas ($N = 10$), symbolic artifacts ($N = 10$), student evaluations ($N = 6$), and a conference evaluation ($N = 1$). All interviews were transcribed by a professional transcriptionist who had signed a confidentiality agreement in advance.

Prolonged engagement. The focus group transcript was read and re-read multiple times, openly coded and recoded, which allowed the data to emerge in a naturalistic manner (Polkinghorne, 1995). The initial codes were reviewed with my research advisor and then, along with the focus group transcript, were sent to the seven participants 159 days after the focus group. Participants were asked to review the transcript for accuracy and the codes for accurate meaning. All participants returned their member check responses after an average of 24 days. All participants indicated that, other than name spelling corrections, the codes and themes were accurate and representative of their experience. Two participants suggested name corrections and minor changes to the information they discussed.

Like the focus group, the transcripts of first and second interviews were read and re-read multiple times, openly coded, and subjected to constant comparative process with each subsequent interview and the focus group. The second group of interview transcripts were compare to the focus group, first interviews, and preceding

second interviews. The coded transcript of each individual interview was sent to respective participants for member checking purposes. The process associated with each of the first interviews (i.e., occurrence, transcription, multiple readings, open and constant comparative coding, and member check and data refinement) took an average of 143 days for the first interview and 159 days for the second interview's demonstrating prolonged engagement with the data which were collected.

Auditor. An African American male doctoral student served as the auditor for this study and reviewed the focus group and a total of four randomly selected interviews from both the first and second interview rounds. Generally speaking, the auditor stated that the derived codes and described "themes are solid, consistent and accurate!" The auditor suggested amplification of participant voices regarding the emotional tolls of their isolation and their concurrent roles as torch bearers and cultural informants in largely predominantly White institutional contexts. The auditors also stressed the lack of questions that were related to the intersections of the participants' varying identities.

Participant artifacts. Participants' artifacts (i.e., symbolic representation, vitae, and student and conference evaluations) were examined for consistency with the derived codes, member check, and auditor feedback. Generally speaking, the interpretative meanings of these items supported the derived codes and themes, illustrated the participant's professional or classroom-specific practices, and provided an additional lens into the participant's constructed Afrocentric identity. Most participants returned their artifacts prior to the second interview or with the second interview member check.

Coded findings. Two hundred discrete codes arose during the open coding and constant comparative processes. The codes, as they were initially conceptualized, were derived from the common and unique expressions of participants. The codes were placed into 40 largely distinct, yet somewhat overlapping, categories. These categories were selected based upon their consistency with participant statements and information derived from the literature review. The 40 categories were further synthesized and reduced into eight overarching, preliminary themes. These themes served as temporary containers, pending subsequent member checking, auditor review, literature review, and iterative refinement. The themes were (a) Afrocentric concepts, (b) ways of being, (c) classroom style and communal obligations, (d) institutional challenges, (e) symbolic images and representations, (f) affective and emotional responses, (g) support system and survival efforts, and (h) holistic versus dichotomous tensions. The themes were finalized after the member checks, auditor response, and additional literature review. White's (1970) description of Black psychological strengths, Harding's (1974) vocational guidance and expectations for Black scholars, and Blake's (1997) description of Afrocentric rhetorical tokens shaped this presentation of the final themes: (a) connectedness, (b) spirituality, (c) emotional vitality, (d) improvisation, (e) healthy suspicion, (f) gallows humor, (g) resiliency, and (h) redemptive suffering.

Organization of Findings

Consistent with the narrative tradition and with my view of Afrocentric research paradigms, I present the results of this study using the African version of the tortoise and hare race (see Appendix B) as a literary scaffold and storytelling device. The unity sculpture also provided a useful conceptual framework for this presentation.

The story of the race, briefly discussed in Chapter III, illustrated African sensibilities and values reflected in unity and cooperation. Likewise, the unity sculpture, which was discussed in Chapter II, represented the interdependent and communal nature of an African identity.

Presenting the results of this study as a story asks the reader to consider the initial strategic meeting of the tortoises, and each subsequent lap or segment of the resulting race, as symbolic expressions of the participants' collective and individual narrative journey as well as their common and unique experiences. Each race segment is primarily, but not exclusively, represented by one participant's experience and illuminates one of this study's seven themes. The description of each race segment is supported by participant quotes drawn from all data sources which provide interpretive insight and support for the respective theme. I ask the reader to consider each race segment as a symbolic expression of the participant's narrative and CES journey.

In the paragraphs that follow I provide brief introductions of the study's participants to lay a foundation which expresses their uniqueness and communality. Afterward the introductions, I discuss the findings from the focus group as a pretext and context to the individual segments of the tortoise and hare race story and as an analog to the tortoises' initial and strategic communal gathering. As noted earlier, the communal gathering is central to African values and ways of being, reflects and amplifies the collective voices of the participants, and is the basis for individual race segments describe herein. Finally, the individual themes are restoried (Creswell, Hanson, Clark, Plano, & Morales, 2007) and imaginatively presented herein as individual and unique segments of the tortoise and hare race story as it is told from an African perspective.

Participant Introduction

The participants of this study were magnanimous, optimistic, and greatly devoted to the CES profession. They believed in its growth potentials and fairness capabilities and loved the profession so much that they took the time to tell their stories. They hoped that their hearts and revealed experiences would be well represented and well received. The participants spoke highly of those who came before them, on behalf of those who would come after them, and to advance the larger CES profession. They were respectful of my questions and demonstrated welcome and openness to each other. The devotion of the participants to the CES and counseling professions was especially noteworthy, since their collegial and institutional contexts often remained mired in forms of hidden prejudice and unwelcome. This following introductions provide insight into the unique and common concerns and mindsets of the participants and into their perspectives of the current state of the CES profession, classroom emphasis, and the varying needs of our students.

Raymond Key. Raymond Key has mentored hundreds of students within CES and has even more “grand-students.” He has been considered a torchbearer and forerunner of African Americans within the CES field. Raymond Key stressed the importance of listening and curiosity when he stated, “I never learn anything when I’m talking.” His presence, authenticity, and openness facilitated communal safety within the focus group and supported the participants’ disclosures. Throughout this study I identify Raymond Key as the senior elder due to the length of his career and the considerable breadth and depth of his contributions to the counseling and CES professions.

Huntstone. Huntstone stated his antipathy for “a passive diversity agenda” and a deep concern as to whether the CES field is committed to multiculturalism beyond mere lip service. He indicated that, while many can recruit an African American for the counselor education professorate, they are not quite sure how to retain him. He spoke openly about his internalized racism, his ongoing participation in other forms of oppression (i.e., homophobia and sexism), and his continuous recovery from White male, heterosexual privilege. Huntstone’s transparency, honesty, and introspection were noteworthy; provided him with compassion, hope and insight; were foundational to his teaching style; and were central to the experiences and stories he shares with his students.

Kevin. Kevin staunchly stressed a concern that the 2014 American Counseling Association code of ethics’ “progressive liberal agenda” affronted the cultural and spiritual sensibilities of African Americans. He stated that his identity as a Christian and political conservative was at odds with such codes and that his spiritual convictions were often unwelcome within the professional community. He balked at the submission to codes and ideologies which come from “a bunch of folk who don’t live in our world, who don’t live in the trenches . . . to a bunch of folk who see karma as residing in themselves, not in a greater Being.”

Maxwell. Maxwell joyously attributed his personal, academic, and professional achievement and sense of efficacy to maternal wisdom and example. Throughout our encounters he relayed stories of his mother’s determination, resiliency, and faith. He indicated that her wisdom is central to his mantra “that all things are possible and that there is nothing that is impossible.” Her wisdom and

instruction permeated his stories of personal identity, student interactions, professional journey, and overall optimism.

DM. DM reported that he entered the counseling profession as he was “deeply bothered” by the inadequate mental health services “that poor people were receiving.” DM considered his doctoral professors’ lack of cultural competency as his call to personal examination, strategic involvement, and professional response. He saw their lacking emphasis as his mandate to “train up people so they can be more comprehensive in counselor educating,” and he forsook passively waiting for his “professors to do something that they themselves didn’t want to do or really didn’t know how to do.” As such, he launched into a journey to overcome his deficiencies in cultural competence.

Art. In the classroom, Art indicated that he stresses the importance of community service and activism, the development of professional counselor identity, and an unyielding devotion to the counseling profession. Art reported that, from day one, he requires students to become actively engaged within the community. He continuously introduced his students to counseling professionals and provided them with a thorough understanding of the job requirements and expectations which they will encounter after their degree completion. His proactive, pragmatic, and praxis stance is Afrocentric in that “every student has to join quote unquote a committee or club” and find ways to serve the mental health needs of the African American community.

Kirk. Kirk expressed immense gratitude for the contributions of African American “godfathers, the forefathers of counselor education . . . you know, the Courtland Lees, the Don Lockes, the Parhams,” and heightened concern about the

continuance of their legacy. He indicated that, due to the changing of the guard, “it is time for us to step up now” and to ensure that African American women also receive similar support in their CES journey. Kirk lamented the relatively low numbers of African American men within CES, the relative isolation of those currently in the profession, and the individuality and entitlement he sees in the new African American students and professionals entering the counseling field.

Noel. Like Art, Noel insisted that counselor training must engage the everyday realities and concerns of people, specifically of African Americans adolescents. Noel indicated that counseling must not be taught objectively at a distance or from afar. Rather, he stated,

You can learn Super by reading a book. It’s about how to apply [the career theory of] Super to these African American boys and girls at this alternative school, where anger problems and issues with parents [exist]. It’s bigger than all of this stuff.

Noel determined that counseling practice—be it scholarship, educational, or clinical—is esoteric if it is not focused on activism and fails to address social concerns and issues of empowerment.

Brown Hornet. Brown Hornet highly valued his integrity, ethnicity, authenticity, sense of self-respect, and progeny. He also abhorred any denigration or abnegation of these in his academic quest and professional endeavor. He stated,

Listen, tenure, full-professorship means nothing if I [can] be a Black man only when I leave the walls of academia. It means nothing to me. And if I am not doing work in a fashion that’s true to me, then it’s just a waste of time. [I can’t] tell my sons, “Hey I am a full professor, I’m a, you know got tenure, yet I have to act like a White boy and compromise to do it.”

Brown Hornet credited his mentor with showing him an example of professional ethnic integrity and classroom authenticity and reported that he

welcomed, honored, and required such from his students. He emphasized invitational classroom space and insisted that a hospitable teaching stance best facilitated student safety, growth, and counselor identity development.

Kosugi. Kosugi advanced that, as a Black male professor, maintaining his sense of dignity is his highest priority. He stated that some of his colleagues attempt to bait and incite him to become “the stereotypical, angry Black man.” Kosugi reported that, rather than succumbing to their expectations, his resulting anger and their latent hostility motivated his professional achievement. He enjoyed silencing his adversaries and provocateurs through his demonstration of unassailable excellence. He relayed a strong belief that educated Black men are perceived as a threat in the academy, and that, generally speaking, his White colleagues remain unaccustomed to dealing with a Black professor who is “able to talk with them and articulate on this level.”

Imam. As an adherent of Islam, Imam spoke extensively about his core spiritual values of faith, fairness, compassion, mercy, and justice and how these values play out in his classroom style, student remediation, and teaching emphasis. Additionally, he spoke at length about his experiences of racial battle fatigue, micro-aggression, White privilege, and his encounters with his students’ White supremacist ideology. He expressed unstinting insistence that his students understand the impact which such realities have on persons of color. He reported bewilderment at the lack of receptivity he has received from Black faculty within other departments. Imam found comfort in Raymond Key’s focus group comments as they captured the essence of his double bind and felt sadness.

James. James spoke passionately of his devotion to African-centered lifestyle, educational ideology, spirituality, and collective emphases. He emphasized the

principles of MA'AT (i.e., “truth, justice, righteousness, harmony, and order”) as he spoke. He spoke highly about his spiritual mentor who introduced him to Afrocentric scholars such as “John Henry Clark, Wade Nobles, Asa Hilliard, Kobi Kambon, Na'im Akbar, and Marimba Ani.” James' overriding concern for the CES professional at large, and for CES' diversity and social justice emphases in particular, was captured in his statement,

Despite the tremendous efforts of people to alter how the profession operates, there continues to be a need within the profession to have conversations about cultural diversity and how cultural diversity and respect for other people's cultures can help promote an environment where social justice becomes a norm and not just something that we aspire to.

Focus Group

Seven of the above men participated in the focus group for this study.

Participant relatedness and connection were prominent aspects which emerged during this meeting and experience. In the following section, participant quotes are relayed to highlight the overall atmosphere and relational dynamics within the group, the existential questions and professional dilemmas expressed by group members, and their varied responses and perspectives. The focus group experience is analogous to the initial gathering which is featured in the African version of the tortoise and hare race (Gyekye, 1996) (see Appendix B).

Pretext and Context

The focus group served as the cornerstone event and the initial immersive experience for this study and resulted in the following themes: connectedness, spirituality, emotional vitality, improvisation, healthy suspicion, gallows humor, and resiliency. Focus group members included Raymond Key, Kevin, Maxwell, DM, Kirk,

Kosugi, and Imam. All participants expressed gratitude for the invitation, welcome, table, food, and the opportunity to exchange story. Participant gratitude suggested high preferences for unity, cooperation, collective problem solving, and mutual understanding. Four participants (i.e., DM, Maxwell, Kirk, and Raymond Key) fondly recalled a roundtable forum of Black male, counselor educators at the 2002 American Counseling Association annual conference and expressed the desire for future gatherings and similar interactions. They indicated that they gained critical access to the story and experience of mentors and peers in such.

Importance of Community

The journey of African American men in CES was often described as a lonely endeavor. Collegial exclusions or insensitivity often made the journey more difficult and perilous. In the following section, aspects of the focus group dynamics, atmosphere, and participant interactions are described in relation to African American communal identities and the power and importance of cultural and professional communities for these men are illustrated. Finally participant insights into the focus group experience, benefit, and purpose will be discussed.

Communal order and structure. Raymond Key and Kevin were given special honor due to their chronological age and were treated as presiding elders. Four participants (DM, Maxwell, Raymond Key, and Kirk) reported that they knew each other well. Two participants (Kevin and Kosugi) reported that they knew of the others either vaguely or remotely, and one participant (Imam) indicated that he knew no one.

Without prompting, Raymond Key had sat at the head of the table while Kevin sat to his immediate right. The fact that Raymond Key, as eldest, was in charge became readily apparent when he gently corrected my omission of Kevin in the roll

call. In doing so, he established order, ensured that all were honored, completed our circle, and kept fidelity with African cultural sensibilities. In retrospect, Raymond Key's authority convened the meeting. School was in session as he spoke about those who had reared him in the counseling profession and provided others insight into the contributions of African Americans to counseling profession. In doing so, Raymond Key initiated an ancestral roll call, challenged participants' knowledge of their roots, and stressed the value of cultural continuity, communal gatekeepers, and relational support. The following conversation illustrates his role and the group dynamics.

Raymond Key: Lots of different people. I was sort of adopted by a group of elders in (his home state). Some of whom were women—Thelma Dailey, Alice Solomon and Carrie. They were very strong African American women who were predominantly counseling professionals. And then there was John McFadden who was at North Carolina Central. People who were, I mean . . . John McFadden is probably best known as the founder of the Association of Non-White concerns. You probably don't even know that name [pause].

Maxwell: That was their predecessor, the predecessor for . . .

Raymond Key: AMCD [Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development], yeah, the original thing was that, uh, John McFadden was a powerful man who had lots of good advice for young professionals. And so did those women . . . Well, you sort of have to have someone point out some of those things to you that are very simple yet are probably indicative of the unwritten, unspoken rules of the organization.

Familial harmony, cooperation, and balance. Focus group participants stressed the value of family and also expressed familial kindnesses to each other. Each man respected or referred to the other as if he were either a father or brother, and our time together was cooperative and non-competitive. Participants celebrated and honored an individual's success and professional contributions as if it were uniquely his, yet also belonged to them all. Regardless of tenured status, professional longevity, or chronological age, each made room to hear and learn from the others. Kirk

indicated that the space was culturally familiar and similar to that of “barbershop” of “family reunion.” All participants expressed a strong devotion to and appreciation for family, community, heritage, and partnership. DM stated,

DM: I thank the good Lord for my wife. “Cause there’ve been a few times where I’ve typed the e-mails, ready to send them out . . .”

Group: Laughter.

DM: . . . and putting the world on notice, this is about, it is goin’ down now.

Group: Laughter.

DM: For some reason I turn to her and say “I want you to read this” and she says . . .

Group: Laughter.

DM: She says “we can’t send this! You can’t send this!” And I say, “why not? This is how I feel! This is what’s going on with me.” She says, “DM.” She said, “DM, they don’t care and you’re giving them something that they don’t deserve.”

Group: That’s right! Mm hm!

DM: And she was like, “don’t say anything or say it like . . .” And I said, “That ain’t what I’m trying to say!” She said “I know you’re angry but that’s not what you want to say right now.” And then one time, she said, “I tell you what. As long as you close the computer and sleep tonight and if you still feel that same way in the morning then send the e-mail.” And like I said, you know, I woke up and said “You’re right, baby, you’re right.”

Interactional Styles

Humor and laughter. After the roll call, introductions, and first question, our conversation spontaneously took off with a life of its own. It proceeded at its own direction and at its own pace. Participants laughed and joked with one another as they listened to each other. The group conversations and exchanges were emergent, fun, interactive, unrehearsed and, at times, serious. Participants used humor to demonstrate

the irony of a situation, and interruptions of laughter were common, expected, and welcomed.

Overt and expressive laughter occurred 145 times during the conversation, while lesser chuckles, encouragers, and intonations also occurred throughout. The laughter was indicative of call and response, signified communal understanding of the storyteller's journey and plight, and gave him assurance that he was not alone. The following conversation provides an example of the humor and supportive laughter which occurred during participant interactions.

Kirk: Again, a junior faculty member, taking on, you know, a 100 other faculty mem- saying, we're not diverse and how're we gonna get there? You know, things such as that. I clearly recall a meeting that we had about this whole reorganization that was going on in our school at the time. I didn't know what the heck it was, but I knew I needed to be there. I showed up and I walked into our classroom, or I attempt to walk into the classroom, and there's a faculty member there and she looked at me and said, "this is for faculty," and I said, "I know."

Raymond Key: Oh no!

Kirk: And I proceeded to walk in and she stepped in front of me. And said, "this is for faculty." And I said, "I know." So I attempted to step aside her. And, my colleagues were sitting in the back, and they waved me in, and so I went and she tried to grab me! And then she realized that I was a Black guy in the professional studies department.

Group: Loud laughter!

Kirk: . . . and that I belong. I mean, really. I know I look youthful.

Group: Loud laughter!

Kirk: But . . .

Raymond Key: Well . . .

Group: Louder laughter!

Kirk: But the bottom line is this . . .

Group: Laughter continues with cross-talk!

Kirk: The bottom line is this, you know, it was February, it was three o'clock on a Friday.

Raymond Key: [smiling] And there was a meeting.

Kirk: And what other student is gonna be . . .

Group: Loud laughter!

Kirk: . . . in the college of education at three o'clock on a Friday?

DM: [Inaudible].

Kirk: But yeah, so that told me that I really don't belong, there's not really a place here.

DM: Or could it mean that, the world is still so under exposed to people like us doing what we do that it's still shocking?

Frankness, openness, and dignity. The safety and intimacy of the group enabled frank and open discussions. Participants freely and candidly spoke about their journeys, experiences, and perspectives. For instance, Raymond Key stated, "I really think that if White people would be honest with us, they really don't believe that we have the ability to be as smart as they are." Such expressions were common, and all participants spoke about disconcerting experiences met within their CES training and institutional contexts. These experiences were: collegial exclusion and insensitivity, evaluation and tenure-related concerns, student entitlement and micro-aggressions, and lack of multicultural emphasis during doctoral training. Participants also relayed stories of racial battle fatigue, collegial incitements to stereotypical and demoralizing behaviors, and strategies which were employed in the maintenance of their personal dignity. Kosugi stated,

But one thing you won't ever have me lose is my dignity. Regardless if I have to find another way around it, be creative, but I don't think anybody I'll work

with, even in institutions that I left, would say “Wow, he never ever lost his dignity.” I never responded even when you knew somebody was kinda pushin’ you. I’m like, okay . . . and I heard one lady say it, “I was just waitin’ for you to lose it in there.” “No! ‘Cause that's what you want me to do, but you're not going to make me lose my dignity.” And I think for myself, my headstone, that's what it would be, ‘cause I see all this as, it’s a game. Tenure is a game. You know, but you're not . . . regardless, even if I happened to not get tenure, I’m gonna keep my dignity because that's something I think that I'll always have, that you can never take from me, regardless of all the shenanigans that you may try to put me through.

Existential Queries

Two existential, meta-questions emerged from participants and lingered throughout the discussion. The questions centered on the ability to develop strategies which would ensure emotional survival in environments of collegial slights, covert micro-aggressions, gross insensitivities, and overt message of unwelcome and implied exclusions. The questions were:

- How can we thrive in a profession which espouses diversity, advocacy, inclusivity, and multiculturalism, while our colleagues are often oblivious, insensitive and continuously choose orientations of oppression, status quo, and White privilege?
- How should we respond to those brothers and sisters within CES who do not interact collectively or who do not profess any sensibility or obligation to our history or to mentor the next generations of African American students in CES?

Participants discussed varying responses to these dilemmas and spoke about the hurts, anger, sadness, and mistrust caused by these situations. Their responses included one or any combination of the following: choosing a sublimated focus and masked response, choosing emotional catharsis and direct response, reliance upon

family and support networks, reliance on faith and ancestral wisdom, maintaining focus and dignity, the avoidance of stereotypical behaviors, and proving academic capability through excellence.

Elder response and guidance. Raymond Key and Kevin, as senior and presiding elders, storied their response to the above questions. Their sharing assured each participant that he was not alone and indicated that they had direct experience and knowledge of the stressors and dilemmas implied within the questions. Their sharing provided the listeners with a sense of belonging, an open forum for expressions, and an opportunity to gather collective support. Their stories highlighted a need for catharsis, mindfulness of ancestors and compassionate response to any Black CES professional who acted out of gross individuality.

Too lose it or not to lose it? As eldest, Raymond Key shared the anger, pain, and wound which he had felt when his dissertation committee served watermelon to celebrate his successful defense. While he stated that their gesture was largely innocent and a poor attempt at connection, he also felt that it was insensitive, derogatory, and sent a symbolic message to him that, though qualified, he “did not belong.” It ruptured professional community, detracted from his achievement, and produced sorrow. As he revealed his story of wound and sadness, Raymond Key spoke about the need for the participants to have a safe place for emotional catharsis. He was also respectful of the differing ways participants described to cope with stress. He stated,

[If] I was counseling either of you, I would say, as long as you sleep well, with that, then it’s okay. But if you find yourself frustrated because you don’t have the ability—no, I’m not judging you, you don’t have the desire to lose it occasionally in order to sleep better. Then, you know, and if losing it is going to cause you to lose sleep, then don’t lose it. So you’ve gotta be [real], and I’m

of the opinion that the stress of being Black is so significant that at some point it overflows.

Non-stereotypical response. In cooperative contrast and as if to complement each other, Kevin and Raymond Key encouraged the participants towards personal professional excellence and removed any excuse for self-indulgence or apathetic responses. For example, Kevin indicated that he had been “denied full professor last year.” And it’s strictly race. And the senior faculty member had made it clear, he was gonna’ try to stop me getting it this year.” Despite his colleague’s attitude and roadblock effort, Kevin stated that he remained diligent in his tasks, did not shun his adversarial colleague, and subsequently received praise for his efforts and work. He and Raymond Key entered into a dialogue which addressed the above meta-questions. Kevin stated that he

Always try to act in a way there would never be any ill-repute upon [her]. You know, and that don’t mean that grandma didn’t “shee-oot” a number of times in her life. You know, ‘cause that’s how she would say “shit” you know. But I think it always has to come down to, how do I present myself that doesn't fit their stereotypes?

Raymond Key: Yeah, my grandmother used to turn people over to the Lord. That was her way of doin’ it. She’d just say, “I’m going to turn them over to the Lord,” and literally she would divorce herself from whatever the situation was and say, “God is gonna take care, let them. I’m not gonna worry about them anymore. I don’t have that ability. I don’t—I’m gonna do it here ‘cause I don’t think God is gonna do it like I’m gonna do it. I’m not going to leave it in His hands.”

Group: Loud Laughter, cross-talk.

Raymond Key: God is gonna be merciful and just, and fair, and all of that. At some point I’d have to come out of it.

Compassionate embrace of the prodigal. In tandem with Raymond Key, Kevin maintained that the community is always responsible to and for the individual. He indicated that the communal responsibility required an empathic response and open

embrace of any member who chose strident individuality and self-centeredness over collective identity and communal obligation. Kevin decried the shunning of any individual; advocated the understanding of his or her isolated plight; implored her or his integration, reunion, and support within the community; and spoke about future possibilities and obligations. He stated,

That's why I come to these things, in part, is to be mindful of the generations coming up. But I also have to be mindful of the ones who forgot where they came from and who they are, because the day comes when they hit that wall. 'Cause they will hit that wall. And they need somebody to still be there for them regardless of whether they met their responsibility to others. We still have a responsibility to be there for them.

Raymond Key and Kevin were mindful of the need for inter-generational hospitality and welcome. Their insight, compassion, and communal emphases reflected the meaning of the Akan proverb that “a single tree cannot withstand a storm” and were a faithful illustration of African collective values.

Participant Experience

The above discussions were provided to offer insight into the impacts of the isolated experience relayed by participants above. They also demonstrated the importance and power of such forums for these men as they need to discuss their journeys. The discussions set the stage for the race narrative which follows. Generally speaking, each participant stated an appreciation for the others, the group experience, overall interactions, and this research effort. Finally, one participant suggested that the focus group provided a unique and separate space for necessary and purposeful preparation.

Communal mentorship. For example, Imam expressed gratitude for the group discussion, the space to witness mentorship, and the lessons he gleaned for his current institutional context. He stated,

I didn't realize how isolated and alone I was until I went to this conference and I met you and went to your focus group. And I met all the other brothers, and I was like, wow, see, this is what's needed. Where there were other people of African descent mentoring other people of African descent and helping us understand the dynamics of uh, higher education. Because I learned so much from the different brothers.

Mutual exchange. Kirk also stated that the focus group resembled the familiar communal space of a family gathering and contained nurturing and supportive conversations. Specifically, he enjoyed the openness and shared exchanges on how to approach different situations. He appreciated,

Just the dialogue, the community with all of us just getting together and just talking. You know what I mean . . . kinda like barbershop talking or family reunion. Just laid it out and just like, this is what going on and this is how we are dealing with it. That type of thing.

Separation for preparation. Raymond Key offered perspective of the focus group atmosphere, emphasized the unity and uniqueness of members, and spoke of its overall meaning and purpose. He said,

It was just a nice feeling in the room, to think all of us were of the same mind about some issues, not everything, but about many issues. And it is a feeling of freedom in those circumstances. And I think that we often—some of us have this notion of artificial inclusion, that every group has to be a composite of all the demographics in the country or something's wrong with it. But I don't think that's true. I think that—I had a priest who used to say, “it was separation as preparation.” Separation from the whole in order to be more prepared to function fully in the whole. And I think that's sort of the way I view the group in Denver. Yeah, and you go out and you go back stronger in the other environment because you have been boosted by your appearance in the other group. I think that's important. I think we all need that boost from somewhere. And sometimes we forget that it can come in what I call, I don't like the word, but a [group] “segregated” by some demographic characteristic.

Symbolic Implications and Considerations

Together, Imam's appreciation, Kirk's familial emphasis, and Raymond Key's insight into the group's ultimate purpose, supported this consideration of the focus group as an experience analogous to the strategic communal gathering near the beginning of the African version of the tortoise and hare race (see Appendix B). In that meeting the tortoises discussed and agreed to the race plan and assigned members individual race segments. Similar to the reliance on others that was illustrated in the discussion of the unity sculpture in Chapter II, the tortoises submitted to the idea that their unity and cooperation would preserve collective honor and provide them with a chance to invite hare to an alternate way of being.

I ask the reader to consider the brief narrative following this section as a symbolic narrative which represents the overall focus group and participant expressions of this experience. The narrative sets the stage for the individual segments of the race contained in following sections and which are italicized herein. Each race segment reflects a particular theme and precedes a brief interpretation of the segment and related participant quotes. For clarity and explanatory purposes, the hare represents the antagonism, arrogance, and insensitivity mentioned at the beginning of the African version of the tortoise and hare race story (see Appendix B) and which were also stated herein by participants in their stories, lived experiences and personal observations.

Connectedness: Separation for Preparation

Hare's spittle flew in their faces as he arrogantly spoke about his speed. Yes, his moist words did not smell good and his listeners felt insulted as they wiped away

boasted phlegm. Hare's paws kicked up a cloud of dust as he ran by and mocked their slowness. Hare's rudeness was evidence enough that he had eaten from the tree, had become drunk, and was adrift in thoughts of superiority, triumphalism and magnificence. So on the gathering day the community selected runners and devised a response to, and for, hare. Their discussion was hearty, and all ideas and viewpoints were welcomed. Raymond Key offered gratitude for the ancestors and provided socially sanctioned race behaviors. Maxwell expressed his devotion to elders and family. Kevin exhorted everyone to remain humble and focused. DM and Kirk knew each runner represented the entire community and expressed their concern and sadness that too few had volunteered or heeded the call to come forward. Kosugi offered ideas on overcoming expected and unforeseen obstacles. Imam didn't say too much as he felt naïve, fatigued and unsure as to how to run. Instead of speaking, he listened intently, took notes on what others said and drew insight and wisdom from their words. All agreed one thing: Each runner must work twice as hard as hare, as the terrain lying ahead was exceedingly harried.

Ontological Awareness

Spirituality and emotional vitality were emergent themes. Participants spoke of their personal and professional identities in spiritual terms. They also discussed maternal ancestors and the role their wisdom played in their academic success and endurance.

Spirituality

Kevin spat on the parched earth when he lined up for the first leg of the race. He did so to ensure that his lungs and spit were clear and to know that he had not been infected by hare's contagion. He traveled a great distance before his mind

wandered. As he strained forward, he reminded himself and rehearsed “Mshau Mungu nimumua” in his thoughts. In fact, he was afraid to think of anything else for too long and was scared that his mind might stray into anger or spite or perhaps somewhere else too far away. He knew that a foolish mind could lead to enslavement, familial dishonor and communal degradation.

The African (Kikuyu) proverb rehearsed by Kevin in the segment above means “He who forgets God is a slave” when translated. I included the proverb here as a spiritual worldview, belief, trust, and faith were common features of individual narratives. Spiritual beliefs informed a participant’s identity, gave him insight, and provided a sense of virtuous and moral behavior. Participant expressions of spirituality were consistent with the African worldview and values.

Kevin stated that his faith in God provided him with identity, self-awareness, and purpose. He said, “I am who I am. I’m a creation of God. He made this. I just hope I use it to his glory.” Kevin furthered that a spiritual focus was the central catalyst for his personal change and required humility. He stated that his wife encouraged him “to trust God and reach out and ask for help to get out of the life that I was in.” Kevin said God was the source of his courage, candor, hope, and personal morality. He relayed,

I don’t say what’s politically correct. I say what I believe to be is right. And I trust, always, that the words out of my mouth are the words God would have me to say. Not the words of a man.

Kevin credited his professional achievements, and the collective successes of all African American academicians, to divine assistance. He avoided hubris and stated the following,

How did we get to where we are? It wasn't because of what we did. [It was] because of the power that God gives us, the strength he gives us to be able to do the things that we do. You know, it's not easy to be who we are. It's not easy to be academically successful.

Kevin expressed belief in the collective identity of African Americans and stressed the values of community, work ethic, and dignity. He expressed disdain for any paternalistic or patronizing attitude directed towards African Americans within the CES profession. He stated,

You know, it's we are who we are. God-fearing people. We're conservative people. We're not a liberal and progressive-minded people. We're a people that believe in hard work. And opportunity. We don't want a handout. We want an opportunity. What—often goes on in counselor education programs, in relation to ethnic minority people and in particular Black people, is that for you to make it, you need us. No! To make it, I need God. And I need to trust God. Hopefully in the process, [when] we are encountering challenge, I can find a counselor who also has God in his or her life, understands the importance and role that God plays in the life of God's children and can help me therefore to be able to overcome the obstacles that get in my way of living that real authentic life as God would have it be for me.

James similarly stressed the centrality of a spiritual identity and described the African idea concerning the harmony that exists between the Creator and all created things. He stated,

So that's how we understand African-centeredness, that there is a spiritual origin of everything and the evidence that supports the existence of a divine source is all around us. And it's our responsibility, and we have the capabilities, to decipher those messages and see this harmonious relationship that exists between the Creator and everything that the Creator created, including us.

James also spoke about the African ideas of spirituality and relatedness. He continued,

African-centered worldview . . . emphasized the importance of spirit. And that spirit is um, spirit is derived from the Creator. And the Creator exists in all things, and those things that appeared immaterial, there's always life there because had it had not been for the Creator, those things wouldn't exist.

James indicated contrasted his beliefs with the European worldview. He stated that his worldview governed his sense of “how a person should conduct themselves in relationship to other people and nature.” He advanced that,

One of the principles of MA’AT is balance and correspondence. And that’s a big difference between hierarchal relationships and dominance and oppression. So the idea, in Eurocentric thinking that man should have dominion and it’s his divine right to control, is the exact opposite of the African-centric ideals that say man and woman should seek to achieve harmony and balance and reciprocity with everything.

While Kevin and James spoke of spiritual humility, identity, and responsibility, Noel employed a biblical narrative to demonstrate the mentorship and courage needed to face the unavoidable crises met during counselor training and professional development. He stated,

I often anchor what I do around scriptures. So the three Hebrews—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, how they had no choice but to go thru the fire. And as new counselors, not even new counselors, as old counselors, we are so busy trying to get people to walk around fires and to notice fires and get out of the way of fires. Sometimes you gotta just walk thru the fire and um, and God will find you in that fire, and you will come out better as you walk thru that fire. So preparing people to walk through the fire, walking with three people through the fire, I think they are huge for me.

Noel reported that he expresses his faith to increase student confidence, clarify their role, and aid the establishment of professional boundaries. He also stated that he emphasizes client resiliency to developing students as a means to give them confidence and perspective. He stated,

Your clients are hardy and they’re fine, just do good work. Stop pressuring yourself. Just do good work, trust the process, trust your training and do good work. And let God do the rest of the work. You just do your part. And don’t take on other people’s parts. So, clinically speaking, that’s what I do.

In addition, Imam reported adherence to the Islamic beliefs and hoped that he faithfully represents the Koranic values of fairness and acceptance within his classroom identity. He said,

One time someone told me that many people would never get the opportunity to get to read the Koran, literally. But the only Koran that they're ever going to be able to read is by watching you. So what is the Koran going to say to them? So it's like I try to in the classroom live, as a professor in the classroom, my understanding of the Koran, as far as being fair, being non-judgmental, and carrying the principles on.

As suggested in the proverb and story which began this section, participants often expressed their personal and academic identities while referencing sacred texts or using spiritual language. Such expressions were consistent with an African-centered worldview. Although it was common for participants to express varying ideologies, their spiritual beliefs and expressions provided mooring and meaning for their personal and professional identities and necessitated humility. Participants also credited ancestral wisdom in their personal and academic viabilities.

Emotional Vitality

Maxwell, on the second leg of the race, was exuberant as he neared the mountain summit. He remembered telling Kevin that he looked forward to getting there and then running downhill. But upon reaching the top, he found that the path had been cratered and gave way to a canyon—the depths of which he could not see. Instead of trepidation, he once again heard his mother speak assurance and wisdom from beyond. Undeterred and hesitating not, he leapt into the air, flew over the ravine and landed on the other side—some 150 yards away, and sprinted further. The onlookers let out a huge gasp. Though he beamed confidence from knowing that no

one could devalue his achievement, Maxwell felt more gratitude for his wife, children and forebears, all of whom he cherished deeply.

Ancestral wisdom, particularly maternal insight, emerged as a central subtheme within participants' narratives. Maternal examples of insistence, protection, travailing, and victory were featured in participant recollections. As such, the above race segment honored the mothers of participants and reflected the power of maternal wisdom and presence on their personal efficacy.

Maxwell expressed gratitude for his mother's instruction and wisdom in both interviews. He intimated that her fearlessness engendered his confidence, exuberance, and positivity. Her example largely removed and defeated ideas of excuse, circumscription, and impossibility. At the family level, Maxwell and his partner appear to have passed the legacy of his mother's courage and wisdom forward to his daughters. During first interview, he teared up as he recalled,

You know, I think she's just my first and my greatest teacher. I think now of, my own daughters and I see so much of her in them, a fearlessness And I think she had to be to raise seven children. You cain't do that without, in that era and that time, in any era in any time without being fearless. You know, I think, you know in terms of teaching me how to love, encouragement, I mean, she was, she was . . . when I talk about "I never heard no" she never, she, unless I was doing crazy stuff, but you know, when I talked about going to college, here she had started college and didn't finish, because she started having children, and there was never "no."

At the professional level, Maxwell relayed that he still felt and relied upon her supportive wisdom during professional deliberations and career transitions. In his second interview, he said,

But when I think—and I equate that to her and that word, her never or rarely saying that word "no." You know, you're going where you need to go. And as long as you firmly are looking forward and believe that, you're going in the right direction.

As a student advisor, Maxwell expressed continuity with his mother's expectation of yes and possibility. Her internalized dictum was evidenced in his statements concerning his ethics, investments, and belief in students. He reportedly fought to support his students' senses of efficacy,

Like tooth and nail, just trying to get them to not see it the way I see it, but to believe there's a different perspective out there, to believe in possibilities. And I feel like I fought to do that because there's—I've always felt like it—no matter what the relationship, whether it personal, professional counseling, or as an educator, if I can get you to see possibilities, then there's nothing that's impossible. If you believe that anything's possible, then you don't believe in impossibilities. It doesn't exist.

Brown Hornet echoed Maxwell's appreciation for maternal wisdom. He emphasized continuity with his mother's compassion, virtue, and inclusive courses of action. He stated, "Um, you know, my mother . . . that grace, that mercy, that I talked about, that loving of people regardless of where they are and how ignorant sometimes they may be, um, you know, I channel that all the time."

In contrast to Maxwell, Brown Hornet also spoke about his mother's restrictive guidance, perspective, and impact upon his school choice and development. He relayed the following story.

I wanted to go to a traditionally Black university. And my mother said, "Well, you can't." I mean, you know "it was going to cost a lot of money" and so on and so forth, and "you'll have a great cultural experience." She said, you know, "but baby you are gonna have to learn to work with folks that don't look like you. And it's not going to be fun. But you have it within you to do that." And I think you know, just in that, you know, short little, you know, few sentences right there—that's who my mother was. And that's, you know, what she taught me, "You know, the world is not always fair, you know, and as a Black man, you won't always be treated equal, you know, but you've got what it takes, and you can't use that as an excuse to give up."

Resultantly, it appeared that Brown Hornet's embrace and internalization of his mother's realism, admonition, belief, and instruction positively impacted his students

of color, bolstered their sense of pride, and provided an example of courage, efficacy, forthrightness, and balance. He stated,

Because this is the feedback that I've got back, that I've received from students of color, "Wow, you said that!" "Man, you talk about White privilege in front of a group of White people. And you know, didn't do it in a mean or angry way, but you were true to yourself and you were honest with it." You know, I mean and it's always refreshing for the students of color to have someone who is you know, who they feel like, well, man "this dude is good at what he does." You know, "and he's telling the truth," you know, but "he's telling the truth in love." Kinda like that balance that I talked to you that my mother had. You know, I'm not the angry Black man, and I'm not, you know, sayin', you know, "you all are blue-eyed devils" you know, "But wow, this stuff exists y'all!"

Kevin indicated that his maternal grandmother was beyond qualified and equipped him with the awareness, knowledge, and skills needed for life. He said, "My grandmother only had a fourth grade education. But she was the smartest, most knowledgeable and insightful person I've ever known." She gave him the awareness and ability to discern treacherous intents. He recalled,

I remember grandma saying, "Your daddy may be White and accepting of people like your mother and me, but the world doesn't accept you. And so I need to prepare you to enter that real world that you're going into, not that, um, world that you currently see . . . that really is out to destroy you, not to help you."

Likewise, Kirk reported that his mother insisted upon early intervention, remediation, and academic probation in his grade school education. He feted her sense of advocacy, wise engagement, and ability to access the resources needed to ensure his academic success. He said,

You're talking to somebody that, um, actually was, um, failed. Not saying held back, [but] failed second grade. My mother identified that I had a learning disability at that time with my reading and my math. And at that time the school was not willing to progress me through socially. And my mother was an advocate around that and was very clear about, "if he can't read, and if he can't do his math, why should he progress?" So as a result, I was held back . . . Um, but as a result of that, I got the services I needed, and by the time I hit my

junior high school I no longer needed any of those services. So I went into junior high not needing any special education services.

The race segment which began this section ever so briefly illustrated the impact of maternal example, wisdom, and influence upon participants. Maxwell's imaginary flight across the ravine was due to his mother's empowering teaching and encouraging nurturance. Likewise, according to participants, maternal wisdom, as an ancestral influence, was the source of their discernment, academic approach, and professional successes. Participants indicated that their mothers' wisdom came from lived experiences and trumped formal education and book knowledge. Deceased or living, participants expressed gratitude for their maternal ancestors and for the protections of mother wit.

Truth Telling

Participants engaged in a truth telling process. They offered insight into the meso- and macro-dilemmas resulting from collegial evaluations, professional standards, and ethical codes. Participants' stories revealed professional concerns, personal flaws, and psychological strengths. Their disclosures illustrated the themes of improvisation, healthy suspicion, and gallows humor.

Improvisation

Kosugi grabbed the baton from Maxwell at the mountain's base and sprinted forward on the third leg of the race. He was encouraged by Maxwell's righteous feat. Little did he know that the presiding council and guild president had set up a roadblock and were waiting to inspect the teeth of any runner who came their way—just as they had done in times past. Kosugi knew he was in trouble when he looked up and saw a sign which read "Schwartzte Verboten!" It seems that there had been a

report of “gross deficiency, a scandalous lack of hygiene and that someone unqualified was trying to sneak across the border without ‘the vetted and proper credentials.’” Anticipating their fear, mistrust, profile, and harangue, Kosugi turned aside to carve a wooden mask. He made sure that the mask had big smiling teeth, for he had heard that smiles often pleased their sensibilities. “Yes,” he thought to himself as he approached the roadblock, “they are going to inspect me, especially my teeth. They may even try to provoke me to anger, to cause my mask to slip and to confirm their misguided beliefs. I must focus!” Gazing at his acacia smile, the council saw no need for a closer inspection. The guild president, bolstered by a sense of power, examined Kosugi’s credentials and congratulated himself afterwards for vetting his passage. Kosugi had wanted to say something during the inspection but bit his tongue. And as he ran on, Kosugi tasted the salt and blood which flowed from his swollen, speechless tongue. To cope with the invasive disrespect, he channeled his hurt, anger and sadness into cunning and excellence. Upon meeting James, Kosugi discarded his mask and the sublimated disguise. The onlookers’ eyes bulged and their minds were perplexed by the sight of Kosugi’s bloodied mouth and delightful smile. Kosugi whispered a secret into James’ left ear before he departed. And while no one knew exactly what he said to him, they knew that it must have been extremely important.

The race segment above reflects Kosugi’s narrative regarding a teaching evaluation experience and his thoughts and sentiments related to his colleagues who performed the evaluation. The sign, written in German, reflects Kosugi’s perspective that the presence of Black men within the academy poses considerable challenge and angst to White counterparts. In this scene, Kosugi’s inspectors perceive him as a deficient and subsequently devise a plan to undermine him. Kosugi’s protective mask

represents his choice, improvisation, and trickster response and simultaneously assures his dignity, safeguards his progress, and allays the fears and suspicions of his inspectors. After he outwits them, thwarts their plan, and finishes his portion of the race, Kosugi secretly passes on to James the importance of self-awareness and self-control. Finally, Kosugi's bloodied mouth symbolizes the costs associated with his strategy, achievement, fortitude, and joy: emotional stuffing, physical pain, hiding, and inauthenticity and voicelessness.

Nine participants agreed that professional and student evaluations had been unfairly interpreted and applied, especially during tenure or advancement proceedings. Kosugi stressed the need to develop a creative strategy and improvised responses to deal with the arbitrary and capricious treatment which are encountered during collegial and in student evaluations. In the following, he relays his exasperation in a conversation with DM concerning an unfair teaching evaluation. He receives validation in the response of communal laughter for his ingenuity.

I've had occasions where it's like, this is totally ridiculous. Like I was telling DM, I said "Man, I gotta 85% excellent, but I was called in about my teaching." I'm like, "it's only two students that I had a problem with, two students that failed, but I was called in." And I was like, you know, I was gonna lose it, but I said "You know something? Time will tell." I said "They're gonna fine me? Fine me." But eh, it was brushed off. There were problems, students [were] problematic and now I'm fine. I'm one of the most loved professors in there. And I think if I woulda sat there and been like "Well!" I would have . . . you know. It's like, okay, I say, "You know I'm gonna look at it. I'm gonna do some personal reflection. I'm gonna look at my teaching skills, get somebody—ask somebody to come in . . ." [And then] I got my next year evaluation and [they said] "Excellent!" I'm like, "Wow!" They said "Oh, you must have done something" and I said "Yeah!" [Kosugi claps his hands as the group responds with loud laughter and smiles of appreciation for his creativity]. I really didn't change anything, but I knew they wanted me to like lose it. But because of my responses by the end of that session they were laughing, having fun. Because my response, you know, you're just not going to drag me there.

Kosugi gave insight into the double bind of the evaluation experience: in order to advance he had to endure micro-aggressions, could not express or retaliate his pain, and must work with colleagues who apparently feared his intellectual strength as a Black man. Kosugi also stressed DM's directive of passing on to others the lessons learned during such ordeals and the creative strategies and responses needed to endure and overcome such encounters. He continued,

But even though part of me wanted to put my fingers in their face and say, "look, this is BS!" But it's like, you know, it's always I think that's just how I perceive us Black men as, we're strong. We're still feared in terms of, even you know, intellectually. I was talking with DM, I mean . . . when I first, I first met 'em, he said "you give back." You know, that's the reason I'm here, too. Giving back. But one thing he says that . . . "they're scared of us." They're not used to somebody being able to talk with them, articulate on this level, so of course [they're] gonna push back a little bit.

Kirk expressed a similar mistrust of the evaluation process and echoed the need for improvised response, a strategy of proactive invitation, and self-evaluation. He stated,

What comes up for me is, as you share your story, and it's what I found myself doing is creating an assessment system for myself so I can counter the one that they're doing . . . [focus group interrupts with laughter\ . . . to prove that what they're saying—you didn't get it all. You know, [if] you're gonna get one angle, get all angles. So I started to develop an internal evaluation system every course that I taught. So, they have that, I have this. All right? Um, I found myself, um, open myself, open my class up saying, "Come observe me. Come see what I do!" No one would come. You know, for that exact reason, 'cause I didn't want anyone to think that there's something going on.

Healthy Suspicion

James, inspired by Maxwell's feat and Kosugi's creativity and determination, confidently started the race's fourth leg. He knew that word of Maxwell's canyon flight had spread for he heard it the cheers of the onlookers as he ran passed them. James chest swelled. He felt proud of Maxwell's jump and knew that his success

belonged to him and to all. He was very certain his way would be easier than that of his predecessors since the extreme trials seemed far behind and as he believed he could easily hurdle the little bump in the road appearing in the distance. He closed his eyes and took in the cool breeze, the smells, and the sounds. He enjoyed the rhythm of his body. He enjoyed it, that is, until he tripped. Eyes opened, James beheld the body of a burnt, strangled, and dismembered child. In shock, he glanced sideways and stumbled forward numbed and confused. His once proud chest now coursed terror and barely held his racing, pounding heart. James resolved that this should not, could not and would not happen again. He frantically pressed onward.

The analyses and critique of the CES profession, its standards, and the counseling profession's ethical codes were central to participant dialogues. Such analyses highlighted the need for expansive and inclusive standards and the desire to protect African American clients from interactions with ill-informed and poorly trained clinicians. In the above story, James's discovery of a body alluded to the actual physical and emotional perils of contact with, and submission, to the Eurocentric academic traditions and values which remains embedded in the CES and counseling professions. This tradition, Afrocentrically speaking, possesses inaccurate historical information, stereotypical ideologies, hubristic definitions, and dismissive perspectives.

James greatly appreciated Katz's (1985) discussion of worldviews, the socio-political nature of counseling, and her insistence that the counseling is bound to a Eurocentric worldview. He cited her work to support his analysis that the counseling profession continues to perpetuate,

the status quo. And that status quo has been, again, oppression, and power imbalances, and disparities in power and differences in power. And if we're talking about helping people to become empowered so that they can maximize their inherent potentials, then counseling has to be part of that social change atmosphere, that social change conversation, and we can't do it if the prevailing philosophy that guides the profession is one of individualism and that operates from a very narrow world view.

James argued that the ahistoricity and silences of CACREP standards, “especially with regard to [omission of] the long legacy of racial domination and inequality that people of African ancestry have had to confront here and throughout the diaspora for centuries” were extremely problematic. He desired corrections of this oversight in the existing CACREP standards and advanced that additional time needs to be given to students during their training to study and consider racial injustices and the historical devaluation of Black lives. Specifically, he stated,

And I'm going to tell you one of the concerns that I have is—look at—and I'm making sure that I say this is as it pertains to what can this profession do to achieve all kinds of social justice, but in particular, for me, racial justice . . . where do you see it, the emphasis that would suggest that it is a priority? And I'm speaking as a member of a faculty of a program who has CACREP and I was very, very much involved in our reaccreditation. And it was my responsibility to go through those eight domain areas. But there is very little commitment to exploring historically, like giving students the space and the time to really develop what it is and what it means to be multi-culturally competent practitioner. And that includes your awareness, knowledge, and skills. And how does, how do we propose that happens? How does that happen?

James pointed to the pervasive lack of an informed and expansive education within elementary and high school classrooms as the basis for his analysis. He furthered,

I just don't see the opportunity, particularly given the fact that most master's programs are two years, and we spend—and I understand why we spend so much time on those practical counseling skills, I understand that. But I just don't think there's a sufficient amount of time, given how little conversation happens in our K-12 settings, on truly exploring how our country has come to be what it is in regards to racial inequities and racial inequalities.

Finally, James voiced that uninformed school counselors would result. He also advanced that their perception of K-12 students of color would be skewed and feared that their work with these students would subsequently be compromised, ineffective, and possibly harmful. He stated,

And these, the master's level students, will be the school counselor practitioners. And one of their responsibilities is to help facilitate students' personal and social development. So the learning to live component is helping them to understand who they are and how to effectively communicate with other people. How do I help you understand who you are when I walk around with misconceptions about who you are?

Kevin expressed a similar concern about the American Counseling Association codes of ethics. He said that the code were undermining of culture values, a conundrum, and overtly political in nature. He stated,

You know, I choose to have discussions about religion and its role, but let's look at ACA [American Counseling Association]. And what is ACA has just recently told us, in their recent code of ethics, that you must, you must present a secular progressive perspective as a counselor. You must! You must present this value system as a counselor. But you'd better not present the values that are an indigenous part of who you are. And then they say at the same time that you must be value-neutral. I'm waiting for them to explain how I do that and be authentic. Because I will never, ever, present a secular progressive perspective in my work as a counselor, because I am a Christian, and I will not turn my back on who I am and what I am.

Kevin advocated that, before adoption or uncritical acceptance, African Americans need to discern the messages embedded within the American Counseling Association ethical codes, namely its messages of implied exclusions and covert censures. He warned against "drinking the Kool-Aid" of the American Counseling Association standards as they were largely influenced and developed by cultural outsiders whose goals and means are situated or arrayed against the concerns and values of African Americans. He strongly felt and observed that African Americans in counselor education tended to blindly "swallow that the American Counseling

Association code of ethics up and say ‘Yes, that’s what we must be! That’s what we must do!’” He interrogated, “According to who?” and believed that the 2014 American Counseling Association ethical “value neutral code” was vague, dismissive, and sheathed in hostility.

Together, James and Kevin offered critiques of the CACREP standards and the American Counseling Association codes of ethics. Their critiques were Afrocentric in nature and were stated in defense of the African American public and counseling professionals. They warned of potential harm and pointed to the need to revisit and possibly re-write professional standards and ethical codes. Their analysis was consistent with the Afrocentric concepts of self-definition and advocacy. James stressed the needs for Afrocentric analyses of the prevailing and current professional standards and codes of ethics. He called for African Americans CES professional to speak out and address this issue and denigrated any complicit silence. He relayed a song lyric from a song by The Roots, “If you ain’t sayin’ nothing you the system’s accomplice,” to raise a sense of consciousness, to indict internalized racism, and to heighten the Afrocentric moral imperative and obligation to speak on in defense of African America people and to advance their interests.

Gallows Humor

By the time he would come near, Huntstone knew that, though James’ anger would be both fierce and just, it could also become deadly, unjust and self-destructive. Huntstone also knew that he had the unenviable task of telling James exactly what had happened to the child, and he could barely contain his sorrow while he sat waiting for him under the tree of dominance. It was under this tree that the child, Rashida, had been snatched while in Huntstone’s care. He felt remorse. Had he not imbibed the

fruit of that tree, he would have been sober, awake and able to defend her from the mob which carried her away and desecrated her body. In fact, the nearby and expanding drought began when he ate and upon her passing. Overtaken by grief, pain, shame, and guilt, Huntstone picked a piece of fruit and thought once again of carelessly forgetting. But James furiously arrived just as he brought the fruit near his lips. Laying it aside, Huntstone grabbed James, told him everything and begged for his forgiveness. As James slumped forward and wretched in exhaustion, Huntstone held and consoled him as a father would hold his grieving son. After a long, long while, Huntstone gave James good food so that he would not go insane as he himself had done before after eating the strange fruit. Huntstone knew that James's recovery required much time and his sadness, agony, and pain would not soon abate. Indeed, he knew this because his own recovery taken considerable time and required sorrowfulness and self-examination. He stayed at the tree until James was somewhat stable and also warned naïve passersby. Raymond Key ran the race's last leg in Huntstone's stead.

Whereas James and Kevin critiqued the Eurocentric, ahistorical, and liberal nature of professional standards, Huntstone critiqued his personal and professional flaws, past silences and complicities. He spoke of the “tree of dominance” and indicated that it was a symbolic motif which represents White, male, heterosexual privilege and hegemon within counselor training. He described the tree's pervasive, deleterious and oppressive fruit and labeled them as “ableism, classism, homophobia, racism, and sexism.” In the above scene, Huntstone lamented his actions of swallowing the tree's fruit, confessed his crime of silence and negligence and mourned the resulting death of his charge. Humbly, he also owned his abetting, solaced James,

and exemplified correction. In confessing his complicity and sorrow, Huntstone demonstrated the compassion, unbridled genuineness and honesty, and the competencies of self-awareness, knowledge and skill.

During his second interview, Huntstone posited “that race, gender, class, sexual orientation, ageism, ableism, religious bias, are all branches of the tree of dominance. And they’re all by-products of the dominant system in which we live.” He described his internalized racism and stated, “that’s the worst kind of racism that there is. And I own it. You know, I own it.” Huntstone furthered that internalized racism was addictive and called for vigilance in his ongoing recovery. Huntstone offered humor, corrected thinking, self-acceptance, emotional authenticity, and communal attachment as effective strategies for dominance recovery. He said,

you know, humor is part of who I am and what I do. And it’s taught me—it’s helped me not to take myself too seriously. And so I do bring humor to the classroom. And I think that’s an essential component of us understanding ourselves and keeping ourselves human and not above mistakes, not above character defects. And this is who I am. And I find humor to be a great—humor and paradox to be a great way for people to understand themselves. It doesn’t . . . shame doesn’t hurt when you’re laughing. Okay. And number two is, um my recovery, um has helped me with my authenticity. I’m, this is who I am. I’m real. What I’m telling you is the truth. Yeah. And some of who I am is funny and some of who I am is embarrassing. Okay. And some of who I am is offensive. I have access to a full range of human experience and emotions.

Huntstone relayed that he has progressively learned the value of transparency and the power of revealing to his students his past and current engagement in internalized racism, sexism, and homophobia in the classroom. He reported that his transparency supported his student’s sense of safety, gave them a contextual understanding of dominance and provided an opportunity and open forum for them to discuss their ideas and learning areas. Huntstone stated,

I've always taught the multi-cultural class, and 20 years ago when I was teaching it, it was just an incredible struggle. And just like if you were trying to figure out why therapy isn't working with someone, part of the equation has to be me asking myself "what am I doing or not doing that's holding up the progress?" And so, over time, it was like okay, how do I talk about this stuff in a way that first of all, students can hear it? And so how can they feel safe enough to look at this stuff authentically. And so one of the things that I've done is talk about my own homophobia, my own sexism, my own class bias, my own racism against Black people, my own sexism, and to talk about how there's a context for that.

Huntstone explained that his exaltation of dominant ideology was a learned process and that the origins of such veneration (i.e., "faulty values") must be replaced upon discovery. He stressed the importance of personal reflection, communal evaluation, and the role and contribution of both in the fulfillment of professional and ethical aspirations. He recalled,

You know, I was raised in a male-dominant family. Women waited on men, hand and foot. I was educated in a dominant model and I talked about the books I learned to read as a kid and all that kind of stuff, and it's always a White couple. There's always a mom and dad, there's always you know, two kids, they always live in a house. And that, those are, that's a paradigm of dominance that is loaded into our default drive. And that paradigm drives our assumptions of normalcy. And we have to re-do those. And so, starting there, you know, I think gives students a sense that they don't have to defend, I mean, learn this model. Because it's not your fault that this is the model that you learned. When you become aware of it, you are then responsible for any attitudes, values, biases that you hold, and you are ethically responsible for diminishing and trying to eliminate those for the rest of your life.

While Huntstone spoke of internalized racism, Imam spoke of his experience of meeting collective opposition from Black faculty at his school. Specifically, he linked their self-serving agendas and the myopic views of the opposing faculty to the poor performance of Black students attending his university. He criticized their hypocritical and misguided pre-occupation with position and their abandonments of collective responsibility and communal obligation. He stated,

Well you see, the thing about it is, what I found out is like, some of the Black—so-called leadership . . . do not like me—they are narrow-minded. They're really—to me they're just using Blackness as a self-serving topic. They don't really wanna help the Black students, because the Black graduation rate [here] is horrific. It's absolutely horrific, Reggie. I mean, they—the Black students here—we had the lowest graduation rate and it's not even close!

Imam lost respect for these faculty members as they had broken with ideas of community and service. He indicated that they were envious of him because of his desire and effort to promote the mental health efficacy of Black students. Ostracized and bewildered, he stated,

And the funny thing is, most of them are from Africana's studies, the supposed Black hub. And they preach Black unity and Black culture [laughs]. But yeah. But I think a lot of that is because of jealousy because of the fact that, um, I'm introducing students to constructs that they didn't know nothing about, like racial micro-aggressions, racial battle fatigue, the stereotypical images of the Black male and the Black female, and the mental health consequences of these things.

Together, Huntstone and Imam relayed experiences of individual and collective hypocrisy. They reported internalized racism, communal betrayal, and the resulting impacts of such alienation and shunning upon themselves and the community. Their self-examination and retrospective honesty were consistent with African cultural values and the Afrocentric ideas of insight and self-knowledge. Their truths were best summed and reinforced by DM's recollection and expression of “Zora Neale Hurston (1937), ‘All skin ain't friend.’”

Professional Engagement and Personal Endurance

Participants relayed their perspectives concerning the state of the CES and counseling professions and the nature of their responsibilities to their students. Their stories indicated that participants saw themselves as agents of change who believed in and maintained commitments to the profession despite their challenging trials and

often painful encounters. In light of such, the following race segment illustrates the resilient, optimistic, and invitational nature of participants.

Resiliency

Raymond Key was tired and his legs were sluggish as he began the last leg of the race. The onlookers wondered aloud why the old one had been selected to run. They became even more confused as he ran while looking about, backward, sideways and forward. His heart also felt lethargic as he reflected on past transgressions. Sensing his fatigue and hearing his labored breaths, the onlookers loudly murmured and braced themselves for both his falter and their collective defeat. Raymond Key's ears, however, heard what they could not—the ancestors were applauding grace, approval, and acceptance. And though their grace did not erase the memories of his past misdeeds, their approval gave him comfort and their acceptance energy. His strides lengthened and quickened. His heart swelled with gratitude as he saw the encouraging words on the placards held aloft by the other runners. And before he or anyone could blink an eye, Raymond Key strutted across the finish line and received a thunderous ovation. He enjoyed many hugs too. While the children were astonished by his speed, others appreciated their elder, heritage, and the communal victory. Hare's ears drooped as he dropped across the finish line much later.

In the above race segment, Raymond Key finds support and encouragement through ancestors and from others. His remembrance and the signs and placards which were held aloft provided energy for him as he finished his race. The signs conveyed a nascent understanding of Raymond Key's contributions and indebtedness to his past struggle, overcoming, and journey as a forerunner in CES. In reciprocal fashion, the runners reciprocally gave to Raymond Key what they derived from him: energy,

fortitude, optimism, and courage. In the following paragraphs, participants reflect on what they had been given and intended to cultivate while in the profession.

Personal integrity and behavioral congruence. James spoke about the interrelatedness of oppression. He stressed the importance of having an articulated identity, personal integrity and convictions, and congruency before his students. He warned of dangerous hypocrisy and stated,

And I understand that all forms of oppression are interwoven. So I understand the role that economic oppression plays in perpetuating myths and stereotypes about people from poor and working-class backgrounds or racial and ethnic minority groups. I understand that. But I am particularly interested in and concerned about the status of African American males in this society. So therefore, because that is my . . . purported interests, if that is truly who I say I am—I tell my students all the time—if I’m who I say that I am, there are certain things that I’m obligated to do. And if I don’t, then it’s a facade, I’m a performer, and I’m helping to perpetuate the very systems I’m supposedly working to alleviate.

Social justice and advocacy for excluded others. DM felt that counselor educators should intensify and broaden their emphasis on social justice and move towards greater awareness, collectivity, inclusion, and advocacy for excluded others. He defined social justice as the responsibility to speak,

for people who can’t speak up and asking questions on their behalf in the rooms where they can’t go. So it’s asking “Well, what about this group? Or how does this relate to this group?” Or, “If we say we’re gonna do this, are we saying we’re gonna leave all groups in or all groups out.” Just continuously advocating promoting a “We” philosophy over an “I” philosophy or an “Us versus Them” philosophy.

Social responsibility, unyielding optimism, and collaborative solutions. Similarly, Art taught and pressed for optimism and collaboration in problem solving. He challenged his students to social responsibility and encouraged proactive community engagement. He stated,

Focusing on the problems does not solve the problems. Focusing on problems gives you more problems. Focusing on possibilities gives you more possibilities. Get up, act, do something. I really like that. That—I guess that's maybe where I am, and that's kind of how I view counseling. You know, let's focus on the solutions, let's do something [in the community] that matters. This is collaborative. I'm there with you, they're there with me to help me, you know.

Professional opportunities and hopefulness. Kirk stressed that varied opportunities abound for African American men within the counseling profession. He implied that responding to such openness would allow African American men to fulfill communal obligations, shape the counseling profession, and to demonstrate their leadership capabilities, skills, and potentials. He was encouraged to see more Black men entering the field. He stated,

Oh. I see um, I see a great opportunity for us to really, um to really—what's the word I'm looking for—a great opportunity for us to one, give back, take our place from a number of different levels, take our place at the table, and lead here from the classroom And in those opportunities for leadership within CES as well, you know, externally as well as internally, if . . . being a faculty member, or being a chair, or being in an administrative role. So I think there's a great, great amount of opportunity that's out there, that we can step in and really show what we're about. And there's gonna be even more—I see it, there's more people of color that are coming into counseling, human services, more men.

Wariness and broadened perspective. As the only Black man in his department, Noel has refused to teach the multicultural class until he obtains tenure. He felt that his candor and views might challenge students in troubling ways, especially as he expressed concerns for the present direction of multiculturalism within CES. For example, he thought that students might feel or say,

He's talking so much about ethnicity but he's not talking enough about gay and lesbian issues, so you know . . . I'm a sure believer that ethnicity is still the number one issue in terms of multiculturalism At large, my gay brothers and sisters have taken over multiculturalism. And I get it, I certainly understand it and get it, but . . . still, the majority of the issues, socially,

financially, institutionally, are based on ethnicity. So I get it, it's the hot kind of thing to do, but you know, it's also the safe thing, the popular thing to do.

Challenge and compassionate engagement. Imam insisted that his students learn about racial battle fatigue, micro-aggressions, and micro-insults. He also mandated that his stance is coupled with and marked by a sense of humility, respectfulness, and compassion. He offered the *American History X* character, Dr. Sweeney (Kaye et al., 1998), as an example of who he hopes to become to his students. He stated,

I would say Dr. Sweeney was in the internalization commitment [stage]. He was explaining how, initially, early on he was in the emergence stage, where he was always angry, and he always blamed everybody for the conditions of Black people and the condition he was in. But after a while, he grew, he developed, and he [asked Derrick] the same question he had to answer: "How has this made my life better?" And he said—he told him to think about that. And so it's like that, that moment was like the "a-ha" moment, because it was like, Dr. Sweeney was so comfortable with his Black identity that he knew that it wasn't that he was superior or inferior because of his Blackness, but just different. And that Derrick or other White people weren't superior or inferior, they were just different. And different doesn't make you better or worse.

Hospitality and inclusivity. Brown Hornet maintained that a creative, invitational, and hospitable space was a central facet of his classroom. He used a dining activity and metaphor to welcome his students and to instruct them about the special importance of demonstrating a sense of welcome and honor towards clients attending the initial counseling session. He said,

You know, they come in class, I greet them, and then just stop. And I just set the table. Pull out the dishes and everything . . . I pull out the physical dishes and I said, "what did I do?" And they say, "Well, you set the table." And I say "Ah, I set the table. Okay, let's talk about this. What does it mean when you set the table." And they say "Well, you know, you respect, especially, you got somebody coming, you're preparing, must be somebody special." And the idea is, okay, you know, that's all the things we need to do for our clients. So how do we set the table for our clients? We have this whole discussion about how we set the table. But when [they] especially sit down with clients for the very

first time, that's what they say they think about. They think about okay, what purple dishes do I need to put out?

Respect, autonomy, and multiple perspectives. Similarly, Maxwell exhibited a high degree of faith in the inherent capacities his students to find their own solutions. He stated that he often challenged them to embrace multiple perspectives and discover possibilities. He stated,

there are multiple ways to do and go about things. There are multiple perspectives, and these are just you know, one or two or a few that—are important for me. And it really is important that you find, develop, and then in your best way articulate your own. I see that as foundational to what we do as professional counselors. You know, we invest in humans, we invest in growth, we invest in—uh, I've been reminded of the benefits of when you just, just really trust someone. What happens when you place your faith in this idea that you, for yourself, know exactly what it is you need right now, and you are more than capable of finding your way through things, sort of, you know, making, creating and then walking your own path, you know, for this journey. And I really, I go back to how to do that with a sense of humility.

Connectedness: Invitational Stance, Education and Celebration

The race officially ended about ten feet away from where hare had initially spat and issued his arrogant taunts. After Raymond Key arrived everyone knew that, although hare was fastest, he, by himself, was certainly not the swiftest nor wisest. Upon hare's arrival, the elders took him aside, commended his effort, admired his talent and invited him to join their celebration of unity and cooperation. Yet hare would not hear, avoided their kola, and lamed away in defeat, sulk and solo. The children felt discomfort and were afraid to ask the elders about hare. Instead they asked, "What should be done to the tree of dominance? Shall we cut it down and uproot it?" After prolonged silence, as the unborn waited and the ancestors looked on, Huntstone looked skyward, smiled and answered, "No, let it be. For it serves its purpose. It is an ancient tree and the last of its kind. But do not eat its fruit, lest you

pass its seeds and fertilize them.” Kevin continued “Most likely, as with hare, it will wither and die alone in the coming storm.” Raymond Key summed, “Unless, that is, it somehow turns, learns and bears different fruits.” As rain fell from the sky like a libation, the elders broke into irenic song and the children, and everyone else gathered with them, joyously danced in a circle.

At the conclusion of the race and consistent with my understanding of the intent of the African version of the tortoise and hare story (Gyekye 1996) (see Appendix B), the elders extended a healing balm to the exhausted hare, expressed need for his unique gifting, and respected his autonomy. Their hospitality and welcome punctuated the story’s inviolable lessons: unity, cooperation, and interdependence best solitary identity, hubristic effort, and independence; the impossible is nothing and overcome by spiritual optimism, inclusivity, mutuality, and harmony; and everyone is to be celebrated, invited, needed, valued, and honored. This segment concludes with a call and response dialogue between the children and their elders. The children’s sadness, hesitancy, and curiosity stem from their awareness of hare’s balk, stubbornness, and isolative plight. Huntstone’s answer, with its prohibition and revocation of revenge towards the tree of dominance, illustrates the importance of forgiveness, redemptive suffering and ongoing vigilance. Kevin’s continuance symbolizes humility and foresight and teaches the value and impact of ceaseless involvements. Raymond Key’s summation suggests the necessities of change, hopefulness, and future optimism yet also warns of the danger of ongoing stasis, despair, and ensuing demise. Finally, the closing events of rain, song, and dance signify natural concordance, successful resolution of the present crisis, and communal agreement, joy, and unity.

This chapter closes with comments from the three eldest participants. Such closure is meant to honor their wisdom, longevity, perspectives, and contribution to the CES profession. These comments reflect their thoughts on how African American men, women, and others can successfully navigate the CES professional race and gave direction for the profession's future.

Forgiveness, liberation, and vigilance. Huntstone stressed forgiveness in his comments and related such to his sense of freedom, personal wholeness, and internal well-being. He stated,

Well, you know, I think it's huge that the act of forgiveness sets me free. You know, if I—to me it's the opposite of resentment. Resentment rots me from the inside out. Forgiveness sets me free of whatever it is that happened. You know? And it's important to be able to do. It's important to be able to let go.

Huntstone also spoke about the need for ongoing vigilance, especially in light of the threats posed by White privilege and insensitivity in the CES profession. He stated,

I was uh . . . saying to my wife the other day, “you hang around White people long enough, someone will try to lynch you.” And it may not be—something that's a hostile act, but just something that a person does because that's the way they do things, and they have the privilege of not thinking about how this might affect a Black person.

Huntstone talked about his future CES career. He saw the need for more African American men within the CES field and pondered working towards that end. He spoke,

And you know, um, uh, I think what I'm committed to is staying in the field. I'm 63; I'll probably work until I'm 70. I think I would like to have the opportunity to go back to a program that has more people of color, particularly African Americans, but at both the master's and the doctoral level. Because we need Black practitioners, you know, in our mental health agencies and our mental health units.

Humility and steadfastness in professional engagement. Kevin expressed a need for humility with success. He warned against hubris and justified such with ancestral wit. He said,

You can't brag. You can't be—you can't put yourself out as being above other people because what Gramma said was that “without humility, you become arrogant.” It—being humble is the ability to recognize that I'm not the center of the world, that the world is bigger than I, and I'm fortunate to play a small role in trying to advance the world.

Kevin added that professional involvements were central to success. He maintained that engagement in diverse career activities were essential to professional advancement. He stated,

Yes. Yes, I mean, it—I try to teach the idea that you put yourself in the position for people to say yes to you, you never put yourself in a position for people to say no. You see, when you're not engaged, when you're not involved in a wide variety of activities that put your name out in front, you're giving people the opportunity to say no.

Cultural integrity and perspective taking. Raymond Key also stressed engagement, integrity, and perspective taking. He stated the tension between maintaining cultural integrity and being open to others beyond cultural encapsulation. He instructed,

we have to reframe our—thoughts and challenge our assumptions about what is a value in our culture and what may be a value in another culture. So that we actually put on a different set of lenses through which we can view whatever is going on in our culture. And I've always—I guess I've always struggled with that in terms of how much—what are the real absolutes wherever you go? And what are the culturally relevant pieces wherever you go? And how do you embrace those without sacrificing what your values are or forcing the other culture to sacrifice their values, whatever they are.

As he mused about his specific experiences with the younger men in this study and the state of the CES profession, Raymond Key expressed satisfaction. He appreciated their commitments to diversity and social justice, felt that the CES

profession was more open to diversity, and believed its future would be well stewarded. He said,

Well I'm happy with what I see. I'm happy to see that there are um, young people who are more committed at this stage of their career than I was at a comparable stage in my own career, to the issues of inclusion, diversity, multiculturalism, and social justice. I think there's a—they are met with a more receptive audience and I think that the profession is in good hands as it moves into its next era.

Raymond Key's satisfaction suggested that, though progress had been made within the CES profession, much work still remains and needs to be accomplished.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The results of this study emerged more organically than I intended or could have imagined. Such emergence was consistent with the open-ended nature and expansiveness of the narrative process (Creswell, 2007). The original intent of this work was to focus on participants' worldviews and to examine how they expressed African cultural values within the context of the counselor education classroom. I hoped our discussion and interactions would generate conversations about specific African-centered and culturally unique teaching approaches. However, as I mentioned in Chapter III, the course of this investigation morphed and the focus quickly shifted to the participants' experiences, cultural strengths, and observations of the counselor education and supervision (CES) profession. In this chapter I endeavor to further illuminate and interpret the meanings of the participants' lived experiences and narratives and to discuss their possible implications for the counselor education and supervision profession.

I learned a great deal about myself throughout this investigation. I was affirmed and embraced by the participants as an indigenous insider or researcher (Tillman, 2006). I, at times, felt as if I was being welcomed into an academic brotherhood or professional family. As such, this investigation was transformative

both personally and professionally. The participants and their stories provided me with corrective emotional experiences (Teyber & McClure, 2011). Their insights addressed the despair, disappointment, and miseducation I have long carried from contact with predominantly White institutional areas. This study afforded me the time and space to (a) interact with professors who espoused African-centeredness; (b) differentiate, deliberate, and develop my voice; and (c) gain insight into the value of Afrocentric stances within the counseling and CES profession. Through this inquiry and my interaction with these men, I experienced, palpably, the values and traditions discussed in Chapter II. Figuratively and spiritually speaking, I needed the participants to baptize, lay their hands on, and collectively bless me so that I could clearly and justly speak in and interpret a tongue other than that I acquired in rote fashion during past mis-educations in predominantly White institutional contexts.

Unlike the frightened children during the concluding scene of the imaginary race which finished and closed Chapter IV, I ask and pose pointed and possibly uncomfortable questions about the CES profession throughout this chapter. I do so to honor and represent the participants' stories and meanings which they either directly stated or indirectly implied regarding their preparatory and current CES journeys. The aim of the questions is to stimulate greater balance, harmony, and truthfulness in the CES profession and to generate greater accountability for CES professionals. In the spirit of call and response, I want the reader to hear and feel participants' voices and stories and, on their behalf, to ask questions which I have humanly and unintentionally overlooked.

Structurally, this chapter was fashioned and scaffolded in a manner which honored and paralleled Harding's (1974) vocational directives for Black scholars.

Harding stated that Black scholars were obligated to undertake four imperatives. These are (a) to speak the truth to the people, (b) to illuminate the truth of our here and now, (c) to identify the enemy within and from without, and (d) to speak about future possibilities. In the first section of this chapter, various truths and facets of the participants' cultural identities and psychological strengths are presented. The second section provides discussion, interpretation, and literature related to the stories of the here-and-now and lived experiences of the participants. This section focuses on their preparation for, and practice within, the CES profession. The third section further critiques professional standards for CES programs and spotlights the slothful response and neglect of multicultural counseling competencies by the counseling profession. In the fourth section implications for the counseling and supervision profession and issues related to retention and tenure are discussed. This section is followed by a discussion of ideas for future research and a presentation of the study's limitations.

At all times I endeavored to place the participants' thoughts, ideas, and experiences within CES at the center of this discussion, as such placement was consistent with Tillman's (2002) emphasis for culturally sensitive research practices and investigations. At times, I reemphasized a participant's specific quote from Chapter IV or introduced new information from a participant to further provide insight or to clarify to a matter. Salazar (2005) indicated that "in-depth exploration and analysis are still needed of the experiences of counselor educators of color and of the perceived and manifest consequences of these experiences" (p. 241). Parham (1999) opined his perspective that "no segment of the population has been more misunderstood and mischaracterized than Black men" (p. 794). As such this investigation is important as little information exists on the experiences of African

American men within the CES profession. This investigation also represented my role and response to the roll call given by Brooks and Steen (2010) in their article entitled “‘Brother Where Art Thou?’ African American Male Instructors’ Perceptions of the Counselor Education Profession.”

The results of this study suggested that, while the commitments of the CES and counseling professions to multiculturalism and social justice are admirable, they are not in and of themselves necessarily sufficient. At issue is how we, as a profession, choose to feel, think about, and respond to the stories and worldviews of diverse population. Our individual and collective responses will determine the future directions and overall relevance of the counseling profession. This study also adds to literature concerning the experiences of African Americans within counselor educator programs. Generally speaking, the results are presented in a manner which represented a broadened perspective of the participants and provided insight into individual uniqueness. This work honors the character, dignity, racial pride, and virtuosity of the participants (Blake, 1997) and highlights critical elements of their experiences, stories, and voices.

Truths about the Participants: Movement Beyond John Henry to Redemptive Suffering

Like Smith, Hung, and Franklin (2011), the participants and their narratives suggested that the African American man within the CES professorate is required to be a modern day John Henry, experiences emotional vexation, and endures stress and racial battle fatigue. In the post-industrial revolution folklore alluded to in their article, John Henry competed in a railroad track laying contest and was pitted against a steam powered, hammer driving machine as his competitor. Though the odds were

apparently in the machines favor, Henry worked tirelessly and won the contest.

However, his strength waned and his brain and heart burst under the stress related to that competition.

The Smith et al. (2011) John Henry analogy was useful for understanding the participants and their stories and further illuminates the emphasis and the wisdom of collective effort prominently featured in the African version of the tortoise and hare race (Gyekye, 1996). Like Henry, the participants evidenced multiple individual strengths, yet they also conversely expressed a value preference for cooperative effort. They were capable, resilient, creative, and hardworking. They derived mental and emotional fortitude from ancestral wisdom and spiritual orientations. Yet, their hearts were also often burdened and challenged by the alien and demeaning machinations which exist within CES (Dowden, Gunby, Warren, & Boston, 2014; Katz, 1985) and which lay namely in the academy's tendencies towards competition, dominance, individualism, objective materialism, and soullessness (Akbar, 2002; Hilliard, 2002). Participants overcame externally imposed obstacles through their reliance upon trusted others, spiritual beliefs, and personal integrity (Dowden et al., 2014).

Communal Integrity and Familial Obligation

Participants voiced their commitments to the maintenance of cultural identity during their doctoral training and in their current position. Brown Hornet best voiced their non-assimilative agency, self-determining perspective, and collective stance towards the CES profession. He emphatically and relationally advanced,

Listen, tenure, full-professorship means nothing if I [can] be a Black man only when I leave the walls of academia. It means nothing to me. And if I am not doing work in a fashion that's true to me, then it's just a waste of time. [I can't]

tell my sons, “Hey I am a full professor, I’m a, you know got tenure,” yet I have to act like a White boy and compromise to do it.

Brown Hornet warned that the tenure pursuit threatened the dismantling of cultural identity, humiliation and colonization, and, as with John Henry, personal and communal demise (Butler-Byrd, 2010; Moffitt & Harris, 2004). His words underscored and illuminated the participants’ core communal values and their cherished commitment to self, family, and cultural continuity.

Ancestral Wisdom and Spiritual Sustenance

Participants esteemed and relied upon ancestral—and specifically maternal—wisdom as in Maxwell’s case and cooperative, interdependent, and familial partnerships as in DM’s example. In doing so they demonstrated the value they placed on connectedness and the core theme of the African communal self. Their narratives conveyed the African notion that the self was not existentially differentiated from others. This notion has been reflected in the saying that, I am because we are and because we are I am (Gyekye, 1996). This notion was relayed in this study through the usage of the African version of the tortoise and hare race and necessitated by Hilliard’s (2002) insistence for African American men to existentially enter the confines of higher education in a manner which conveys unity, collective consciousness, and oneness.

Relatedly, the participants’ veneration of maternal wisdom critiqued and countered the degrading, misogynistic, and stereotypical representations of their mothers as Mammy, Sapphire, and Jezebel (West, 2012). From an Afrocentric perspective, participants viewed themselves as reciprocal extensions and continual expressions of the varied and unique meanings of their mothers and their story and

struggle (Harding, 1974). By embracing mother wit, faith, and way of being, participants became relationally assured, balanced, and formidable in their endeavors.

From a literary and communal standpoint, the academic and professional effort of each participant resembled Milkman's daring flight into communal well-being and resulted from the indomitable defiance and courageous spirit of various mothers (Guiffrida, 2005; Morrison, 1977). Likewise, his mother's defiance challenged each participant to transgress masculine dogma and domination. Her courageous faith effectuated his spiritual development, ensured his progress towards holistic integration, and sourced his ability to personally and professionally re-present the best of the characteristics and virtues which he had inherited from both his father and mother.

Lastly, the participants expressed gratitude and appreciation for the sacrifices of familial forbearers, CES elders (i.e., Nancy Boyd-Franklin, William Cross, Janet Helms, Courtland Lee, and others), and for the support of their loved ones and partners. Their sacrifices took on renewed meaning in light of the participants' daily challenges and demanded response. The interpreted meanings of familial ancestors and CES elders were likened to a call and provided participants with direction, encouragement, exhortation, mentorship, and spiritual sustenance (Nobles, 2002).

Creativity and Ingenuity

Participants demonstrated creativity and improvisational skills (White, 1970) as evidenced by their ability to navigate two worlds (Cole, 2001; DuBois, 1903). Participants and their stories also illustrated self-knowledge and self-determination (Myers, 1985; Nobles, 1978), as evidenced by their willfulness to militate against the imposition of external stereotypes, to refute degrading definitions, and to advance

humane alternatives (Parham & Ajamu, 2000). To survive participants navigated coercive circumstances and often forgave the disrespect of colleagues.

Self-determined Identity and Purposeful Marginality

Like Huntstone's Chapter IV narrative, all of the participants overcame and resisted the (a) tendencies towards cultural assimilation and amalgamation, (b) temptations towards individuality, and (c) illusory acceptance promised by internalized racism (Henriksen & Trusty, 2005). They shunned the identity which White, in his talk with Parham (2007), referred to as being a Black Anglo Saxon and embraced an African-centered or Afrocentric identity. The participants were either actively assigned, or relegated by others to, a marginalized identity within the CES professoriate and other academic contexts. However, they demonstrated self-determination, chose marginalized identity, and negotiated outsider status (hooks, 1994; Salazar, 2005). Self-determination, chosen identity, and outsider status served a threefold purpose. They gave participants the (a) means to define and retain healthy selfhood, (b) ability to respond to external stressors, and (c) impetus to advance change within CES (Salazar, 2005).

Psychological Maturity and Persistent Joyfulness

While the particular psychological strength of connectedness (White, 1970) was alluded to in Brown Horner's words, the African American psychological strength of resilience best summed my view and experience with the participants. White indicated that resilience is the ability to rebound from setbacks and thus become stronger in places of weakness. He furthered that in the Black environment,

psychological maturity is not achieved until one has paid one's dues and is on the other side of the storm.

Despite a variety of obstacles (i.e., collegial racism, isolation, racial profiling, micro-aggression, invisibility, and hyper-visibility), each participant expressed gratefulness for having overcome these obstacles, gratitude for the support of allied others, and joy for the attainment of irrefutable academic successes. Maxwell best summed the participants' optimism and emotional resolve when he stated that despite professional circumstances, he "just can't be bitter" in light of his personal achievement.

Rich Heritage and Redemptive Suffering

The manner in which participants relayed their stories suggested that they possessed deep ancestral, cultural, and spiritual reservoirs. These reservoirs provided participants with the ability to maintain invitational and engaging stances within the CES professoriate and necessitated excellence in their professional involvements. These reservoirs also provided participants with a source of safe exemplars and lessened the need for the foolish desire and dangerous search for validation from oppressors and other untrustworthy sources (Parham, 1999, 2007). Participants demonstrated love, respect, and joy for their cultural heritage and richness. I believe their love, respect, and joy undergirded their purpose and engagement in the very profession which often deemed them both inferior and illegitimate.

Blake's (1997) discussion of the Afrocentric rhetorical tokens of redemptive suffering and providential design provided an effective lens to interpret the participants' stories and a context which situates their orature and lived experience.

The participants' overall and specific insistence on professional engagement and their general insistence on attitudes of forgiveness (i.e., Kevin, Huntstone, Maxwell, and Raymond Key) spoke of their tenacity and forbearance. Their insistence demonstrated the spiritual resourcefulness, unassailable hopefulness, and virtuous character needed to face professional adversity. Participants continued to advocate, engage, and labor within CES for the sake of the larger African American community and the profession as well, even as they simultaneously met inhospitable treatment in its very environs.

I realize the challenges associated with using the concepts of redemptive suffering and providential design to interpret and situate participants' narratives. And I want to stress herein that my intent in employing such is not meant to justify the participants' suffering; to sidestep their anger, pain or legitimate grievance; or to exonerate the conditions which affected and resulted in such suffering. Nor should my usage be construed as a stereotypical representation of the participants as happy-go-lucky, pie in the sky imbeciles. Rather I offer this interpretation of their spoken words, situations, and experiences to call attention to their self-determined identities and concurrent devotions to the CES profession. I ask the reader, and more importantly participants, to consider my interpretation and representation as recognition of their courage and resilience. My recognition is meant to repudiate all persons who, and all conditions within CES or otherwise which, attempt to negatively degrade the participants. My representation and recognition also illuminate the love, spirituality, and forbearance which White and Siwatu (2002) deemed as necessary for academic success and professional thriving.

Love, spirituality, and forbearance aside, important questions remain and need examination, consideration, and answers from the CES profession. Given the Chapter

II discussion of African-centered epistemology and affect-symbolic imagery cognition (Dixon, 1976), the following questions must be addressed:

- How have you, the reader, felt about the participants' stories and their varying representations?
- How have you been impacted as you hear the participants' experiences?
- How do you hope the CES profession responds?

These questions are important in light of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) standards which require that the “academic unit [to make] systematic efforts to recruit, employ, and retain a diverse faculty” (CACREP, 2009, Section I.U). These questions are also part of a necessary, pressing examination of the here and now within the CES and counseling professions.

The Truth of the Here and Now: Life on the Academic Plantation

Smith et al. (2011) indicated that institutions of higher learning and academic programs are not as welcoming or open as they either advertise or as we would like to think. Participants in this study indicated that the African American counseling student or the African-centered counselor educator often faced latent hostilities, profound assimilation and acculturative pressures, and existential questions (Cole, 2001).

Acculturative pressures and questions were particularly amplified in predominantly White institutional contexts and threatened ethnic identity and the fidelity to cultural values.

Hilliard (2002) and Schiele (1994) indicated that predominantly White institutional contexts propagate and foster a Eurocentric worldview and cultural values. As such these institutions remain committed to cultural encapsulation and

impoverished. Practically speaking these institutions exclude other worldviews, refuse power sharing, demand allegiance, and mantra cultural capitulation in diverse others (Hilliard, 2002; hooks, 1994). This leads to stifling educational environs, reveals the tendency towards academic dominance, and is in essence an attempt to perform cultural conversion therapy.

In light of this egregious perversity and hegemonic educational barbarism, counseling programs and counselor education professionals must extricate themselves from such unethical practices and learn to welcome diverse others, equally valid worldviews, and alternate problem solving modalities (Katz, 1985; Wrenn, 1962). The failure to do so sends an overt message to students and faculty of color within our programs that the counseling and CES professions intended to remain and continues to remain uncommitted to inclusivity and diversity (Holcomb-McCoy & Addison-Bradley, 2005). It also sends covert messages of approval and status quo to majority culture students. These messages buttress their ideas of normalcy and superiority, justifies their naiveté, and shrouds their privileged position (McIntosh, 2008). Hays and Chang (2003) defined White privilege,

as the belief that one's own standards and opinions are accurate (to the exclusion of all other standards and opinions) and these standards and opinions are supported by Whites in a way to continually reinforce social distance between groups, thereby allowing Whites to dominate, control access to and escape challenges from racial and ethnic minorities. (p. 141)

Though extrication from such privilege has not been, nor will be, easy, it is necessary if our institutions are to become inclusive environments. This undertaking will be a long and arduous process and, in fact, may be near impossible given its historical entrenchment. However, in the context of CES, extrication may result in improvements in client welfare and to the increased relevance of the counseling

profession and counselor preparation programs. It may also strengthen the ability of CES departments to recruit and retain scholars of color through improvements in racial climates and in turn increase the job satisfaction of CES scholars of color (Holcomb-McCoy & Addison-Bradley, 2005). Until then important and pressing questions will remain for the African-centered CES scholar: Is the primary allegiance towards academic advancement or to the larger African American community? How can dual legitimacy be maintained within the community and the academy (Akbar, 2002; White & Siwatu, 2002)?

Denigration of Communal Values

Moffitt and Harris (2004) indicated that during the pursuit of tenure African American scholars may become either alienated from their community or undergo communal exile altogether. As such, African American scholars in predominantly White institutional contexts often become resigned to service the aims of the institution and forced to pay homage to Eurocentric cultural aims of competition, individuality, and materialism (Asante, 2002; Katz, 1985). This situation (a) is unfortunate, (b) robs African American communities of vital talents and critical resources, and (c) violates the African-centered and sacrosanct idea that knowledge exists for communal liberation and advancement (Carroll, 2010). When this emphasis exists in counseling programs, communal interactions, reciprocities, and service are sacrificed and weakened alongside the social justice, inclusion, and advocacy intents espoused by the profession in its ethics and standards (American Counseling Association, 2014; CACREP, 2009). As illustrated by Huntstone's erroneous preference and consumption of the fruit from the tree of dominance, the repercussion

of such tenured pursuit and violations are severe and tragic for both the individual African American scholar and her or his community.

African-centered scholars teaching within predominantly White institutional contexts are often employed in non-validating and attitudinally dismissive institutions. These scholars are often asked to mute their voices, forgo cultural fidelity and communal imperatives, participate in internalized racism, and succumb to institutionalized oppression (Hilliard, 2002; hooks, 1994; Salazar, 2005). In essence, it is as if he or she is asked to lose a sense of cultural rootedness and to become a house Negro on an academic plantation. In such settings the plantation overseer metes out the material privileges of advancement, retention, and tenure as the reward for subservient allegiance, cultural neglect, and intellectual suicide (Akbar, 2002). These exchanges are extraneous, exorbitantly high, usurious, and especially vexing for the emerging or self-identified Afrocentric scholar (Akbar, 2002; Hilliard, 2002; Schiele, 1994). In the quest for academic prestige or attainment, he or she faces a plethora of difficult and perplexing choices. These choices range along a continuum and may result in either greater senses of personal wholeness and communal engagement or individual fraction and collective dismemberment (Cole, 2001; Hilliard, 2002; Moffit & Harris, 2004).

Post-Racial Colleagues? Not!

If the experiences and stories of participants had been a referendum or plebiscite concerning the post-racial attitudes of their colleagues and departments, then their voices would have overwhelmingly resulted in a 90% vote of no confidence. In fact, the most prevalent myth which participants mentioned in the focus group and individual interviews centered on the myth of multiculturalism within the CES

profession as evidenced by their personal career experiences. This is not surprising as Hays and Chang (2003) observed that “unfortunately counselor educators generally are motivated by the views and characteristics of lower racial identity statuses and perpetuate institutional racism through academic practices and policies” (p. 139). Though their observation is not surprising, it should be alarming and policed.

Kevin’s advancement story, particularly and most overtly, illustrated this reality and raised important questions for the profession to consider. What lay beneath his assessment that his colleague’s attempt to block his advancement was “strictly [because of] race?” Was he just making this up, somehow otherwise jaded and playing the race card to cover up his deficiency? What toll did such treatment exact upon him? How unpalatable to his adversary was his view that CES professionals hold a patronizing and paternalistic liberalism towards African Americans which cripples and disadvantages them? Additionally, to what extent do members of our profession still maintain feigned or masked commitments to diversity, social justice, and multiculturalism? These queries resemble those intimated in the Hays, Dean, and Chang (2007) examination of privilege and oppression in counselor training and supervision environs.

That the collegial insensitivity, ignorance, and offense reported by Raymond Key during his dissertation defense in the 1980s was repeated or reappeared in Kevin’s 2014 advancement story 34 years later remains concerning. It was sad then and remains sad now. The discriminatory and offensive treatment in Kevin’s story appeared to be more overt, blatant, and offensive than that storied by Raymond Key. Relatedly, Robinson, Lewis, Henderson, and Flowers (2009), Hays (2003), and Hays et al. (2007) indicated that our academic institutions mirror historical race relations

within the United States, remained homeostatic purveyors of status quo, and were often a microcosm of the current ambient culture. Together Kevin's story, Raymond Key's reminiscence, and the professional literature indicate that CES professionals and programs have long held ambivalent stances towards African Americans. This is disconcerting since over the last 30 years the counseling profession has expressed a dire need for philosophical diversity (Katz, 1985) and has made substantial commitments to multicultural competencies (Arrendondo et al., 1996). These participants' voices indicated that, despite our profession's effort and commitment, we have not yet met the Sue et al. (1992) call to the counseling profession and still remain a racially oppressive profession.

Academic Profiling Within the Counselor Education and Supervision Field

And what are we to believe about Kosugi's report of his experience of de-evaluation and harassment during a mockingly unfair and unjust collegial review? His reviewers and their remediation attempt caused him pain, sadness, and anger. However, he managed to preserve his dignity, leveraged appropriate personal power, and demonstrated self-control by masking his true feelings and employing a trickster strategy (Harris, 2015). For his resolute and brilliant success, I am glad.

We should not be glad, however, for the collegial, institutional or professional conditions which necessitated his trickster response. Instead, we should pause, take note, have great concern, re-evaluate, and change. The double bind and challenge within Kosugi's ordeal was twofold: in response to his evaluation he believed that he must either (a) act according to the external stereotype of being an angry Black man

and surrender his dignity in the process, or (b) respond in a way which maintained his dignity and which overcame those trying to demean him.

Kosugi overcame the double bind, maintained self-respect, and was lauded by other participants. However, his narrative points to aspects of our profession which are in dire need of assessment, remediation, and gatekeeping: the entrenchment of White privilege and its abusive supremacist notions within academic environs. This is especially true as his colleagues, as evaluators, appeared to have fictional or predetermined caricatures of Kosugi in their mind. They also appeared to have a discriminatory basis for their investigation and remained oblivious to their privileged stance, implicit bias, and misguided power. In a very real sense Kosugi was objectified and deemed as an outsider (Salazar, 2005). He was racially profiled by his colleagues within his institution. And what, pray tell, was his alleged crime? Teaching while Black!

Kosugi's academic credibility and competency were subjected to micro-insults and micro-invalidations during this review (Sue et al., 2008; Sue & Sue, 2012). His story, response, and experience of collegial disrespect most assuredly contributed to his related belief that the intellectual capacities of African American men are "feared." His story and belief were not, however, the sole result of individual conjecture or personal interpretation and were evidenced by the professional counseling literature and voices of other CES professionals of color (Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Vereen & Hill, 2008).

Consistent with Reviere (2001) and Tillman's (2002) guidance concerning Afrocentric research imperatives of communal validation and interpretation, I pause here to stress the specific call and perspective of the auditor of this study regarding

any interpretation and representation of this matter. He explicitly stressed the vitriolic invective contained in Kosugi's story. I disclose his interpretation herein so that the reader does not miss the message and so that I do not understate his wisdom and insight. He indicated that Kosugi received a veiled and derogatory message and was essentially told during the evaluative absurdity to "Dance Monkey Dance!"

I found Kosugi's report of collegial amusement and laughter near the end of the evaluation extremely disconcerting. In concert with Kosugi and in response to the auditor, I believe their behavior towards him represented forms of derogatory sport, academic sadism, and gendered racism (Smith et al., 2011). It seemed certain that his colleagues were not interested in alternate interpretations nor did they consider differing perspectives during their evaluative endeavor. For example, the problematic student evaluations may have resulted from the students' cultural encapsulation, contemporary racism, privilege, or any of the other arbitrary challenges which are often directed towards the credibility of Black faculty in predominantly White institutions (Constantine, Smith, Redington, & Owens, 2008; Vereen & Hill, 2008). Rather, it appeared that Kosugi's colleagues acted upon their intransigent beliefs and preserved provoking profiles of a Black man as intellectually inferior, simple minded, and violence prone (DuBois, 1903; Jackson & Crawley, 2003).

**Different Kinds of Shackles: The
Double Binds of Invisibility
and Hyper-Visibility**

Still further, and relative to the context and meaning within his narrative, the lack of response from Kirk's colleagues to his invitation for classroom observation spoke volumes. Their silence and distance spoke of their cultural leanings, negative affectations, disingenuous intents, and refusal to acknowledge him. In essence, his

colleagues were playing a game and his invitation trumped their disguise and revealed their gamesmanship. Kirk wisely maintained a separate record of his scholastic achievements. His recordkeeping suggested (a) wary regard and healthy suspicion towards his colleagues, (b) anticipatory wisdom and survival instincts, (c) preparedness and readiness to thwart their micro-aggressive schemes, and (d) ability to invalidate their micro-insulting harassment (Sue et al., 2008; Whaley, 2001; White, 1970).

Additionally, while Kirk indicated that he was treated well during his doctoral program and given a tenure track position, he wished that he had been assigned or sought out a cultural informant or mentor. Kirk's desire reflected the Holcomb-McCoy and Bradley (2003) discussion concerning the difficulties African American CES professionals encounter in matters related to tenure, publication, grant, and funding opportunities. His desire and dilemma was also reflected in the works of others who also found that the lack of mentorship and research support was a major source of occupational stress for African American counselor educators (Borders et al., 2012; Hill, Leinbaugh, Bradley, & Hazler, 2005). Kirk desired someone who could have taught him about "the hidden agenda" of higher education and its "whole quota system." Left alone and relatively isolated, he was unprepared to encounter what Wood (2008) referred to as the "hegemonic power structured in the academy which is controlled by the dominant Eurocentric professoriate" (p. 4). Cole (2001), in his experience, similarly echoed the impact of collegial and social isolation in the academy when he said,

Yet, one of the most important needs of African American graduate students goes beyond obtaining a racially inclusive knowledge base. It relies on mentorship. Who was going to mentor me through the cultural norms of

academia, present opportunities for pivotal graduate assistantships, assist in establishing publishable forms of research and encourage me to maintain my commitment to issues improving the experience of African Americans in higher education? (p. 96)

In my opinion the absence of culturally responsive informants and mentors left Kirk vulnerable to collegial isolation, mistaken identity, and forms of confirmation bias, heuristic errors, indentured servitude, and tokenism. These threatened to undermine, and most certainly would have ravaged, his self-esteem had he no remembrance, anchor, and connection to his ancestors and elders (Akbar, 2002). However, as he participated in mandated and numerous committee assignments, Kirk was very certainly exposed to the feelings, tolls, and impacts associated with experiencing the dual simultaneities and contrasting realities of (a) collegial invisibility, in which his rightful presence and ideas were slighted, overlooked, or deemed inferior (Dowden et al., 2014; Franklin, 1999) and (b) hyper-visibility, in which he solely bore the burdens of usurious tokenism, the recruitment of students of color, and other situationally related increases in institutional obligations (Constantine et al., 2008).

Kirk's narrative and treatment corresponded with voices in the counseling literature which indicate that collegial isolation and negative affect, racial and cultural bias, heightened expectations, and other discriminatory behaviors remain a challenge for African Americans preparing for, or within, the CES professorate (Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Holcomb-McCoy & Addison-Bradley, 2005). Indeed, Kirk would have personally and professionally profited from the availability of a cultural informant and avoided extortive forms of quid pro quo exploitation during his training and initial career path. Based upon his report, it appeared that Kirk was reduced to a

cultural artifact, was paid to be a token, and helped satisfy the requirement of counseling programs to “recruit, employ, and retain a diverse faculty” (CACREP, 2009, Section I.U). That said, I celebrate his achievement, perseverance, success, and way-making abilities.

**Voices from the Quarters:
Black Lives Matter**

The concerns and conditions of the ambient African American community were often at the forefront of participants’ minds. For most participants the call and concerns of the African American community were seldom far from their hearts regardless of his institutional context (e.g., historically Black college or university or predominantly White institution) and were an integral part of their academic calling and professional responsibilities. Their commitment to the issues of the Black community remained unshaken despite the above mentioned collegial denigrations and remained central to their teaching philosophies and praxes. Art’s interview, in particular, highlighted the need for an intertwined and reciprocal relationship between academic preparation and educational achievement and the simultaneous fulfilment of cultural imperatives and communal obligations. He countered the notions of an individual emphasis, material privileges, and elitism and confined knowledge which are so often found and celebrated within the academy (Hilliard, 2002; hooks, 1994).

Like Moffitt and Harris (2004), Art’s interview echoed Asante’s (1987) idea that knowledge and education were important only insofar as they made a significant difference and contribution to the larger African American community. This idea may be problematic for the Afrocentric and tenure-seeking professor, as academic institutions often devalued activities related to service and communal obligations (e.g.,

serving on diversity committees, mentoring students of color, or making community presentations) and assigned higher value to research and publication activities (Butler-Byrd, 2010). Art's teleological emphasis and voice also echoed Harding's (1974) stance that,

Harshly put, then, the fact still remains that for the life and work of the Black scholar in search of vocation, the primary context is not to be found in the questionable freedom and relative affluence of the American university, nor in the ponderous uncertainties of "the scholarly community," nor even in the private joys of our highly prized, individual exceptionalisms. Rather, wherever we may happen to be physically based, our essential social, political and spiritual context is the colonized situation of the masses of the Black community in America. (p. 6)

Art's voiced insistence concerning ideas of social responsibility and communal involvement also reflected Marable's (1995) insight that,

It is insufficient for Black scholars to scale the pristine walls of the academic tower, looking down with calculated indifference on the ongoing struggles of Black people. We must always remember that we are the product and beneficiaries of those struggles, and that our scholarship is without value unless it bears a message which nourishes the hope, dignity and resistance of our people. (p. 112)

The fulfillment of communal obligations and the maintenance of cultural connections were critically important tasks for the participants. Salazar (2009) indicated that communal involvement and connection are necessary survival strategies for professors of color within predominantly White institutions. Academic survival aside and Afrocentrically speaking, the participants and their voices consistently relayed the following perspective: knowledge is meant to ensure the very survival and well-being of those outside the walls of the academy (e.g., Trayvon Martin, February 26, 2012; Eric Garner, July 17, 2014; Michael Brown, August 9, 2014; Tamir Rice, November 22, 2014).

**Revisiting The Color of Fear:
Afrocentric Advocacy for the
Heart and Soul of the Counselor
Education and Supervision
Profession**

The participants, individually and collectively, advocated for the heart and soul of the CES profession in their stories. Their advocacy paralleled and illustrated the central dilemma contained within the classic video, *The Color of Fear: A Film* (Lee et al., 1994), which is a popular teaching tool that has been used in many counselor education and diversity training programs. During a moment of heightened tension, the group facilitator, Lee Mun Wah, posed a Socratic and cognitive question to a White group member, David. Prior to his question, David, as antagonist, seemed incapable of empathy, resisted the interpretations, stories, and experience of the men of color, and remained largely indifferent to their spoken plights. David's invalidation was particularly offensive to Victor, the protagonist, who traveled against David's indifference and ignorance and advocated for his heart and soul.

Lee Mun Wah pursued David in the hope of increasing his understanding, awareness, empathetic capacity, and overall development. As and after David mused about the possibility of discriminatory treatment being directed towards his daughters, Lee Mun Wah asked, "What keeps you from believing that the stories of these men is true and that it is really happening to them?" (Lee et al., 1994). David's openness and resulting realization, empathy, honesty, intellectual response, and emotional catharsis were, for most viewers I hope, freeing, noteworthy, sincere, and moving.

Interestingly, David did not demonstrate insight or empathetic understanding for the experiences of the men of color within the group until he was personally threatened or affected with the possibility of loss. The timing of his empathetic

response, in and of itself, shed light on his privileged position, subjugating ignorance, and invalidating ideology. His response allowed his Afrocentric advocate, Victor, to state, "From here I can work with you" (Lee et al., 1994). As a result, the foundation for a tentative working context between them was established. With David's nascent regard and emergent empathy, the necessary conditions and requisites (i.e., psychological safety, cognitive empathy, emotional awareness, mutual respect, and positive regard) for future dialogue, trust, and cooperative relationship were tentatively established.

Like Victor, the participants continued to battle for respect within the CES profession. Their battle pointed to a huge gulf between the profession's expressed commitments to multiculturalism and diversity and the articulated experiences of these men. Their stories undermined feel good, self-congratulatory attitudes and challenged the profession to renewed commitment, examination, and effort. Since we, in many of our programs, have asked our students to view and discuss the video in terms of participant stories, I believe that counseling professionals must do likewise and similarly discuss the narratives of these participants and the stories of those similar to them. To do otherwise is duplicitous. Like Lee Mun Wah's questions to David, I invite and ask the reader to introspect and consider questions which are similarly related to that interaction: How would you respond if your beloved had experiences similar to the participants of this study? What keeps you from believing their stories are true? What do their stories say about the CES profession? What keeps your heart and mind from acknowledging their legitimate pain, grievance, virtue, and nobility?

My reasons for asking the above questions are twofold. Although voices similar to the participants have been around for years, the sad reality is that these past

utterances have been partially heard and, in some cases, were largely ignored. In my opinion, the truest tests for advocacy, multiculturalism, and social justice hinge on orientation towards personal examination and collective truthfulness; cooperation and mutuality; interdependence and humility; and efforts towards balance, harmony, inclusion, and justice (Asante, 2003; Myers, 1985; 1987). Passing these tests is consistent with an Afrocentric worldview and is not an option if the CES profession is to progress towards greater ethical soundness and healthiness in its symbolic heart and soul.

This point illustrates the larger concern of whether or not we, as the CES and helping professions, will continue to silence and harm another generation of African American male scholars and lose them to other fields. Relatedly, Smith et al. (2011) stressed similar concern and irony in their discussion regarding the positive correlation between higher educational attainment and the related increase in environment stress for Black men. They stated,

It is rather late in the history of the U. S. and “desegregated” schooling and workforces for People of Color to still be facing problems associated with gendered racism. The country must seriously confront these forms of institutionalized racism because for African American males, the associated consequences of institutionalized Black misandry continue to be public health threat. (p. 75)

Participant narratives indicated that African American men encounter malignant fear within the CES profession.

**Afrocentrically Speaking,
“Even Our Professional
Standards are White”**

Hilliard (2002) and Schiele (1994) criticized the persistence of Eurocentric cultural values within predominantly White institutions and advocated for expansive

educational approaches. More recently and specifically, Hays et al. (2007) voiced their similar concerns about the Eurocentric orientation of the counseling and CES profession in their discussion on the counselor education preparatory experiences of students. They called for an increase in diversity conversations in our counseling training programs and supervisory efforts to develop culturally responsive students.

As mentioned earlier in Chapter IV, James called for the re-examination of the cultural ideology and training implications of our professional standards (CACREP, 2009). He saw the specific omission of discussions related to the prejudicial treatment, oppression, and societal challenges historically and presently faced by African Americans in United States society as egregiously problematic. Symbolically speaking and for this discussion, James is representative of Victor, who is the protagonist in *The Color of Fear: A Film* (Lee et al., 1994). Alternately, David, as the video's antagonist, symbolically represents the invalidating, racist and White supremacist attitudes remaining within the CES professorate and the overall counseling profession.

I found James's voice and perspective, as both Afrocentric rhetorician and counselor educator, compelling and believe he should be heard. He provided insight into the classroom atmospheres and experiences within the teaching environs of a historically Black college or university. Based upon his insight, I believe that discussions concerning historical privileges and oppression take place more frequently, and possibly more vigorously, within the historically Black college or university classroom. I agree with James' insistence that counselor educators move beyond the popular canon and the widely accepted texts of convenience in our programs (e.g., those mass produced by a few, mostly White authors) and adopt texts which more stridently critique issues of power and privilege. He observed,

I walk past classrooms at [HBCU school name removed] and they're having conversations about the school-to-prison pipeline, and they're connecting that to the work of Freire, or Frantz Fanon, or the *Miseducation of the Negro*. Um . . . she graduated from the master's program at [HBCU school name removed], and in one of her classrooms, the primary text for the course was *Even the Rat Was White* by Robert Guthrie. And I—I'm confident that you just can't have an experience like that at majority universities, where the primary focus is education for the purpose of liberating and advancing the cause of people of African ancestry in this country.

This is not to say that the above conversations do not occur within counselor education classrooms at primarily White Institutions. Surely such conversations occur but more than likely they remain anemic. Hays and Chang (2003) suggested that the discussion of multicultural issues within counselor education programs were either avoided or not sufficiently addressed in-depth. Their work indicated that White privilege, oppressions, and the historical, institutional, and social constructs which give rise to privilege remain overlooked in student training. Such overlook means that the majority of counseling and counselor education students are being inadequately prepared.

Together, James's insight and the Hays and Chang (2003) emphasis challenged counselor training institutions to obtain greater awareness and social consciousness. Our implementation of their challenge results in multicultural competence, critical awareness, and cognitively mature students (Davidson & Schmidt, 2014; Granello, 2002; Granello & Hazler, 1998). Clearly the absence of historical or contemporary references to the fallacious notions of White racial superiority and cultural dominations within the CES training standards is in itself a grievous matter. This absence represents a violation of CES' expressed commitments to social justice and is tantamount to a whitewash of United States history. Such whitewash strategically maintains unearned White privilege, reifies its corresponding myth of meritocracy,

and results in a deceptive depiction and dissociative re-storying of United States and African histories (Akbar, 2002; Asante, 1987; McIntosh, 2008). Ironically, the historical amnesia and silence within CACREP standards reflects the charge arrayed against Afrocentric adherents, ideology, and worldview: They are pseudo-historical, cover-ups, and nothing more than attempts to a feel good psychology.

Thus, without concerted, deliberate, intentional, and prolonged exposures to the stories of non-dominant others, Afrocentric or otherwise, counselor educators and aspiring counselors will remain culturally encapsulated in their training and related interventions (Vereen & Hill, 2008). They will also remain deficient, inferior, maladaptive, and under-developed when it comes to the achievement of cultural competency and to the provision of culturally responsive services (West-Olatunji, Goodman, Mehta, & Templeton, 2011). Additionally, as long as the CES profession and our training efforts repeat the culture of Whiteness and protect its privileged position within our training efforts, counseling professionals will remain ideologically White and Eurocentric, unaccountable, and become increasingly irrelevant to rapidly changing demographics (Hays & Chang, 2003; Hill, 2003; Robinson et al., 2009).

The participants of this study must be heard, especially as their voices require and provide deep insight into the CES profession and our counselor efforts. We must ensure that our standards and their implementation are not, like the rat in the title of Guthrie's, 2004, psychological treatise, White and slanted solely and primarily towards (a) Eurocentric worldview and aesthetic; (b) gross forms of individuality and objectivity; (c) pathological estimation of African Americans or other persons of color as inferior, deviant, and deficient; and (d) revisionist history. This imperative is for all

training counselor training programs, historically Black college or university, predominantly White institution, or otherwise.

Moreover, where are the studies on privilege and Whiteness? And where are the studies within the counselor education which focus on the remediation and gatekeeping of professors and colleagues who maintain oppressive and insensitive stances? We must address these questions as our student populations and the populations of those they serve are increasingly diverse. The applicability, credibility, and usefulness of the counseling profession are in serious question when it remains committed to privilege and therefore insensitive to the concerns of people of color, other demographics, and their varying intersections (Holcomb-McCoy & Bradley, 2003; Katz, 1985; Sue et al., 1992). Likewise, our professional standards, social justice, and advocacy pursuits remain—from an Afrocentric standpoint—solely aspirational, unbalanced, diminished, disharmonious, schizoid, and much less than truthful.

I honestly did not want to hear aspects of the participants' stories and wanted to hide myself from their implications. I did not want to be confronted by the painful or searing realities of their experiences. Though I had doubt, I wanted to believe that I was teaching and supervising in a post-racial profession and was surrounded by a collegial society devoted to the cutting edge of social progress. My doubt was confirmed as one of the elders stated that, in the eyes of members of the dominant culture, African American men who hold doctoral degrees are “a [derogatory racial epithet removed] with a Ph.D.” His statement challenged my desire for oblivious naiveté and was, on numerous occasions, a sub-theme of the participants' stories. To this day his words bring to consciousness recent media portrayals and national

conversations on the persistent and varied nature of the assaults, mistreatments, and violations that are often directed against the lives, sanctity, and well-being of African American men (e.g., Martin, Garner, Brown, and Rice).

I needed to hear the elder's warning and the reality that African American men face devaluation in the CES profession. I also needed to confess the deception that I would or could somehow be exempted and an exception. While I have been taught by the participants' stories, I know that there is more which I need to learn. Indeed my scholastic voice and journey have been shaped by my hearing and connecting with their experiences. I hope the participants will recognize themselves (and my gratitude) in the various scenes, journeys, and ancestral remembrances contained in this study.

Identifying the Enemy

There is an African word pronounced "Sankofa." It literally means "to go back and fetch it" (Butler-Byrd, 2010). Throughout the course of this study I have been challenged to hear a very small portion of the collective history and experience of African American men within the CES profession. Indeed such history is larger than I can recount herein and even what I have heard is minuscule in comparison to the larger African American CES story. I have much to learn. I embarked upon this study knowing that there was something amiss in my educational and professional development. I undertook this study as a necessary means to ensure my survival and to fulfill the necessary requirements for doctoral completion.

In the following section, I briefly touch upon the history of the multicultural competency movement within the counseling profession. I do so to honor the forbearers of the multicultural competency movement within the profession and to highlight remaining and ongoing work. Afterwards, I present a brief discussion on

White privilege within counselor education. It is my opinion that White privilege and internalized racism remain formidable adversaries and enemies within the CES profession and must be removed for our students and clients.

Advent of the Multicultural Counseling Competencies

Leaders within the counseling professional solidified the movement of the profession towards multicultural counseling competency with the publication of a document which operationalized the multicultural competencies 19 years ago (Arredondo et al., 1996). This landmark achievement was based upon the work of Sue et al. (1992) and their call to the profession regarding the need for multicultural competencies and related standards. The need for these competencies and standards were initially discussed and referenced in a 1982 position paper on cross-cultural competency that was developed by various counseling professionals (Arredondo & Perez, 2006).

The insight for such inclusion and advocacy has been known for decades. Katz (1985) observed the monocultural nature and worldview of the counseling profession. She indicated that the counseling profession was dominated by a Eurocentric worldview and that counseling theories often reified Eurocentric cultural values as normal. In her view, it followed that the counseling profession and its healing interventions were often irrelevant to others who possessed differing worldviews. Prior to Katz's observation, Wrenn (1962) stated his observations concerning culturally encapsulated counselors, stimulated awareness of the dangers and consequences of such, and pointed to the need for greater diversity in the counseling

profession. His observations were made during a time of great societal upheaval and change.

Many professionals generally linked the advent of the multicultural movement in counseling to the Civil Rights movement and legislation of 1964 (Arredondo & Perez, 2006). However, Parham and Arredondo in *The Multicultural Paradigm Interviews* (Microtraining Associates, 2012) also situated the inception of the multicultural movement within the contexts and experiences of Japanese and Mexican immigrants and their related struggles to overcome prejudicial and discriminatory treatment. Interpretive starting point aside, the need, importance, and relevance of the multicultural movement and competencies can be clearly seen.

Indeed, the forerunners of the multicultural competency movement and their efforts constituted a heartfelt, just, and necessary response from the profession for the sake of diverse others and itself. Through their efforts counselors were held responsible for developing an awareness of themselves as cultural beings, knowledge about diverse others, and skills to work with culturally different others. Their efforts resulted in the emergence of what is commonly called as the fourth force of counseling (Pedersen, 1990). This emergence was intended to ensure dignified, ethical and respectful treatment, and the provision of culturally responsive counseling services, to persons of color and other diverse demographics. This was greatly needed then and remains even more so needed now. This is true in light of the mental health and counseling needs associated with an increasingly diverse and changing demographic within the United States population (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2001).

A Feigned Adoption and Slothful Neglect of the Multicultural Counseling Competencies

Today, the multicultural competencies are 23 years old. They were endorsed by the American Counseling Association in 2002 (Arredondo & Perez, 1996). At the time of this study, the multicultural competencies had not been significantly updated or refined by the profession since their initial introduction. It appears that counseling profession considered the initial multicultural competencies good enough and as a result they have remained untouched ever since. This perspective and lack of refinement is concerning, especially when we consider that Arredondo and Toporek's (2004) saw the "competencies, as a living document . . . [and] subject to further refinement, development, and validation based on continuing and new sociocultural and political issue that impinge of the lives of individuals and families" (p. 50).

It seems that non-dominant individuals with the CES profession have become like the hare in the race narrative (i.e., too self-assured and too comfortable) and have left the furtherance of the multicultural competencies to persons of color and other non-dominant individuals and groups (Arredondo & Tovar-Blank, 2014). For example, Parham and Ajuma (2000) presented an African-centered therapeutic approach for interactions with African American families. Their approach relies on Afrocentric principles, rituals, and ideas. Relatedly, Santiago-Rivera, Arredondo, and Gallardo-Cooper (2002) discussed the cultural values of Latinos and introduced competencies for Spanish speaking populations and those of Latino heritage. Other diverse scholars have contributed to this advance, developed additional culturally specific counseling approaches, and built upon the aliveness and flexibility of the original multicultural competencies (Arredondo & Tovar-Blank, 2014). For these

voices and their efforts we should be glad. We should not be glad, however, about the blatant neglect of the multicultural competencies by others within the counseling profession.

The multicultural competency framework and the initial operational statements held such promise. However, an examination of the arch of our literature suggests that our profession moved too quickly beyond their implementation and diluted the necessary focus on the prevalence and deleterious impacts of White privilege. Initially, the movement of our profession from more generic discussion of cultural competency to the operationalization of the multicultural competencies in the early- to mid-1990s was greatly beneficial, timely, and wise. Then in 1999, we turned to the social justice track, and this pivot seems to have diverted attention and energy away from the momentum of multicultural competency and recognition of White privilege to a broader and perhaps more palatable engagement in the issues of social justice.

The professions' dereliction of ethical duty in this regard has resulted in a collective sloth in matters related to the furtherance of the multicultural competencies. This inactivity and its related impacts on student training and professional development have been duly noted, addressed, and observed (Arredondo & Tovar-Blank, 2014; Hays et al., 2007). Sadly, Arredondo reported the need for continued advocacy of the multicultural competencies some 23 years after their introduction. She stated,

In 2011, plenty of graduate program classrooms across the country did not address multicultural competence let alone introduce the MCC [multicultural competencies]. I [Arredondo] report this anecdotally because I make it a point to ask when making invited presentations. Blank stares and furious note taking by student attendees and expressions of embarrassment by professors who invited me to speak are common scenarios. Clearly those of us who advocate

for MCC have more work to do to influence our colleagues. (Arredondo & Tovar-Blank, 2014, p. 30)

Arredondo's report was most unfortunate and pointed to a deeper malaise and malignancy within the profession: the enduring and intransigent nature of White privilege and its commitments to supremacist notions and ideologies of dominance, mastery, and normality. The endurance of White privilege and oppression, in my opinion, is the primary reason that the counseling profession still lags in the operationalization of the multicultural competencies. Such endurance is also the major contributor to the lack of multicultural awareness and competency in training programs and to the lack of multicultural awareness, self-knowledge, and skill of counseling students.

In light of the above, the multicultural competencies are a bit of a joke, especially as they have lain largely fallow within a majority White profession and neglected by White professionals. If the American Counseling Association and our profession had truly devoted itself to the multicultural competencies then our teaching and instructional approaches would be truly different today as would our students. Likewise the stories of the participants herein would be substantially altered and issues related to the retention of faculty of color would have been largely solved. Until majority persons of privilege become consistently pained by the impact of their veiled status to themselves and address issues of inequity and inequality, nothing will change. Nothing will change because the rewards associated with their privileged position necessitate internal denial and obliviousness. Also, the counseling profession has given White people a covering or window dressing to hide behind and which justifies their indifference.

Implications and Possibilities for the Profession

If our profession is to meaningfully further the implementation of the multicultural competencies, then White people within our profession must educate White students about Whiteness and the ramifications of the recalcitrant, racist, and veiled attitudes inherently associated with White privilege. They must also take the lead in honoring all voices in the canon within our teaching, supervisory, and research practice. Those who fail to do so (a) undermine the spirit of the multicultural competencies, (b) reveal their true desire and intention for cultural dominance and privilege, and (c) violate the ethical foundations of counseling (e.g., autonomy, justice, nonmaleficence, beneficence, and fidelity) (Arredondo & Toporek, 2004). In the following section I discuss the findings of this study in terms of their implications for counseling instruction, supervisory efforts, and promotion and tenure concerns.

Miseducation in Counselor Education

The participants and their experiences raised serious concerns about counselor educators and their instruction and curriculum. Given that the pedagogical attitudes of counselor educators have progressed little since the 1970s (Arbuckle, 1970; Hays & Chang, 2003; Wrenn, 1962), the students of today are likely no different from those of earlier decades. In this regard it seems that our counseling programs, standards, competencies, and ethical codes have made little difference. Consider that we have little to no research substantiating that the multicultural competencies have had any notable impact on counselors, their training, or client services. As such, I ask what proof can counseling or psychology scholars provide to demonstrate that the multicultural competencies have mattered at all in our training efforts of counselor outcomes? The absence of proof implies that, politically speaking, the profession has

not taken the multicultural competencies seriously and has lost its will to move forward. The stories herein evidenced the profession's disregard and neglect of the multicultural competencies.

From a curriculum standpoint I do not find that there has been adequate analysis or meaningful critique of counseling pedagogy. Arbuckle (1970) critiqued the practice of counselor education when he stated that "it may be that the educator has become so involved in teaching *something*, that he has lost sight of the *somebody* who is learning" (p. 142). He furthered that teachers often required students to adopt the right way of doing and to fit a mold. Such approach violated the necessary, relational conditions of unconditional positive regard and empathetic understanding which students need to learn.

In 1998, the editors of the *Counselor Education and Supervision* journal devoted the entire issue to the pedagogical functions of the CES profession. The journal contributors found little evidence to suggest the existence of pedagogical structure or foundation for counselor education and suggested possible starting points. Sexton (1998) indicated that "as a discipline counselor education lacks a comprehensive theoretical and conceptual rationale to guide the identification and dissemination of its core knowledge base" (p. 67). He stressed the importance of continued dialogue to prevent a closed pedagogical foundation. He expressed concern about the possibility of culturally encapsulated pedagogy which favored Eurocentric ideologies of individualism and logical positivism.

In the same issue, Nelson and Neufeldt (1998) advanced a constructivist approach which emphasized teacher and student participation in the co-construction of knowledge and the discernment ability to know how, when, why, and with whom they

could apply such knowledge. Their goal was to develop reflective practitioners. Their work was an admirable pursuit as it included a focus on issues of pedagogical power. Granello and Hazler (1998) in turn focused on the applicability of the various developmental models (e.g., adult, college student, counseling, and novice-to-expert) to the sequencing of course work for counselor trainees. Their work was intriguing in that it focused on the cognitive abilities of students and paired such with related learning style, teaching styles, and course sequencing. The authors wisely noted the limitation of their approach by stating that the developmental models were male normative and did not take into account the considerations of person of color or intersectional identities. Fong (1998) commended the postmodern and constructivists approaches which were advanced by the other authors. She also discussed the cultural limitations of the works included in the issues and emphasized a dire need to include the perspectives of Freire (1970) and hooks (1994) in future discussion and publications. I agree with Fong.

In my opinion two things appeared certain. One, we have not had prolonged discussion or debate about which constitutes good pedagogical foundations or questioned the underlying assumptions of our current teaching approach. And two, if we do not have more engaged instruction, experiential pedagogy, and social action activities other than that which is passively taught by the book, we will keep our students and clients at an arm's length from each other and do both of them a disservice (Henriksen, & Trusty, 2005; Hill, 2003).

Until we prove otherwise I believe that we are miseducating our students and offer in evidence the participants' narratives and experiences which are contained herein. I also offer my own experience. Just as my education background had gaps,

due to the cultural encapsulation of my instructors, and holes, which did not represent my experience, I am strongly concerned that our students are being educated similarly. Perhaps, as James intimated, our instructional efforts, ethical standards, and professional guidelines (a) reflect limited value preferences; (b) are nothing more than attempts to maintain social control; (c) convince differing others of their inferiority, unacceptability, and abnormality; and (d) attempt to mask the pressing problems within our lives, relationships, and interactions (Szasz, 1960).

We subject counseling students to theories and a prepared profession which do not fit the real world or their worldview and mold them into the exclusive, preferred, and established way of being rather than educating and liberating them to other possibilities, modalities and ways of being (Freire, 1970; hooks, 1994). We have to move from the delivery of a packaged curriculum to exploratory instruction which includes non-dominant voices. Otherwise, our counseling students come out looking like the widgets of yesteryear. At some level we need to reconfigure our pedagogical approaches, move beyond the privileged textbooks of convenience, such as Gladding, Corey, and Sue, and welcome culturally indigenous and unique voices and the works of critical scholars (Hill, 2003; hooks, 1994).

Supervisory Muteness Concerning Diverse Others

The development of culturally aware supervisees and their ability to conduct culturally sensitive and appropriate interventions is an ethical responsibility (American Counseling Association 2014; Arredondo & Toporek, 2004; CACREP, 2009). This is not possible without the appropriate broaching examples and instruction from counseling supervisors (Hays, Chang, & Shoffner, 2004). As mentioned above, all

students in counseling training should be required to gain additional insight into their privileged identities and into the power imbalances between the clients and counselor (Hays & Chang, 2003; Vodde, 2001). Additional insights will result in increases in their self-knowledge, awareness, and understanding of diverse others and capacities for culturally responsive interactions. Butler-Byrd (2010) stressed the importance of a supervisors' self-knowledge in counselor preparation. She indicated that,

Self-knowledge includes understanding our historical and current cultural context and the many aspects of our identities, including social location, ethnicity, class, gender, and ability. Self-knowledge also includes awareness of the effects of one's behavior on others, and changing behaviors that no longer serve healthy growth or relationships. (p. 12)

However, a review of the counseling supervision literature concerning self-knowledge and multicultural competency offered little encouragement. Constantine (1997) found that supervisees believed and felt that their supervision experience would have been more positive if increased discussions on multicultural issues had occurred. Remington and DaCosta (1989) indicated that supervisors often remained silent when faced with multicultural issues. Similarly, Gatmon, Jackson, and Koshkarian (2001) found that slightly better than 10% to a third of counseling supervisors broached ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation with their supervisees. When present, these silences (a) negatively impacted supervisees, (b) disrupted the supervisory alliance, (c) lessened supervisee satisfaction, (d) stunted the supervisee's development of multicultural competencies, and (e) impacted client welfare and related outcomes (Constantine & Sue, 2007; Crutchfield et al., 2001).

Constantine and Sue (2007), along with Hays and Chang (2003), stressed the specific need for White supervisors to have prolonged examination on matters of White privilege and oppression within their supervisory training. In their view White

supervisors and students evidenced inadequate training on matters of privilege and would benefit from an increased focus on privilege, racism, and oppression. But how are these supervisees supposed to gain prolonged discussions and adequate training in the multicultural competencies when counseling educators and supervisors remain rooted and committed to White privilege and neglect diversity issues in their discussions?

Hays and Chang (2003) feared this neglect, lack of additional focus, and its pervasive impact. They believed that White students, counselors, and counselor educators were unaware of the true extent and impact of their position and privilege and remain mired in racist cultural identity and status (i.e., contact, disintegration, and reintegration) (Helms, 1995). These statuses are racist in that they justify the normalcy of the White culture and experience, the inferiority of persons of color, and the prevailing myth of meritocracy. These statuses allow White persons to remain psychologically safe and to maintain a largely avoidant posture and position with respect to issues of diversity (Helms, 1995). This sets up clients, who are already vulnerable, for the silencing of important aspect of their identity and leads to hurtful counseling encounters.

As supervisors avoided multicultural issues and discussions with their supervisees, supervisees, in turn, remained avoidant and did not broach topics of diversity with their clients (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004; Constantine & Sue, 2007). This failure to broach likely results in the premature termination rates of clients of color and impacts their underutilization of counseling services (Day-Vines et al., 2007; Sue & Sue, 2012). In my opinion, that refusal of supervisors and supervisees to broach issues of diversity with their supervisees and clients is dismissive of aspect of

supervisee and client realities, suppresses their voices, and is unethical. Such silences are certainly equivalent to the students in Michigan and the southern states who either refused or did not want to counsel lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transpeople, and intersex persons. Ironically, the relative silence from counseling professionals on issues related to a lack of broaching is both duplicitous and akin to a type of favoritism towards the diversity issue of the day while others suffer issues. Where is our outrage now?

Part of a student supervisee's responsibility is to offer clients a corrective emotional experience and empathetic understanding of their familial, cultural, and systemic concern (Teyber, 2000; Teyber & McClure, 2011). But how often do we fail our students and clients by not emphasizing diverse perspectives? How can our students and supervisees offer such experience to their clients when we do not offer the same in our classroom settings, training efforts, or supervisory context and fail to broach issues of personal, student, and client diversity? In this regard our silences do not teach or model to our students how to appreciate, relate to, and honor human uniqueness and the many diversities of human experience. We also limit our and their ability to relate to diverse clients, their personal growth, cultural empathy, and professional development (Hill, 2003; Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1999).

The Unwelcoming Reality of Acceptance

Despite the mandate to “recruit, employ, and retain a diverse faculty” (CACREP, 2009, Section I.U), the above stories indicate that, if it is not completely closed, then the door for advancement and tenure of African American men within CES appeared barely ajar and fraught with difficulty (Brooks & Steen, 2010; Flowers

& Jones, 2003). At the time of this study only one participant had gained tenure. One participant had retired, while the remaining 10 participants were at either the assistant or associate professor rank. Holcomb-McCoy & Bradley (2003) found that the departmental racial climate was a greater predictor of the overall job satisfaction of African American counselor educators than tenure or rank.

The participants voiced the African American adage “You’ve got to work twice as hard to get half as far as a Black person in White America.” They reported having to work two to three times harder than their White male counterparts and to be twice as smart to gain half the progress. For example, DM and Kirk indicated that they often endured “a tax” and met the double burden created by the institutional requirements to serve as the diversity representative on various committees and the simultaneous expectation to mentor students of color in light of the low numbers of available faculty (Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2002; Brooks & Steen, 2010). Such inequities must be addressed with an even greater emphasis on the recruitment of African American men into the CES professorate. Mandates must be also added to existing standards that the academic program and existing faculty must demonstrate culturally responsive mentoring of diverse students or face the loss of program accreditation, programmatic or professional remediation, and employment termination.

While it has been relatively easy for their White CES counterparts to remain complacent about the need for the multicultural competencies and relatively dismissive of advocacy, such luxury had not been afforded to the participants of this study and their counterparts of color. Once recruited, the participants ironically found that their institutions and colleagues favored the competition for grants and individual

glory and left little room for them, their students, or other community concerns (Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Brooks & Steen, 2010). Their stories indicated that they often (a) were intensely alone and socially isolated, (b) lacked mentorship and collaborative research partnership (Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004), and (c) remained confined in institutions which devalued research related to communities of color and denigrated communal service (Moffitt & Harris, 2004). Their stories and experiences were best summed up by Huntstone in his first interview when he stated that “anyone can recruit you but they are not sure what to do with you once you get there.” Given that, for African Americans, the perceived, negative racial climate and lack of support result in less job satisfaction (Holcomb-McCoy & Addison-Bradley, 2005), CES academic programs, again, must face mandates regarding how they address this and other issues related to the retention of diverse faculty or face the loss of accreditation.

On more than one occasion the participants spoke about their professional adversities and their need to maintain cultural identity and personal dignity in the related struggles. They were challenged to maintain (a) double-consciousness and awareness of both the community and the academy (Cole, 2001; Hilliard, 2002; Nobles, 2002); (b) flexibility in negotiating the tensions of teaching, research, service demands, and hope for advancement and tenure (Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2002, 2004; Roysircar & Smith, 2010); and (c) personal well-being (Day-Vines & Holcomb-McCoy, 2007).

Kirk reported that research related to the concerns of communities of color was often discouraged at the doctoral level. In my opinion, such dissuasion stemmed from the belief that the societal and historical contribution and concerns of the African

American community do not represent legitimate areas of inquiry. Soft bigotry, with its preconceive notions of intellectual inferiority and lowered expectations, was potentially reflected in the lack of mentorship and research collaborations which were extended to African American faculty and in the general depreciation and dismissal of the qualitative and quantitative efforts of researchers of color.

Our hypocrisy and untrustworthiness are exposed when we talk about cultural competency and treat our colleagues poorly. The above discussions illuminate the retention and tenure barriers to African American CES scholars. If CES professionals fail in their advancement and retention efforts, our programs and pedagogical approaches will remain largely mono-cultural, continue to promote the status quo, and inadequately educate our students.

It is important to note that despite obstacles, DM felt hopeful for the future of African American men within the CES and counseling professions and saw many diverse and unlimited opportunities for those with a CES degree. Rather than focus on the obstacles, he sought insights as to why African American elders have stayed in the CES and counseling field profession for as long as they have. His curiosity pointed to a unique possibility: the CES and counseling professions would benefit greatly if their members listened to and learned from the stories of its African American elders.

Directions for Future Research

In light of their stated desire for diversity, multiculturalism, and social justice, CES professionals need to continually hear and examine the stories of all of its adherents. Current research and professional literature suggested that, while strides have been made within CES towards embracing multiculturalism, much work remains (Hays & Chang, 2003). Faculty of color within counselor education programs continue

to face collegial and communal isolations, lag in advancement and tenure, report less job satisfaction, and encounter other challenging occupational stressors. These dilemmas resulted from the Eurocentric hegemony and White privilege which exist in CES programs.

This study pointed to the need for additional research which produces qualitative and quantitative understandings of the implications of race upon tenure and promotion practices. Additionally, longitudinal analyses, both qualitatively and quantitatively, should be conducted to investigate the impact of the counseling and counselor education curricula upon the professional development of counselor educators, counselors, supervisors, supervisees and related client outcomes (Atkinson et al., 2001; Worthington et al., 2007). This would require the use of sound and culturally aligned psychometric instruments to measure changes in student performance on specific elements of the multicultural competencies.

Continued research into African cultural values and their expressions in the teaching efforts of Afrocentric male counselor educators remains critical. This is especially true as the CES profession encounters greater diversity and attempts to stay culturally relevant. Future studies might include classroom observations to gain additional insight and understanding. Though the focus of this work centered on the stories of Afrocentric men, the classroom experience and voices of Afrocentric women and other professionals (i.e., Latino, Asian, etc.) are of equally great importance.

Summary

This study explored and examined the common narrative among male, African American, African-centered, and Afrocentric counselor educators. Additionally, this study investigated how their collective narrative informed counselor education in

terms of multicultural competency and teaching praxis. African American male counselor educators were the subjects of this study as little information existed concerning their career stories and lived experiences. The African version of the tortoise and hare race story was symbolically featured to present and discuss the participant narratives, individually and collectively.

The participants' stories were interpreted using the frameworks of African-centered cultural values and scholarship and discussed through the lens of an Afrocentric perspective. This study highlighted the participants' cultural identities and yielded insight into their psychological strengths. A reliance on maternal wisdom and the myth of multiculturalism in CES were emergent themes. This study de-centered Eurocentric cultural values and advanced an African-centered worldview. The resulting narrative provided a critique and counter story to the current status quo within the CES profession.

Limitations

The study has many limitations. First, the study focused solely on a participant's African centered and Afrocentric identity and did not seek to explore the various intersections of a participant's identity. For example, though one participant identified himself as having multiple heritages, this aspect of his identity and experience was not explored in-depth. An exploration of the intersectionality of a participant's identity (i.e., socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, age, region of origin, etc.) would have yielded thicker and more meaningful descriptions and led to nuanced discussions. It also would have honored the many variations of an African-centered and Afrocentric identity and overcome concerns of identity essentialism (Abrams & Moio, 2009).

Second, while I used the terms African-centered and Afrocentric interchangeably herein, Carroll (2008, 2010) emphasized the discreteness of these terms. Thus, this reliance on an interchangeable definition and participant self-identification detracts from the generalized transferability of this study. Additionally, this study could have been strengthened through the inclusion on the participants' definitions of African-centeredness and Afrocentric identity.

Third, this investigation did not focus on the racial cultural identity of the participants. This study and its results could have been strengthened through the use of an Afrocentric assessments or measures, such as the African self-consciousness scale (Baldwin & Bell, 1985) or the Africentrism scale (Grills & Longshore, 1996). These assessments most likely would have provided further insight into a participant's Afrocentric identity and validated his self-reported adherence to African-centered cultural values. However, the use of such measures was considered counterproductive and disrespectful to the participants' self-identifying capabilities and self-determination.

Fourth, as this study aimed and focused solely on Afrocentric male counselor educators, this work is limited with respect to the experience of Afrocentric, female counselor educators. Though purposeful for this study, such limitation was not meant to imply that past examinations of the experiences of African American female counselor educators (Bradley, 2004; Hall, 2010) were sufficient. Future examinations are sorely needed and worthy of our consideration. In fact, to imply such would violate the Afrocentric principles of male-female balance, cooperation, and harmony (Nobles, 2002) and the participants' maternal appreciations which were expressed herein.

Fifth, though a process of communal validation and consensus was used for this research effort (i.e., communal validation of African cultural values, member check, and auditor review), the participants did not review or approve the final results and presentation. This process would have been useful as it is consistent with an Afrocentric research approach (Reviere, 2001). Such approaches mandate communal participation in the gathering, review, interpretation, and representation of the final data. Had such a process been used for the race segments, the trustworthiness and credibility of the story and its telling may have been increased.

Sixth, the individual interviews were conducted via telephone and did not use Skype® or any other electronic video supports. The lack of the visual access prevented observation of non-verbal cues (i.e., paralanguage, kinesics, and proxemics) (Sue & Sue, 2012). The limitation of data gathering to solely auditory information lessened the overall communication and interactional experience.

Lastly, my interactions with participants and others deeply and continually sharpened my awareness, development, and expression of Afrocentric identity and constructs. At times, my ideas were rightfully questioned by my committee members. I appreciate their challenges and support greatly. That said, I can only hope that participants and the larger community consider this work and its narrative as a faithful representations of African cultural values, Afrocentric ideas, and participants' experience.

This study contributes to the body of counseling literature on topics related to multiculturalism and diversity. Specifically this work contributes to the scant literature on the unique and common experiences of African American, male, CES professors. This investigation deepens an understanding of African American cultural values and

worldview. The participants' stories are presented in a manner which honors African-centered cultural identity, heritage, and psychological strengths. The participants offered Afrocentric appraisals of the counseling profession, standards, and ethical guidelines and posed alternate possibilities for the collective future of CES. They generously told their stories and as such provided a roadmap to future African American counselor educators.

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APPENDIX A

PERMISSION TO REPRINT

RE: The return of the prodigal son (picture)
 Ghislain Cortyl <gcortyl@editions-emmanuel.fr>

Thu 7/23/2015 11:56 PM

Inbox

To: Moore, Reginald;

Dear Reggie,

Thanks for your mail.

Yes we give you the permission to reproduce " The return of the prodigal son" in your final dissertation.

The only thing you have to do is to indicate the copyright.: "Life of Jesus Mafa ©

Editions de l'Emmanuel". Website :<http://www.jesusmafa.com/>

If you need the HD picture, just tell me, I'll send it on Monday.

Good luck for your final dissertation

Kind regards

Ghislain Cortyl

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-----Message d'origine-----

De : Reginald Andre Moore [<mailto:moor4530@bears.unco.edu>]

Envoyé : jeudi 23 juillet 2015 20:57

À : contact@editions-emmanuel.fr

Objet : The return of the prodigal son (picture)

De : Reginald Reginald Andre Moore <moor4530@bears.unco.edu> Ville :

Lakewood, Colorado Pays : United States

Type de demande :

[Demande]

Sujet : The return of the prodigal son (picture)

Corps du message :

Good morning -

My name is Reginald Moore. I am a Ph.D. student at the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley Colorado, USA. I would like to use your depiction of the prodigal son in my final dissertation. I use the picture to reference the spiritual and communal emphasis of African culture, the dangers of arrogance, isolation and individuality, and the willingness of the community to embrace the prodigal. I will receive no financial proceeds from such usage and will credit your organization's gracious permission.

Please let me know if I may use the picture by replying to my email if possible.

My kindest regards -

Reggie Moore

(303) 990-2964

moor4530@bears.unco.edu

--

Ce email a été envoyé via formulaire de contact le Vie de Jesus

MAFA <http://localhost/asmafa>

APPENDIX B

THE HARE AND THE TORTOISE

The Hare and The Tortoise

The Lion, King of Beasts, once called all the creatures of his kingdom together and when even the smallest and the slowest had arrived he addressed them thus: “My people, I have long been concerned by the lack of unity and cooperation amongst the animals. Not only do we suffer the depredations of hunters and trappers but animal attacks in the forest and you, my people, have ceased to help each other. Were we all to work together, no hunter would be able to attack us, and when groups of men tried to come into the forest we would have adequate warning and would be able to keep out of their way, and even to destroy them. What suggestions have you so that we should work better together?”

One animal after another stood up and talked, some making suggestions and some complaining that it was not their fault. The little tortoise sat at the feet of the King and watched and listened. After a bit, the hare jumped up and when the King had nodded that he could speak he said: “I, O King, do not need help. I can run and jump and am quite capable of looking after myself. As you know I am the swiftest animal in the forest. If anyone starts to chase me, I can tire him out. When any of us are caught it is just by accident I am quite happy with things as they are.”

Then all the animals started to talk at once and the King was obliged to silence them. He caught the eye of the little tortoise and seeing he wanted to speak, he lifted him up on a stool so that the other animals could see him.

The tortoise looked round the crowd and turned to the hare. Then he began to speak: “You hare, you are a foolish animal. Have you not heard that the King advises that we work more together? You think you are safe but even I, the little tortoise, could beat you in a race and therefore teach the importance of *unity* and *cooperation*.”

The hare was furious and shouted back, “You silly little creature. You know quite well that you could not even begin to race with me. I am the swiftest animal of the forest and you are known for your slowness. You insult me by your talk. You have better take back what you said.”

The tortoise smiled. “If you are so sure of yourself then I will race you and show you that I can win,” he said.

The hare, angrier than ever, addressed the King who was smiling broadly at the idea of the tortoise racing. “O King,” said the hare. “I challenge the tortoise to prove what he says or else he should be punished. I ask you to arrange for a race tomorrow.” The King agreed and soon the animals were marking out the course of the race and talking and laughing about the tortoise’s challenge. Indeed, they laughed so much that the sound could be heard in the next village.

The time was fixed for the race and the animals went home. The tortoise hurried to his house and sent out messengers to fetch all the members of his family, young and old. When they had arrived and the doors of the yard were closed against strangers, the

tortoise addressed them thus: “Members of my family, elders and friends, you will have heard of the rudeness of the hare and of my challenge to him. I have called you together because *this is a matter that affects not only myself but the honour of every tortoise. If I win, then the glory will go to our family as a whole*; if I lose, as I do not intend to do, then we are all disgraced. Will you all help me so that I can win?”

The largest and oldest of the tortoises replied, “What you say is true and we will all help. Nonetheless we think you are very unwise to challenge the hare in this manner for you cannot possibly beat him.”

“There, Grandfather, you are wrong,” replied the tortoise. “With your help I shall win. Listen now to what I have to tell you, and do as I say. Will all the tortoises of my size and colour please come to this side.” There was a scuffling and a large body of the tortoises moved across the yard. “Each one of you has a part to play. I will give you all numbers and you will know your order,” said the tortoise, and he numbered them all.

“Now, number one,” he said, “you go and hide in the bush some fifty feet from the beginning of the course. When the race has started and you see the hare approaching, step out into the path and start going along the path. At the same time I will disappear into the bush, so that when the hare turns round he will see no one on the path. Number two, you go some forty feet further on...” And the tortoise gave them all instructions to make sure he crossed the line ahead of the hare. He told them to go and take up their positions under cover of dark. He also told them that they should sing the following song when they saw the hare coming so that the next one of them would be ready to come out of the bush:

With patience and diligence, I shall reach far-off places.

The following day all the animals were out early to watch the race and there was an air of festivity about. When they saw the tortoise they laughed: “He, ho, ho, hee, hee, hee, ha, ha, ha.” But the tortoise only smiled back at them.

The hare had been so angry at the insult that he had not slept all night. He had lain fuming on his bed, unable to eat or sleep. Now he was longing to be off and to prove once and for all what a fool the tortoise was. The King appointed judges and some stood at the beginning, some at the end of the course. At last, they were ready to start. The hare shot ahead without looking back, then, thinking it was stupid to get hot when the tortoise could not even do more than amble along, he slowed down.

About forty feet from the start the hare turned round but was surprised to see no sign of the tortoise. Then he looked ahead again and there in the middle of the path was a tortoise going along for all it was worth.

“So, you have magic,” thought the hare and he started to run more swiftly. When he turned to look again there was no tortoise behind him. He looked ahead and there in the path was the tortoise, singing a song and so bespattered with dew that it looked as if it was sweating profusely. The hare began to get angry and hurled insults at the

tortoise as he passed. Then he really began to get worried. He ran as swiftly as he could be always ahead of him in the path was the little tortoise, singing as he went: With patience and diligence, I shall reach far-off places.

Making a final effort the hare threw himself across the inning line, but just before he did so he heard a great cheer and people began to shout, "The tortoise has won, the tortoise has won." The hare collapsed groaning on the ground whilst the judges clustered round the tortoise congratulating him. "That was nothing," said the tortoise, "I am not even hot."

The judges went at once to the King with the result of the race. At first he would not believe them but with so many witnesses he could not fail to be convinced. He laughed heartily and again called together all the animals so that he could honour the tortoise.

When the animals had come together they called for the tortoise. In he came at the head of all his family and relations. They waddled proudly in, each one feeling and looking like a small chief. The tortoise's victory had made them proud and confident.

The King called the tortoise to come up beside him and then called on the people to cheer the victor. When the crowd was again silent the King asked the tortoise how it was that he had managed to beat the hare who was the swiftest animal in the forest.

"It was the triumph of *unity and cooperation*," said the tortoise. "*We won because we all stuck together.*"

"We won? You mean you won," said the King.

"Well, yes, Your Majesty, I won. You see every member of my family gave me their support so we were able to win."

"Why do you keep saying we?" asked the King. "It was surely you alone that won the race! Now we will call on the hare to congratulate you," and then he turned to look for the hare. The hare had been so ashamed of himself that he had slunk home and had not come to the meeting. When the King found that he was absent he sent for him and for all the members of the hare family to come quickly.

Very soon with his head bowed, the hare came into the courtyard. The other animals tittered and smiled behind their paws. Behind hare came all his people looking angry and ashamed.

One by one they were made to come up and congratulate the tortoise and his family on the victory. Then the King asked the tortoise again to say how he had won the race. "All my friends helped me," said the tortoise.

The King being wise did not ask any more questions in public, but you may be sure that by evening he had heard the whole story. In the meantime he again addressed his

people: “The tortoise,” he said, “has showed us *the value of unity and cooperation*. Let us learn from him. If you cannot all work together at least let those of the same family help each other.”

From that day many of the animals started to move together *in herds for their mutual protection*, the birds flew in *flocks* and the ants, who already knew what could be done by mutual help, moved into even *greater colonies*. Only the hare, embittered by his experience, continued to live alone and to rely on his speed to save him from his enemies.

From *African Cultural Values: An Introduction* (pp. 38-44), by K. Gyekye, 1996, Accra, Ghana: Sankofa.

APPENDIX C

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



Institutional Review Board

DATE: October 9, 2013

TO: Reginald Moore, MA

FROM: University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [489796-3] A Collective Pedagogical Narrative of African American Male Counselor Educators

SUBMISSION TYPE: Amendment/Modification

ACTION: APPROVAL/VERIFICATION OF EXEMPT STATUS

DECISION DATE: October 9, 2013

Thank you for your submission of Amendment/Modification materials for this project. The University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB approves this project and verifies its status as EXEMPT according to federal IRB regulations.

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records for a duration of 4 years.

If you have any questions, please contact Sherry May at 970-351-1910 or Sherry.May@unco.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB's records.

APPENDIX D

CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY of
NORTHERN COLORADO



CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Project Title: A Collective Pedagogical Narrative of African American Male Counselor Educators

Primary Researcher: Reginald A. Moore, M.A. (Professional Counseling)
Phone: XXX-XXX-XXXX E-mail: moor4530@bears.unco.edu

Faculty Advisor: Linda Black, Ed.D.
Phone: 970-351-1638 E-mail: Linda.Black@unco.edu

Purpose and Description: The primary purpose of this narrative study is to investigate the stories of Black, male, counselor educators who self-identify as African-centered or Afrocentric and/or who hold an African-centered or Afrocentric worldview and cultural values (i.e. communalism, spirituality and holism). The significance of this study lies in its emphasis on the multicultural aspects of training of master's and doctoral level counselors as they relate to the stories of male, African-centered or Afrocentric professors engaged in such education. The participants for this study will have a doctoral degree from a Council for the Accreditation of Counseling Related Educational Programs (CACREP) accredited or equivalent program.

Potential risks in this project are minimal. The risks inherent in this study are no greater than those normally encountered during regular classroom participation, staff meetings, or professional conference interactions. However, there may be foreseeable risks and possible discomfort for participants as their views are expressed in the online interview and face to face, focus group settings of this study.

The first interview will last approximately 60 minutes and will be digitally recorded for later transcription by a transcription service. The second interview will occur no later than approximately 45 days after the first conversation. The second interview will last for approximately 90 minutes and will also be digitally recorded and later transcribed by a transcription service. The transcription company representative will sign a confidentiality agreement for each individual interview to ensure participant confidentiality.

The focus group will occur at the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) conference which will be held in Denver, Colorado in October of 2013. The focus group is expected to last for approximately two hours, will be digitally recorded and later transcribed by a transcription service, and will be held in an enclosed and quiet room at the conference site or a location in close proximity. The transcription company representative will sign a confidentiality agreement for the focus group to ensure participant confidentiality. Participants will sign an informed

consent form and confidentiality statement at the beginning of the focus group. The participant's signature on the confidentiality statement signifies his intent to keep the identity of focus group members and what is discussed confidential.

All consent forms will be retained by the Research Advisor for a period of three years at which time they will be destroyed. All identifiable data related to this study will be destroyed seven years after the completion of the study. All digital recordings related to this study will be destroyed three years after the completion of the study.

The benefits for participation may include the gaining insight or knowledge from peers and an increased sense of camaraderie and networking. Participants may also benefit indirectly from making a contribution to peers, the Counselor Education and Supervision (CES) field, and to future generations of counselor educators, be they of African American descent or otherwise. Additionally, at the end of the experiment, I will be happy to share with participants the study results for their personal and professional edification.

Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in any loss of any benefits to which you are entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact the Office of Sponsored Programs, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-2161.

Please check the box or boxes below which reflect your desire to participate. (*Note: if you desire to participate in the entire study, including both the individual interviews and the focus group, you will need to check both boxes.*)

_____ My signature below indicates that I have read this consent form and will participate in the focus group and its related data and member checking events.

_____ My signature below indicates that I have read this consent form and will participate in both individual interviews, the related data and member checking events, and, when possible, will provide the requested materials of a symbolic artifact and student evaluation.

Subject's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

APPENDIX E

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Interview Demographic Information

Project Title: A Collective Pedagogical Narrative of African American, Male Counselor Educators

Pretext: I want to start off this interview by telling you that it is my belief that all pedagogy, teaching, and classroom style are influenced by the culture values of the teacher.

Interviewee Demographic Information:

Age:

Race or ethnicity:

Faculty position:

Name of institution:

Current years of service:

Percentage of your students who are on average white?

**Semi-Structured Interview Questions
(Focus Group)**

1. Describe what drew you to counselor education?
2. What did you enjoy about your educational preparation for this field?
3. What did you least like about your preparation?
4. What myths did you encounter in your training?
5. What truths did you encounter in your training?
6. Tell me a story about how your professors expressed themselves in their teaching.
7. Portray a typical day in your classroom; including the context and your behaviors and intentions.
8. Tell me a story about who you are in the classroom?
9. What narrative would your students share about the culture of your classroom?
10. Discuss the following constructs to the degree they are or are not relevant in your teaching: history, responsibility, culture, community, ancestors, legacy, ethics, values, purposefulness, and wisdom.
11. Talk to me about your institutional context and its ability to support your expression and teaching praxis. What supports your teaching and classroom presence? What does not?
12. If your teaching could be represented by the title of a book, movie, poem or work of art, what would it be?

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW GUIDE AND QUESTIONS

**Interview Guide and Questions
(First and Second Interviews)**

Project Title: A Collective Pedagogical Narrative of African American, Male Counselor Educators

Pretext: I want to start off this interview by telling you that it is my belief that all pedagogy, teaching, and classroom style are influenced by the culture values of the teacher.

Interviewee Demographic Information:

Age:

Race or ethnicity:

Faculty position:

Name of institution:

Current years of service:

Percentage of your students who are on average white?

**Semi-Structured Interview Questions
(First Interview)**

1. Describe what drew you to counselor education?
2. What did you enjoy about your educational preparation for this field?
3. What did you least like about your preparation?
4. Tell me a story about how your professors expressed their cultural values in their teaching during your preparation?
5. Looking back illustrate how you became who you are in the classroom?
6. How has this story changed over time?
7. What story or stories might students tell me about who you are in the classroom and their experiences of your class?
8. Tell me a story of how you view learners?
9. What do you emphasize to your students in their development?
10. What lies behind your emphases?
11. How do you see yourself as a developer of their competencies?

**Semi-Structured Interview Questions
(Second Interview):**

1. What lingers for you from our previous interview?
2. I'd like to revisit your story of who you are in the classroom. What else might you add?
3. I am intrigued by your story of how your classroom identity has changed over time.
4. Talk to me about your core convictions as a teacher of counselor in training?
5. Tell me a story about how you approach differences in your classroom environment?
6. How do you accomplish, foster or facilitate the growth and development of your students?
7. Who do you want to be to your students?
8. What stories do you hope that past students are telling about you and your teaching?

APPENDIX G

MANUSCRIPT

Collective Transgression and Liberating Encounters

Reginald Andre Moore

University of Northern Colorado

Abstract

In October 2013, I was privileged to learn from and alongside seven African American men who held doctorates in counselor education and supervision. We met during in a focus group as part of the data collection effort related to my dissertation. The focus group lasted two hours and took place at the associations' national conference. In this article, I relay the impact of the focus group upon my personal and academic development and convey aspects of my researcher journal.

Collective Transgression and Liberating Encounters

Background

I received a picture from my cousin Carolyn today (see Figure 1). The picture came via e-mail and showed us standing with Mr. Bill on our first day of school in August 1967. Mr. Bill was our crossing guard and made sure that we crossed over safely to start our education. I am not sure who took that picture. Most likely it was my mother or Carolyn's mom, my Aunt Barbara. I looked small and trepid as I held my school supplies and red nap time mat. Carolyn was an inch or two taller than me and seemed more confident. I had not yet turned five and she was nine months older than me. And while I did not know what to expect, I know I was calmed by her presence and knew that, whatever it was that we would face beyond those doors, at least we had each other. She helped me pass my first real test by tying my shoes as Mrs. Riordan, our kindergarten teacher, turned her back. I can see now that we were like the large, twin oak trees which stood on the far side of the school playground. They have withstood many Kansas storms.

I do not remember much about Mr. Bill. And I especially have no clear recollection of him now, some 48 years later, other than that he was a kind man and did his job well. He protected us and ensured we crossed Salina's Iron Street safely, especially as we often ran late for the school bell. I really do not remember who took that picture. As I said, most likely it was my mother, my aunt, or both. I wonder now what was in my mother's mind during the picture. Certainly she had made this trip four times before with my siblings. What was she thinking? What was her hope? Was she filled with wistfulness at the sight of the last of her children on his first day at Oakdale Elementary? Did she know what lay ahead? Could she have known that her

baby boy would start a closet fire, four years later, while in Mrs. Olson’s third grade classroom?

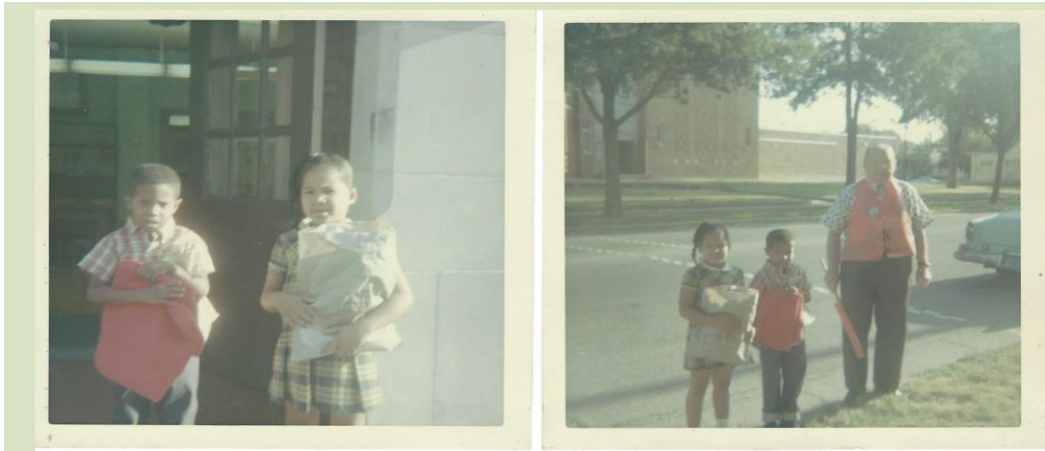


Figure 1. First day of school, August 1967. Cousin Carolyn and me (left); cousin Carolyn and me with Mr. Bill, crossing guard (right).

This story sets the stage for this reflection on my doctoral dissertation research experience over the last two years. I am now much older. And lessons which began some 48 years ago are coming into focus as I prepare to defend and present my dissertation. My cousin Carolyn will attend my defense, will not tie my shoes, and will witness for our mothers.

New Crossing Guards

Like an accident caused by untied shoes, I was most fortunate to encounter the article entitled “‘Brother Where Art T\thou?’ African American Male Instructors’ Perceptions of the Counselor Education Profession” (Brooks and Steen, 2010). Their article had me “trippin.” While the title of their article manifests its subject and content, my felt response to their title alone was, in and of itself, both disorienting and

locating. I heard within their titled query, an invitational call to self-examination and a mandate to include the Afrocentric ideas of location and self-knowledge within my remaining development as a counselor educator. Naively, like an elementary student at the edge of a road, I did not grasp how much danger I had been and was in. This danger stemmed from the lack of a critical ingress and questions about my prior schoolings.

I remember a similar feeling after “trippin’” over a book I found one day in the clearance section of Barnes and Nobles. The book challenged my educational journey and left me feeling uneasy about my current academic endeavors. Looking back, I was fortunate to have found the book, *Making it on Broken Promises: Leading African Male Scholars Confront the Culture of Higher Education* (Jones & West, 2002), prior to the start of this study. The book contained a series of essays written by African American male scholars about the professional challenges and opportunities associated with higher education. I read and re-read the book as if was forbidden fruit, since it challenged and critiqued the dogmatic Eurocentric orientation of United States colleges and universities. I admired those authors and their transgression, but I could not, back then, have seen myself sinning by saying the things I read. I had a fear about such interrogation and felt that I had to remain in my place as subservient and peaceful. In fact, if not for this book and the Brooks and Steen article, I am not sure I would have mustered the courage to decide on and freely choose this direction for my dissertation. As I consider Mr. Bill’s role, I now view Jones and West (2002) and Brooks and Steen (2010), in particular, as crossing guards who ensured my safety and egress into an academic education which was more congruent with my culture.

Cultural Immersion

In many counselor education programs students are required to immerse themselves in a culture with which they had little to no experience. The goal of the immersion experience is to create self-awareness of one's own culture and to stimulate a basic awareness and appreciation of diverse others. The ultimate aim of the immersion experience is to sensitize students to diverse others and to ensure culturally responsive interaction and ethical intervention. In my experience students are often apprehensive and otherwise wary as they undertake this mystery assignment.

Similar to students embarking upon their immersion experiences, I had little idea what to expect after the door to the room where the focus group was held would be closed. I had scant ideas about the participants, how I would be received, or what we would talk about. Rest assured, I had my semi-structured interview questions prepared for the participants and had even spoken with some of them by phone. However, as I prepared the room for the focus group, I was, in many ways, like the eager and trepid little boy on his first day at Oakdale Elementary school.

Though I was excited to begin my study, I also had personal insecurities which nagged, raged, and surfaced within me. Internally, I wondered whether I would be accepted and I could hear myself not blurting out to the participants, "I feel lost. Am I one of you?" I knew that my isolation was real. I knew this as I had read a study which had indicated that as of 2007, there were only three African American male, doctoral counselor education students in the entirety of the western United States. I was one of the three. While it was possible this number increased by 2013, I believed that any change would have been insignificant. I was afraid and alone. My cousin was not there

to tie shoes or take pictures. Though I could not have known how transformative the two hours would be, I now know that I gained much from the instruction.

An Act of Communal Truth and Love

Since I had missed the era of the all Black Dunbar schools, I now see my experience in the focus group as an analog to that Black, academic learning environment. I had no familiarity with such excellence and formal instruction, though I had been given life lessons from my parents and extended family in home settings and in the community barbershop and church. Let me tell you, our meeting was like the ritual clearing scene in *Beloved* (Morrison, 1987) or a slave hush harbor. I was taken aback by the experience of the focus, the overall honesty of its members, and the fact that all were affirmed, celebrated, welcomed, and experienced location.

The men spoke what was on their hearts and minds freely and stated things which I did not know how to hear and things which I was afraid yet needed to hear. They loved each other by disclosing painful realities and academic dilemmas for which I then had no language. I had great difficulty with their expressions of anger, hurt, and sadness. This was readily apparent when an elder, to my consternation, expressed his belief that, in the eyes of persons from the dominant culture, a Black man with a doctorate “will always be considered [a derogatory name removed] with a Ph.D.” This was something that I did not want to hear, did not want to believe, and did not want to admit. I recoiled at his statement, even though my brother Marvin had passed on similar insight during one of our weekly family conference calls. Their words left me no room to be a White apologist.

This participant then told me that he “would not have said half the things” he “did if a White man had been present.” I, at that time, wanted to believe that his

statement was a type of antiquated, cultural mistrust (Whaley, 2001) and did not want to include it in my dissertation. After much thought, I now hear his words as an act of advocacy, love, and education. What he said was for my and our health and the well-being of Black men. I believe that his words (a) were a necessary antidote to the academic and gendered racism directed towards African American men (Smith, 2014; Smith, Hung, & Franklin, 2011), (b) facilitated comfort and provided a corrective emotional experience (Teyber, 2000; Teyber & McClure, 2011), (c) warned those present of the dangers associated with seeking validation from one's oppressor (Parham, 1999, 2007), and (d) strengthened those who were weakened by racial battle fatigue arising from adversarial colleagues and institutional contexts (Fasching-Varner, Albert, Mitchell, & Allen, 2014; Jones & West, 2002; Smith et al., 2011). His care, candor, and thoughts reflected facets of the soul care which can and should exist in classrooms (hooks, 1994). If I were to write an article about his role in the focus group, it would be entitled the "Sankofa Priest: Facilitating Stress Inoculation and Racial Battle Fatigue Relief for African American, Male, Counselor Educators within the Separated Space of a Communal Gathering."

Survival Skills

It is hard to play a game when you do not know the rules. It is even harder to play a game when you do not even know that the game is being played. I listened intently and somewhat incredulously as the participants described their experiences as doctoral students and as professors who taught in counselor education programs. For example, I was taken aback as one participant described the dual faces of his tokenism. He told a story of being invisible to his colleagues and concurrently expected by them to be hyper-visible as their diversity representative. He wished in

retrospect that he had had a mentor who could have clued him in as to how the game of academia was played. He spoke of the need to maintain his own records to demonstrate his teaching effectiveness and to thwart the negations and oppressions of his suspecting colleagues. I did not truly understand the gravity of his situation and lived experience until I later read articles which reflected aspects of his narration (Constantine, Smith, Redington, & Owens, 2008; Dowden, Gunby, Warren, & Boston, 2014; Franklin, 1999).

The story of another participant, regarding the need to demonstrate a masked response during a bogus meeting with his colleagues about two student evaluations, impacted me greatly. His insistence on this strategy as a means to both preserve a sense of dignity and to master his adversary was compelling and brilliant. I found the compassion of the group members and their ability to identify with him equally compelling. I was furthered moved when an elder warned him of the emotional toll that such masking would eventually take, offered him additional avenues for cathartic expressions, and respected his autonomy, choice and wisdom. However, I was confused and saddened when the younger man stated, “I don’t know if I’m just, you know [smiling/smirking], a maniacal person, but I get pleasure in the simple fact that [they] can’t say anything to me.” His articulated pain, coupled with his ability to silence naysayers, agitated, exposed, and challenged the remaining vestiges of my internalized racism, undermined my denial and reversed my commitment towards outward docility. I was faced with my anger and its impact on me and others. If I were to write an article about his role in the focus group and what I learned from him, it would be entitled, “A ‘Maniacal’ Response: Using an African Mask to Thwart

Academic Oppression and Racism While Operating within the Professional Context and Binds of a Counselor Education Department.”

Social Responsibility

I hope that others who are completing their dissertation are as fortunate as I when it comes to the recruitment of participants. I remain humbled and indebted to those who attended the focus group, especially to those two who came in response to last minute invitations. One member came at the request of another and did not know at the time what to expect. He stated “all I knew was that there was this brother who was doing his dissertation [and I came].” Another member responded to a personal invitation which I gave him in the hotel lobby about an hour before the focus group started. Though we had never met before, I later discovered that I had participated in his dissertation effort about two years ago. Still yet, another individual committed on the spot to the two remaining individual interviews for this study when we were introduced by a focus group member in hotel lobby after the meeting. He stated that he had been unable to participate in the focus group due to a previous conference engagement and was glad to be available.

I was overwhelmed by the members’ collective responses and remain greatly appreciative of their support. They were genuine, magnanimous, spontaneous and sincerely interested in me and the completion of my work. In many ways each participant demonstrated a willingness to give me the support he had been given throughout his life and academic journey by his family and others. As he did, he honored ancestral legacy. I came to understand what social responsibility and communal obligation looked like in the context of higher education. What would possess seven African American men to take time out of their busy schedule to attend

a focus group for a doctoral student who they did not know at a national professional conference? I could not have said it then but I now believe that this study tapped into a vein of reciprocal care and cooperation that are germane to the African American experience and central to its educational traditions of excellence, social responsibility, and academic activism (hooks, 1994; Moffitt & Harris, 2004).

I experienced and learned what Hilliard (2002) spoke of when he questioned whether African American men should come to the academy as a singular individual or collectively as one. His essay raised my awareness of the dangers associated with having an individualistic mentality while studying or employed in the university and the benefits and safety nets found in a communal academic identity. The focus group members and experience taught me that, even though I was reportedly one of three African American male doctoral students in the western United States and though my cousin was absent, I was in no ways alone. And even though I was isolated, I could hope and could expect support. I knew this because another elder attending the focus group insisted that the ethic of care and social responsibility always applied, even if it was to a “one.” He said,

That’s why I come to these things, in part, is to be mindful of the generations coming up. But I also have to be mindful of the one who forgot where they came from and who they are, because the day comes when they hit that wall, ‘cause they will hit that wall, and they need somebody to still be there for them regardless of whether they met their responsibility to others. We still have a responsibility to be there for them.

I was relieved when I heard him say this as I had felt dislocated and incongruent in terms of both my geographical and ideological locations. Relatedly, I had no answer when a member of my community in Denver asked me what difference my doctorate would make to those within the Five Points community. Then, Brother

Jeff's question stumped me and I had no answer. I could tell that he was asking me to remember those like me and to gain what Akbar (2002) called a dual legitimacy to the community and academy. Due to my experience with the group members and their impact on me, I now understand how to better answer his query and am much clearer as to my communal obligations as well. If I write an article on what I gleaned from this elder, it will be titled, "The Miscegenated One: The Wisdom of Embracing Both 'Halves' of the Academic Self."

Othermothering

The focus group was a place of extreme nurturance and challenge. It was a place which allowed the men to break their silences; to confess their defeats, struggles, and successes; and to laugh and hurt with each other. This was important given the relative isolation of these men in their varying professional contexts. It provided an environment and forum for the men to experience forms of extended family, social support, and advocacy. These are central to African American culture and to the Afrocentric and feminist conceptions related to "othermothering" (Hill Collins, 2000; Guiffrida (2005).

I was experiencing and learning categories of thought and ways of being that had been denied or neglected within my professional training to date. As such the focus group was a place of higher or meta-learning and stimulated further reflection on my family, upbringing, and education. For example, I could relate to a member when he referenced his grandmother's wisdom and insights. Specifically, his recollection of her insistence on remaining humble in personal achievements and of remembering and thanking God for such paralleled the spoken emphasis of others during my upbringing.

I know that for some my usage of this term and concept of “othermothering” might be considered problematic. A man cannot technically mother a son any more than a woman can technically father a son. My reason for using this idea of “othermothering” herein is twofold: It is the best analog available to me at this time, and the men did not say not much about their/our fathers during the group. These men and our collective silence concerning our fathers reminded me that in fact I have been lonely for my father for most of my life. He and I did not connect on the level that either of us desired, though we loved each other the best we knew how to back then.

Remembering My Father

I do not remember my father being present for the picture on my first day of school. Most likely, he was at International Harvester, where he diligently labored as a diesel mechanic for a good man named Bob Stewart. Mr. Stewart was a good man as he, like my grade school crossing guard, supported my father on those days when he was hungover and ensured him safely to our home. I sure missed him that day and have missed him on many days since. His anger, intensity, and rage intimidated me and others. I was extremely mad at him after one of his stupor and rage incidents at home when I was in the third grade. In fury I took matches to school, started a fire in the closet, and set ablaze an art project that the class was working on as well as the coats of the twin sisters. I did so in the hope of stemming his neglect and was disappointed by his lack of a disciplinary response. I decided then to shun anger, to become docile, relatively mute, non-assertive, and unlike him. And where did that leave me?

The reason why I was initially afraid of the focus group members was that I had no control over them. They reminded me of my father and of the many times that I

have, since then, been vicariously fearful and avoidant of Black men. The members shed light on the emotional cutoffs and incongruence within me as they gave voice to Black pain. The manner in which they voiced their anger and hurt addressed the wounds of an 8-year-old boy. Their openness created a non-competitive space, cooperative environment, and much needed forum to discuss and hear the experiences of African American man.

The focus group was a street crossing of sorts and a capstone educational experience. I was fortunate to meet these men and to see my father and myself in them. I find true Harding's (1974) words that the people are "their fathers and mothers. They are their children. Just as they *are* themselves, children" (p. 9). In hindsight, I was "otherfathered" and "otherbrothered" by these men during the focus group and since then in our subsequent interactions.

I am reflecting the focus group experience and writing this article a couple of days before my dissertation defense. My cousin Carolyn will be there for the defense on my last day of school (see Figure 2). She will watch me tie my shoes as I defend my dissertation. And I will carry a picture of my father and my mother in my heart.

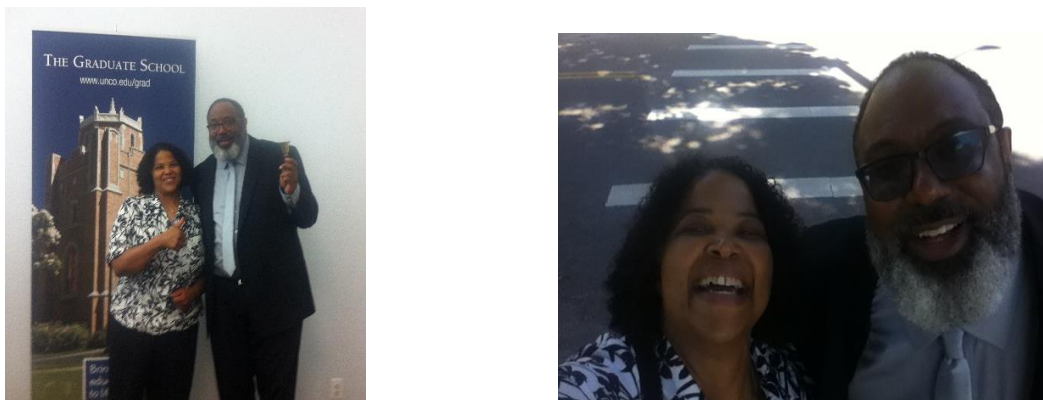


Figure 2. My cousin Carolyn (left) and me (right) in both pictures after my defense.

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