

BLACK AND WHITE RACIAL IDENTITY

Theory, Research, and Practice

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Toward a Model of White Racial Identity Development

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The development of White identity in the United States is closely intertwined with the development and progress of racism in this country. The greater the extent that racism exists and is denied, the less possible it is to develop a positive White identity. J. M. Jones (1972, 1981) has identified three types of racism: (a) individual, that is, personal attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors designed to convince oneself of the superiority of Whites and the inferiority of non-White racial groups; (b) institutional, meaning social policies, laws, and regulations whose purpose is to maintain the economic and social advantages of Whites over non-Whites; and (c) cultural, that is, societal beliefs and customs that promote the assumption that the products of White culture (e.g., language, traditions, appearance) are superior to those of non-White cultures.

Because each of these three types of racism is so much a part of the cultural milieu, each can become a part of the White person's racial identity or consciousness ipso facto. In order to develop a healthy White identity, defined in part as a nonracist identity, virtually every White person in the United States must overcome one or more of these aspects of racism. Additionally, he or she must accept his or her own Whiteness, the cultural implications of being White, and define a view of Self as a racial being that does not depend on the perceived superiority of one racial group over another.

Thus, the evolution of a positive White racial identity consists of two processes, the abandonment of racism and the development of a non-racist White identity. Because White racism in the United States seems

to have developed as a means of justifying the enslavement of Black Americans during the slavery eras of the 1700s and 1800s (cf. Comer, 1980; Cross et al., in press; Giddings, 1984), Blacks and/or Black culture have been the primary "outgroup" or reference group around which White racial identity development issues revolve. Thus, as is the case with Black racial identity, White racial identity contains parallel beliefs and attitudes about Whites as well as Blacks.

For the most part, theories or models of White racial identity development have focused on defining racism. Some of these perspectives are summarized in Table 4.1. As shown in Table 4.1, most of these models are typologies, that is, they assume that racists can be classified according to various categories. Moreover, most of these early perspectives were fueled by the implicit assumption that racism was only damaging to the victims of the resulting oppression but did not consider their effects on the beneficiaries or perpetrators of racism.

Only recently have theorists begun to speculate about the harmful consequences of racism on the perpetrators of racism, which include the absence of a positive White racial identity. In presenting the case for the need to help Whites develop a positive White identity, various authors have discussed the defense mechanisms by which Whites pretend that they are not White. For instance, J. Katz and Ivey (1977) noted that when faced with the question of their racial identification, Whites merely deny that they are White. They observed: "Ask a White person what he or she is racially and you may get the answer "Italian," "English," "Catholic," or "Jewish." *White people do not see themselves as White*" (p. 486). Relatedly, Terry (1981) commented, "To be white in America is not to have to think about it. Except for hard-core racial supremacists, the meaning of being White is having the choice of attending to or ignoring one's own Whiteness" (p. 120). If these authors' surmises are accurate, then it appears that most Whites may have no consistent conception of a positive White identity or consciousness. As a consequence, Whites may feel threatened by the actual or presupposed presence of racial consciousness in non-White racial groups.

In exploring the emotional consequences of racism to Whites, Karp (1981) indicated that major concomitants of racism and Whites' distorted views of racial identity are negative feelings such as "self-deception," "self-hate," and "guilt and shame, along with feeling bad about being white (sometimes expressed as a flip side—rigid pride in 'superiority')" (p. 89). She further suggests that these feelings can contribute to distorted behaviors as well as distorted views of the world. Dennis (1981) discussed the many "selves" into which a White person must compartmentalize her or his feelings and thoughts in order to be accepted by other Whites. In passing, it should be noted that theorists and researchers have viewed similar symptoms (e.g., racial denial, self-hate, feelings of

Table 4.1
Summary of White Racial Identity Models

Author	Model Type	Components Name	Description
Carney & Kahn (1984)	Stage	1. Stage 1	1. Knowledge of ethnically dissimilar people is based on stereotypes.
		2. Stage 2	2. Recognizes own cultural embeddedness, but deals with other groups in detached scholarly manner.
		3. Stage 3	3. Either denies the importance of race or expresses anger toward her/his own cultural group.
		4. Stage 4	4. Begins blending aspects of her/his cultural reference group with those of other groups to form a new self-identity.
		5. Stage 5	5. Attempts to act to promote social equality and cultural pluralism.
Ganter (1977)	Stage	1. Phase 1	1. Protest and denial that Whites are patrons and pawns of racism.
		2. Phase 2	2. Guilt and despair as racism is acknowledged.
		3. Phase 3	3. Integrates awareness of Whites' collective loss of human integrity and attempts to free oneself from racism.
Hardiman (1979)	Stage	1. Acceptance	1. Active or passive acceptance of White superiority.
		2. Resistance	2. Person becomes aware of own racial identity for the first time.
		3. Redefinition	3. Attempts to redefine Whiteness from a non-racist perspective.
		4. Internalization	4. Internalizes non-racist White identity.
Helms (1984)	Stage	1. Contact	1. Obliviousness to own racial identity.
		2. Disintegration	2. First acknowledgment of White identity.

Table 4.1 (continued)

Author	Model Type	Components	
		Name	Description
Kovel (1970) Gaertner (1976) Jones (1972)	Type	3. Reintegration	3. Idealizes Whites/denigrates Blacks.
		4. Pseudo-Independence	4. Intellectualized acceptance of own and others' race.
		5. Immersion/Emersion	5. Honest appraisal of racism and significance of Whiteness.
		6. Autonomy	6. Internalizes a multi-cultural identity with non-racist Whiteness as its core.
		1. Dominative racist	1. Openly seeks to keep Black people in inferior positions and will use force to do so.
		2. Aversive Dominative Racist	2. Believes in White superiority, but tries to ignore the existence of Black people to avoid intrapsychic conflict.
	3. Aversive Liberal racist	3. Despite aversion to Blacks, uses impersonal social reforms to improve Blacks' conditions.	
	4. Ambivalent	4. Expresses exaggeratedly positive or negative responses toward Blacks depending on the consequences to the White person.	
	5. Non-racist	5. Does not reveal any racist tendencies.	
Terry (1977)	Type	1. Color blind	1. Attempts to ignore race; feels one can exonerate self from being White by asserting one's humanness; equates acknowledgment of color with racism.
		2. White Blacks	2. Abandons Whiteness in favor of overidentifying with Blacks; denies own Whiteness; tries to gain personal recognition from Blacks for being "almost Black".
		3. New Whites	3. Holds a pluralistic racial view of the world; recognizes that racism is a White problem and attempts to eliminate it.

Note: Gaertner (1976) and J. M. Jones (1972) elaborated the typology originally proposed by Kovel (1970).

inferiority, etc.) as cause for alarm and serious psychological intervention in Black communities. However, it does not seem that similar enthusiasm has been expended in promoting healthy White racial identity development.

Implicit in much of the contemporary writings on White racial identity development is the awareness that, in spite of the pervasive socialization toward racism, some White people do appear not only to have developed a White consciousness, but one that is not predominated by racial distortions. Some authors have even loosely described an orderly process by which a White person can move from a racist identity to a positive White consciousness. In describing the process by which some Whites have overcome racism, Dennis observed: "one sees them moving from 'knowing' Blacks to knowing Blacks, from deracialization to reracialization, toward a more 'objective' approach to race with a clearer understanding of the role of race and culture in society" (p. 74). Karp (1981) described the process as follows: "Whites [must address] their feelings of oppression [must seek out] accurate information, [must discharge] feelings related to racism, and [consequently change] their attitudes and behaviors" (p. 88). Thus, Dennis essentially proposes a cognitive process of White identity development, whereas Karp emphasizes the interrelatedness of emotions, attitudes, and behaviors.

At least two of the White identity typologists (Pettigrew, 1981; Terry, 1981) have speculated more systematically about the relationship of White racial identity to Whites' psychological health. Applying Jahoda's (1958) trichotomy of "sick," "not healthy," and "well" to describe the psychological consequences to Whites of racism, Pettigrew (1981) concluded that roughly 15 to 75% of Whites were in the categories of sick or not healthy as a consequence of internalizing some form of personal racial bigotry. Terry's (1977) categorical system recognized that there were different ways that one could acknowledge and, consequently, be White (see Table 4.1), just as there were different ways that one could be racist. However, from none of the typological perspectives is it clear how or whether a person can shift from one type of identity or category to another.

Working independently, in separate places and at different times, Hardiman (1979) and Helms (1984b) proposed developmental models of White racial identity development. Both models are similar in that they propose a linear process of attitudinal development in which the White person potentially progresses through a series of stages differing in the extent to which they involve acknowledgment of racism and consciousness of Whiteness. They differ in the particulars of some of the stages, though both agree that the highest stage involves an awareness of personal responsibility for racism, consistent acknowledgment of one's Whiteness, and abandonment of racism in any of its forms as a defining aspect of one's personality. Hardiman's theoretical model is summarized

in Table 4.1. However, since Helms's model has been subjected to empirical investigation and (to the author's knowledge) Hardiman's has not, Helms's model is the primary theoretical basis for the subsequent presentation of White racial identity development. Consequently, it will be presented in some detail.

STAGES OF WHITE RACIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

One of the concomitants of being a White person in the United States is that one is a member of a numerical majority as well as the socio-economically and politically dominant group. One result of this racial status is that, as Dennis (1981) points out, even if one has few resources oneself, as long as one has White skin in America, one is entitled to feel superior to Blacks. This sense of entitlement seems to be a basic norm of White society.

Perhaps more importantly, as previously noted, if one is a White person in the United States, it is still possible to exist without ever having to acknowledge that reality. In fact, it is only when Whites come in contact with the idea of Blacks (or other visible racial/ethnic groups) that Whiteness becomes a potential issue. Whether or not this initial contact has any implications for racial identity development depends upon the extent to which it is unavoidable. Thus, if the Black (in this instance) presence "intrudes" into the White person's environment, and the intrusion cannot be ignored or controlled, then the White person is likely to be forced to deal with White racial identity issues somewhat. However, to the extent that such intrusions can be avoided, which may still be the case in much of White America, one can avoid resolving White racial identity issues. That is, one can choose to be oblivious to race and the differential effects of race on how one is perceived and treated by society at large; or one can decide to remain fixated at one of the identity stages to be described subsequently.

There are two primary ways by which one can become aware of the presence of Blacks as an outgroup: vicariously or directly. Vicarious awareness occurs when significant persons in one's life (e.g., media, parents, peers) inform one of the existence of Blacks as well as how one ought to think about them. Dennis (1981) does an excellent job of describing how Whites are socialized directly and indirectly to fear and devalue Blacks. Direct awareness occurs when the White person interacts with Blacks himself or herself. These two means of awareness are not necessarily exclusive, as Dennis points out. Nevertheless, though one's own initial experiences with Blacks may be pleasant and non-individually racist, significant White persons in one's environment may use the socialization pressures available to them to ensure that the White person learns the rules of being a socially accepted White person. A number of

autobiographical accounts (e.g., McLaurin, 1987; L. Smith, 1961), usually written from a Southern perspective, describe how Whites are taught to develop individual racism.

Recall that institutional and cultural racism are so much a part of the White (or Black) individual's world that he or she is often blind to their presence. Thus, the White person's developmental tasks with regard to development of a healthy White identity, according to both Hardiman's (1979) and Helms's (1984b) perspectives, require the abandonment of individual racism as well as the recognition of and active opposition to institutional and cultural racism. Concurrently, the person must become aware of her or his Whiteness, learn to accept Whiteness as an important part of herself or himself, and to internalize a realistically positive view of what it means to be White.

Helms (1984) originally proposed that White racial identity development occurred via a five-stage process, each involving attitudes, emotions, and behaviors in which Whites as well as Blacks are referents. More recently, she has included a sixth stage, Immersion/Emersion, to reflect Hardiman's (1979) contention that it is possible for Whites to seek out accurate information about their historical, political, and cultural contributions to the world, and that the process of self-examination within this context is an important component of the process of defining a positive White identity.

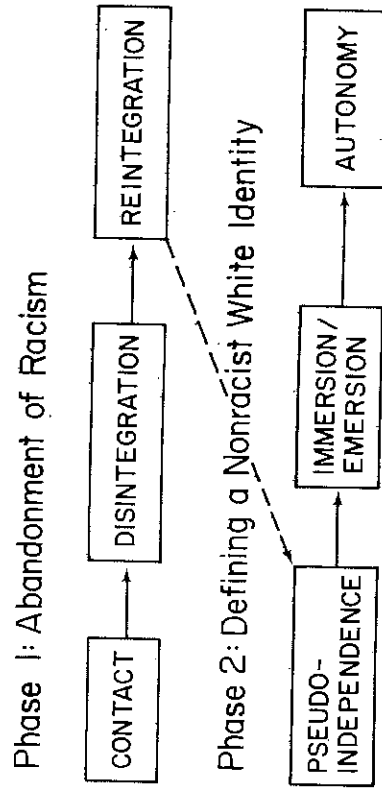
Thus, presently, Helms conceptualizes a two-phase process of White identity development. As illustrated in Figure 4.1, Phase 1, the abandonment of racism, begins with the Contact stage and ends with the Reintegration stage. Phase 2, defining a positive White identity, begins with the Pseudo-Independent stage and ends with the Autonomy stage.

Contact

As soon as one encounters the idea or the actuality of Black people, one has entered the Contact stage of identity. Depending somewhat upon one's racial (particularly) familial environment, one will enter Contact with either naive curiosity or timidity and trepidation about Blacks and a superficial and inconsistent awareness of being White. When one is in Contact, if one exhibits individual racism, it is probably exhibited in a weak and unsophisticated form since the person is just beginning to try her or his racial wings. Nevertheless, the person in Contact automatically benefits from institutional and cultural racism without necessarily being aware that he or she is doing so.

Oddly enough, the person in Contact may enjoy being a racist more than persons at the other stages simply because he or she has not had to confront the moral dilemmas resulting from such an identification. The Contact person's White racial identification is equally subtle. Thus,

Figure 4.1
Stages and Phases of White Racial Identity Development



although each a person evaluates Blacks according to White criteria (e.g., White physical appearance, standardized tests, etc.), he or she does so automatically without awareness that other criteria are possible, and that he or she might be as legitimately evaluated according to other racial/cultural groups' criteria.

Behaviors thought to characterize Contact people are limited inter-racial social or occupational interaction with Blacks, unless the interaction is initiated by Blacks who "seem" White except for skin color or other "Black" physical characteristics. In such interactions, the White person uses the Black person to teach him or her about what Black people in general are like and often uses societal stereotypes of Blacks as the standard against which the Black person is evaluated. Comments such as "You don't act like a Black person," or "I don't notice what race a person is," are likely to be made by Contact persons.

Affectively, Contact persons can be expected to have positive self-esteem because they have not yet learned to compartmentalize and differentially value their different selves (cf. Dennis, 1981). They should generally have positive feelings about the "idea" of Blacks and fair treatment of Blacks; though trait anxiety should be low, state anxiety or arousal may be present when actual interactions with Blacks are experienced or anticipated.

One's longevity in the Contact stage depends upon the kinds of experiences one has with Blacks and Whites with respect to racial issues. For instance, as the White person becomes aware of Blacks, if this awareness is based on vicarious information rather than actual experiences, she or he is likely to remain in the Contact stage, particularly the aspect of the stage associated with fearfulness and caution. This supposition is based on the common observation (e.g., Karp, 1981; Reid, 1979) that the bulk of information available to Whites (and Blacks) about Blacks is negative. In such cases, the person is likely to continue to engage in minimal cross-racial interaction, is unlikely to be forced to rethink her or his racial perspective, is tolerated by her or his racial peers if he or she makes known her or his Contact perspective, and, of course, is warmly accepted if he or she remains silent about it.

On the other hand, if the Contact person continues to interact with Blacks, sooner or later significant others in the person's environment will make it known that such behavior is unacceptable if one wishes to remain a member in good standing of the "White" group (cf. Boyle, 1981; L. Smith, 1961). Where Blacks are concerned, if Whites in the Contact stage continue to interact with them, sooner or later the Contact person will have to acknowledge that there are differences in how Blacks and Whites in the United States are treated regardless of economic status. Sometimes this awareness may occur because the Black person points out the differences; sometimes it occurs because of obvious acts of dis-

crimination (e.g., cab drivers who pass by Blacks regardless of how they are dressed, but stop for their White associates). Moreover, many Blacks will not join the Contact person in pretending that he or she is also Black (see Terry, 1980). When enough of these "socialization" experiences penetrate the White person's identity system, then he or she can enter the Disintegration stage.

Disintegration

Entry into the Disintegration stage implies conscious, though conflicted, acknowledgment of one's Whiteness. Moreover, it triggers the recognition of moral dilemmas associated with being White as described by Dennis (1981). If some of his dilemmas are reworded to refer to Whites regardless of religion or geographic origin, then they can be summarized as follows:

- (a) the desire to be a religious or moral person versus the recognition that to be accepted by Whites one must treat Blacks immorally;
- "[b] the belief in freedom and democracy versus the belief in racial inequality";
- "[c] the desire to show love and compassion versus the desire to keep Blacks in their place at all costs";
- (d) the belief in treating others with dignity and respect versus the belief that Blacks are not worthy of dignity or respect;
- "[e] the belief that each person should be treated according to his or her individual merits versus the belief that Blacks should be evaluated as a group without regard to individual merits and talents" (p. 78).

Accompanying the conflicted White identification is a questioning of the racial realities the person has been taught to believe. It is probably during this stage, for instance, that the person first comes to realize that in spite of mouthings to the contrary, Blacks and Whites are not considered equals and negative social consequences can besiege the White person who does not respect the inequalities. Moreover, the Disintegration stage may be the time in which the person comes to realize that the social skills and mores he or she has been taught to use in interacting with Blacks rarely work. Thus, the person in Disintegration may not only perceive for the first time that he or she is caught between two racial groups, but may also come to realize that his or her position amongst Whites depends upon his or her ability to successfully "split" her or his personality.

Self-actualization personality theorists such as Rogers (1951) suggest that emotional discomfort, which Rogers calls "incongruence," results when one must markedly alter one's real self in order to be accepted by

significant others in one's environment. The feelings of guilt, depression, helplessness, and anxiety described by various authors (e.g., J. Baldwin, 1963; Karp, 1981; J. Katz, 1976) as correlates of Whiteness probably have their origins in the Disintegration stage.

Festinger (1957) theorized that when two or more of a person's cognitions (e.g., beliefs or feelings about oneself) are in conflict, an uncomfortable psychological state that he calls "dissonance" likely results. He suggests that when dissonance is present, a person will not only attempt to reduce it, but will also take steps to avoid situations and information that are likely to increase it. Thus, if one thinks of the uncomfortable feelings resulting from White moral ambivalence as previously described as dissonance, then it seems plausible that the same sorts of strategies used to reduce dissonance in general may also be used to reduce race-related dissonance.

Festinger proposed three ways of reducing dissonance: (a) changing a behavior, (b) changing an environmental belief, and (c) developing new beliefs. Accordingly, the person in the Disintegration stage might reduce discomfort by (a) avoiding further contact with Blacks (changing a behavior), (b) attempting to convince significant others in her or his environment that Blacks are not so inferior (changing an environmental belief), or (c) seeking information from Blacks or Whites to the effect that either racism is not the White person's fault or does not really exist (adding new beliefs). Additionally, as a means of avoiding an increase in dissonance, the person may selectively attend only to information that gives him or her greater confidence in the new beliefs and/or he or she will interact only with those who can be counted on to support the new belief.

Which alternative the White person chooses probably depends on the extent to which her or his cross-racial interactions are voluntary. It seems likely that the person who can remove herself or himself from interracial environments or can remove Blacks from White environments will do so. Given the racial differences in social and economic power, most Whites can choose this option. If they do so, they will receive much support in an exclusively White environment for the development of individual racism as well as the maintenance of cultural and institutional racism.

Attempts to change others' attitudes probably occur initially amongst Whites who were raised and/or socialized in an environment in which White "liberal" attitudes (though not necessarily behaviors) were expressed. However, due to the racial naiveté with which this approach may be undertaken and the person's ambivalent racial identification, this dissonance-reducing strategy is likely to be met with rejection by Whites as well as Blacks.

To the extent that cross-racial interaction is unavoidable, the White

person will attempt to develop new beliefs. However, the desire to be accepted by one's own racial group and the prevalence in the White group of the covert and overt belief in White superiority and Black inferiority virtually dictates that the content of the person's belief system will also change in a similar direction. As this reshaping of the person's cognitions or beliefs occurs, he or she enters the Reintegration stage.

Reintegration

In the Reintegration stage, the person consciously acknowledges a White identity. In the absence of contradictory experiences, to be White in America is to believe that one is superior to people of color. Consequently, the Reintegration person accepts the belief in White racial superiority and Black inferiority. He or she comes to believe that institutional and cultural racism are the White person's due because he or she has earned such privileges and preferences. Race-related negative conditions are assumed to result from Black people's inferior social, moral, and intellectual qualities, and thus, it is not unusual to find persons in the Reintegration stage selectively attending to and/or reinterpreting information to conform to societal stereotypes of Black people. Cross-racial similarities are minimized and/or denied.

Any residual feelings of guilt and anxiety are transformed into fear and anger toward Black people. Much of the person's cross-racial behavior is motivated by these feelings. Though the feelings may not be overtly expressed, they lie just below the surface of the person's awareness, and it only takes an event(s) that can be characterized (whether or not it actually is) by the White person as personally threatening for these feelings to be unleashed.

Behaviorally, people in the Reintegration stage may express their beliefs and feelings either passively or actively. Passive expression involves deliberate removal of oneself and/or avoidance of environments in which one might encounter Black people. In this instance, honest discussion of racial matters is most likely to occur among same-race peers who share or are believed to share a similar view of the world. Active expression may include treating Blacks as inferior and involve acts of violence or exclusion designed to protect White privilege.

In this society, it is fairly easy to remain or fixate at the Reintegration stage, particularly if one is relatively passive in one's expression of it. A personally jarring event is probably necessary for the person to begin to abandon this essentially racist identity. Again, the event can be direct or vicarious; it can be caused by painful or insightful encounters with Black or White persons. Changes in the environmental racial climate may also trigger transition from the Reintegration stage. For instance, the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and the Vietnam War caused

some Whites to question their racial identity, though hopefully the catalyst for such self-examination does not have to be so major. Be that as it may, once the person begins to question her or his previous definition of Whiteness and the justifiability of racism in any of its forms, then he or she has begun the movement into the Pseudo-Independent or Liberal stage.

Pseudo-Independent

Pseudo-Independent is the first stage of redefining a positive White identity. In this stage, the person begins actively to question the proposition that Blacks are innately inferior to Whites. Instead, in this stage, the person begins to acknowledge the responsibility of Whites for racism and to see how he or she wittingly and unwittingly perpetuates racism. Consequently, he or she is no longer comfortable with a racist identity and begins to search for ways to redefine her or his White identity. Usually the redefining process takes the form of intellectual acceptance and curiosity about Blacks.

The Pseudo-Independent stage is primarily a stage of intellectualization in which the person attempts to submerge the tumultuous feelings about Whiteness that were aroused in previous stages. To the extent that feelings concerning racial identity issues are allowed to emerge, they are apt to be feelings of commiseration with Blacks and perhaps disquietude concerning racial issues in White peer groups.

Nevertheless, though the person in the Pseudo-Independent stage is abandoning the belief in White superiority/Black inferiority, he or she may still behave in ways that unwittingly perpetuate this belief system. That is, though the person may seek greater interaction with Blacks, much of this interaction involves helping Blacks to change themselves so that they function more like Whites or White criteria for success and acceptability rather than recognizing that such criteria might be inappropriate and/or too narrowly defined. Furthermore, cultural or racial differences are likely to be interpreted by using White life experiences as the standards. Moreover, the Pseudo-Independent person still looks to Black rather than White people to explain racism and seeks solutions for it in hypothetical Black cultural dysfunctions.

Although the person in the Pseudo-Independent stage no longer has a negative White identity or consciousness, neither does he or she have a positive one. The paucity of White models of positive Whiteness means that the person usually has no visible standards against which to compare and/or modify himself or herself. Additionally, such a person is likely to be met with considerable suspicion from other Whites as well as Blacks.

Many Whites will treat the Pseudo-Independent person, who actively expresses this identity, as though he or she has violated White racial

norms. Many Black people will be suspicious of the motives of a person who devotes so much attention to helping Blacks rather than changing Whites. Consequently, the Pseudo-Independent person may not feel entirely comfortable with her or his White identity, but overidentification with Blacks is also not likely to be very comfortable. Thus, the person may come to feel rather marginal where race and racial issues are concerned. However, if the personal rewards (e.g., self-esteem, monetary, etc.) are great enough to encourage continued strengthening of a positive White identity, then the person may begin the quest for those positive aspects of Whiteness that are unrelated to racism. The quest for a better definition of Whiteness signals the person's entry into the Immersion/Emersion stage.

Immersion/Emersion

Redefining a positive White identity requires that the person replace White and Black myths and stereotypes with accurate information about what it means and has meant to be White in the United States as well as in the world in general. The person in this stage is searching for the answers to the questions: "Who am I racially?" and "Who do I want to be?" and "Who are you really?"

Often such a person will immerse herself or himself in biographies and autobiographies of Whites who have made similar identity journeys. He or she may participate in White consciousness-raising groups whose purpose is to help the person discover her or his individual self-interest in abandoning racism and acknowledging a White racial identity. Changing Black people is no longer the focus of her or his activities, but rather the goal of changing White people becomes salient.

Emotional as well as cognitive restructuring can happen during this stage. Successful resolution of this stage apparently requires emotional catharsis in which the person reexperiences previous emotions that were denied or distorted (cf. Lipsky, 1978). Once these negative feelings are expressed, the person may begin to feel a euphoria perhaps akin to a religious rebirth. These positive feelings not only help to buttress the newly developing White identity, but provide the fuel by which the person can truly begin to tackle racism and oppression in its various forms.

Autonomy

Internalizing, nurturing, and applying the new definition of Whiteness evolved in the earlier stages are major goals of the Autonomy stage. In this stage, the person no longer feels a need to oppress, idealize, or denigrate people on the basis of group membership characteristics such

Figure 4.2
A Workshop Activity on Self-Assessing White Racial Identity

For each of the subsequent items, use the following scale to indicate the extent to which the item is true of you.

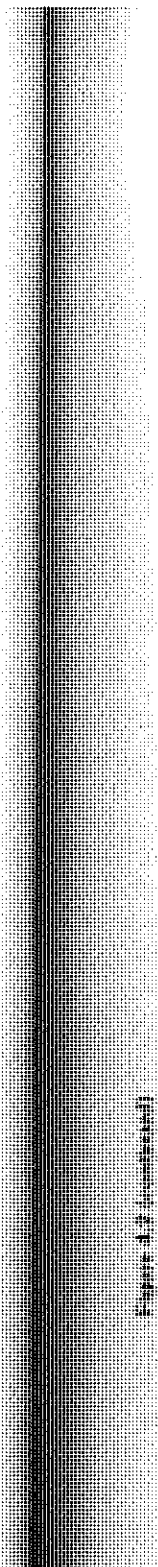
- 4 - Strongly Agree
- 3 - Agree
- 2 - Disagree
- 1 - Strongly Disagree

Write the numbers of your responses on the line next to the item. Add together your responses to the item preceded by the same combination of letters and plot your scores on the graph. Draw a line to connect your C total, R total, D total, F total, E total, and A total. Draw another line to connect the totals preceded by double letters (e.g., CB). This will give you a racial identity profile.

- C1. _____ There is no race problem in the United States.
- C2. _____ Racism only exists in the minds of a few Black people.
- C3. _____ I personally do not notice what race a person is.
- _____ C TOTAL
- CB1. _____ I have asked or would ask a Black person to help me understand how I might be prejudiced.
- CB2. _____ I contribute or would contribute money or time to social programs to help Blacks.
- CB3. _____ I participate or would participate in an activity to help Blacks overcome their poor environment.
- _____ CB TOTAL
- R1. _____ I believe that White culture or Western civilization is the most highly developed, sophisticated culture ever to have existed on earth.
- R2. _____ Africans and Blacks are more sexually promiscuous than Europeans and Whites.
- R3. _____ The white race will be polluted by intermarriage with Blacks.
- _____ R TOTAL
- RB1. _____ When a Black male stranger sits or stands next to me in a public place, I move away from him.
- RB2. _____ I live or would live in a segregated (White) neighborhood.
- RB3. _____ The people I do my non-business related socializing with either are Whites or Blacks who "act White."
- _____ RB TOTAL
- D1. _____ American society is sick, evil, and racist.
- D2. _____ There is nothing I can do to prevent racism.
- D3. _____ I avoid thinking about racial issues.
- _____ D TOTAL

Figure 4.2 (continued)

- P1. _____ It is White people's responsibility to eliminate racism in the United States.
- P2. _____ Eliminating racism would help Whites feel better about themselves.
- P3. _____ White people should help Black people become equal to Whites.
- _____ P TOTAL
- PB1. _____ I have boycotted a company or its products because of its racist programs.
- PB2. _____ For Martin Luther King's Birthday, I attend or would attend a commemorative event.
- PB3. _____ I have tried to help Whites understand Blacks.
- _____ LB TOTAL
- E1. _____ White culture and society must be restructured to eliminate racism and opposition.
- E2. _____ Whites and White culture are not superior to Blacks and Black culture.
- E3. _____ A multi-cultural society cannot exist unless Whites give up their racism.
- _____ E TOTAL
- EB1. _____ I have studied the history of White and Western European people.
- EB2. _____ I meet with Whites to discuss our feelings and attitudes about being White and White racism.
- EB3. _____ I have conducted activities to help Whites overcome their racism.
- _____ EB TOTAL
- A1. _____ I accept that being White does not make me superior to any other racial group.
- A2. _____ Being a member of a multi-racial environment is a must for me.
- A3. _____ My Whiteness is an important part of who I am.
- _____ A TOTAL
- AB1. _____ I speak up in a White group situation when I feel that a White person is being racist.
- AB2. _____ I express my honest opinion when a Black person is present without worrying about whether I appear racist.
- AB3. _____ I attempt to explain to White friends and relatives the relationship of racism to other forms of oppression.
- _____ AB TOTAL



Attitudinal Behavioral Levels	R			P			E			A	
	CB	RB		CB	PB		CB	EB		CB	AB
12											
9											
6											
3											
0											

This workshop activity is adapted from Hardiman (1979) and Helms (1984). These items are not from a validated scale and are presented here for the reader's possible self-exploration. Abbreviations are: C = Contact attitudes, CB = Contact behavior, R = Reintegration attitudes, RB = Reintegration behavior, D = Disintegration attitudes, DB = Disintegration behavior, P = Pseudo-Independent attitudes, PB = Pseudo-Independent behavior, E = Emersion attitudes, EB = Emersion behavior, A = Autonomy attitudes, AB = Autonomy behavior. Higher scores indicate higher levels of the attitudes/behaviors.

as race because race no longer symbolizes threat to him or her. Since he or she no longer reacts out of rigid world views, it is possible for him or her to abandon cultural and institutional racism as well as personal racism. Thus, one finds the Autonomous person actively seeking opportunities to learn from other cultural groups. One also finds him or her actively becoming increasingly aware of how other forms of oppression (e.g., sexism, ageism) are related to racism and acting to eliminate them as well. Terry's (1977) description of the characteristics of the New White (see Table 4.1) seems to describe the Autonomous person.

Although Autonomy represents the highest level of White racial identity and might be thought of as racial self-actualization or transcendence, perhaps it is best to think of it as an ongoing process. It is a process wherein the person is continually open to new information and new ways of thinking about racial and cultural variables. Nevertheless, reaching the Autonomy stage does not necessarily mean that the person is perfect with respect to all aspects of her or his identity. Chances are if the person had a grouchy personality (i.e., personal identity) before he or she began movement through the racial identity development process, then he or she will still be a grouch once the process is completed. It is just that his or her grouchiness will no longer be governed by cultural or racial determinants. In other words, one might find a variety of personality characteristics and styles among people who have reached the Autonomy stage.

CONCLUSIONS

As might be apparent, each of the White racial identity stages is hypothesized to have its own unique effect on attitudes, behaviors, and emotions. Nevertheless, it is probably not the case that each of these develops at the same rate. In fact, studies of symbolic racism (e.g., McConaghy & Hough, 1976) suggest that attitudes (at least racist attitudes as opposed to White identity attitudes) may change faster than behaviors. As an example of how this is possible, the reader might wish to try out the workshop exercise in Figure 4.2. It seems reasonable to speculate that the greatest discomfort occurs for those individuals whose attitudes, emotions, and behaviors are not in harmony.