A Feminist-Poststructuralist Investigation of the Experiences of Indian Adults in Interethnic Romantic Relationships in New Zealand

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Abstract

This inquiry investigated the problematisation of interethnic intimacy in the New Zealand Indian population. In order to comprehensively explore this topic, this inquiry synthesised two disparate bodies of literature. It adopted a Hindu-Indian cultural perspective to illuminate issues surrounding love, sexuality, and partner selection, and integrated it with existing Western research on interethnic intimacy.

Both bodies of work are significant to consider in their own right. Scholarly attention has been given to the experiences and challenges faced by Indian immigrants in Western countries, especially where it concerns family life and adjustment to Western social norms. However, little research addresses Indian attitudes towards love, sexuality, and romantic relationships, an area which has conventionally been characterised by silence in immigrant Indian families. On the other hand, interethnic relationships have conventionally been referred to in the literature as a measure of relations between ethnic groups. However, they also violate normative endogamous partner selection. The repercussions of this non-normativity are profound for interethnic couples, as they frequently experience opposition from those around them. Interethnic relationships seem to be particularly challenging for Indian society. Thus, this thesis analyses the problematisation of interethnic intimacy using Indian understandings of partner selection.

This inquiry employed a feminist-poststructuralist paradigm and was divided into two studies. Study 1 examined the attitudes held by Indian adults in New Zealand towards partner selection. Data was collected using interviews and focus groups with Indian adults between the ages of 21 and 65 in Auckland. In Study 2, Indian adults in New Zealand over the age of 21 who were in heterosexual, interethnic romantic relationships were recruited. Data was collected through reflexive photography and semi-structured interviews. All data was analysed using discourse analysis. Findings indicated the changing nature of Indian culture in New Zealand. Young Indian adults endorsed liberal approaches to love, sexuality, and partner selection, indicating changes in values about dating, interethnic relationships, and premarital cohabitation. However, reticence towards interethnic relationships persisted in varying degrees. Indian adults in interethnic relationships experienced challenges with: familial relationships; cultural integration; identity; and racial microaggressions, which rendered them vulnerable compared to Indian co-ethnic couples. These findings have far-reaching implications for New Zealand's Indian population, as well as for health practitioners and researchers.

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signature: Date:

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Chapter One: Contextualising the Problem of Indian Interethnic Relationships

1.1 The Research Problem

A simple Google search of the term "Indian interracial relationships" reveals a plethora of blog posts and social media sites focusing on the hardships encountered by Indian people who choose to date/marry a non-Indian person. These websites normally seek advice about the hostility from relatives, friends, and acquaintances towards these interethnic relationships, and also try to explore the question of *why* interracial relationships/marriages are problematic for Indian society in the first place. Such explanations often rely on constructing Indian culture as patriarchal with regressive views of marriage and sexuality, but do not go much deeper. From such advice-seeking posts, it seems that interethnic relationships in Indian society are rarely sanctioned by family members and the wider community, and indeed, that there is something about interethnic relationships that breaches normative rules about who can marry whom. It is this problematisation of interethnic relationships in Indian culture that is the focus of this thesis.

As an Indian woman presently in an interethnic relationship, I have encountered opposition from relatives and the wider community about what is usually regarded as an illicit relationship. I also experienced challenges with my partner as we struggled to navigate numerous tensions that we barely understood. Growing up as an Indian woman, there were several things that I instinctively understood about Indian culture and its stances on marriage, dating, and relationships, but which I could not articulate coherently. However, as I continued to experience conflicts, both within and outside of my romantic relationship, I became increasingly interested with the roots of these conflicts, which led me to pursue postgraduate research in this area.

Originally, my interest was in probing the experiences of other Indian adults in interethnic relationships to discover the commonalities between their experiences and also to ponder any differences. I soon realised that this was too superficial an approach, as it became clear to me that interethnic relationships sit at the nexus of multiple intersecting axes: those of race, culture, gender, and sexuality. More importantly, the way in which these axes intersect when it comes to interethnic relationships represents a disruption of social control of individuals' bodies. Therefore, if I truly wanted to understand why interethnic relationships are so problematic, especially in Indian culture, I had to go much deeper than

I initially anticipated, and had to carefully deconstruct many ubiquitous assumptions about love and sexuality in Indian culture.

In order for the reader to truly understand the research problem, I have chosen to structure this introductory chapter in a precise way. Firstly, while I have broadly described the research problem (the problematisation of interethnic relationships in Indian society), it is necessary to present the context in which it is situated. This contextualisation will include a concise explanation of physical intimacy and partner selection in India, which will, therefore, include a discussion of the predominant Indian religious discourses, the Vedic caste system, Indian views of marriage and sexuality, and the traditional structure of the Indian family. Additionally, this chapter will briefly discuss the challenges faced by Indian families who immigrate to Western societies. From there, the research problem can be understood and the research questions of this inquiry can be presented.

Before proceeding any further, it is necessary to make an important acknowledgement, which I also reiterate in the Methods chapter of this thesis (Chapter Four). The following sections rely on ancient Hindu texts, like the *Rig Veda*, the *Manusmriti*, and Vatsyayana's *Kamasutra*. However, my explanations of the attitudes towards marriage, sexuality, partner selection, and women contained in these texts are not based on a thorough reading of the texts themselves. My reason for this is that I am not a Vedic scholar and am not fluent in Vedic Sanskrit (the language these texts are written in). I know very little about the authenticity of these primary sources and how best to interpret them. Instead, I have chosen to rely on the works of scholars who have made a study of these sources and to depend upon their interpretations. The conclusions that I have made in the following chapters are thus supported by the work of these academics, and should be viewed as but one potential interpretation of Hinduism's holy texts. With this limitation in mind, the following section will explain the predominant religion in India, Hinduism, in order to establish the context for partner selection in India.

1.2 Hinduism

It is important to capture a snapshot of India's religious background if we are to understand the context for partner selection in Indian culture. Firstly, it is critical to understand the diversity of India—a place that is divided into 29 states and 6 union territories with a multitude of different ethnic groups and religions coexisting simultaneously (Medora, 2003). This heterogeneity means that it is difficult to make generalisations about 'Indian' customs, as they vary not only regionally, but ethnically and religiously as well. However, many customs—particularly where they pertain to marriage—are derived from Hindu origins.

Although there are many religious systems in India (Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism, Christianity, Jainism, etc.), the predominant religion is Hinduism. Hindus make up over 80% of India's population and, in 2010, were one billion of the world's total population (Medora, 2003; Pew Research Center, 2015). In New Zealand, 54% of the Indian population is Hindu (Statistics New Zealand, 2013c). Given the preponderance of Hinduism in India, many of the non-Hindu invading influences (e.g., Muslim conquerors like the Mughal Empire) that settled there adopted a number of Hindu practices during assimilation. Indeed, Hindu philosophy, practices, and behaviours can be found in other religious faiths in India (Medora, 2003). These adopted practices include those regarding intimacy and marriage. Therefore, this thesis will be underpinned by a Hindu understanding of partner selection.

Briefly, the Hindu worldview is one that celebrates the interconnectedness of all beings in the cosmos, both animate and inanimate, which are embodied by the supreme divine spirit, *Brahman* (J. Sinha, 2014). In this view, the ultimate goal of life is to work one's way towards *moksha*—liberation from the earthly world and achievement of inner spirituality—in order to become reunited with *Brahman* (Kapadia, 1966; J. Sinha, 2014). This goal is accomplished towards the end of one's life. However, many Hindu thinkers recognised that between birth and death, men (women were excluded from such philosophical concerns) had temporal interests on the earthly plane that were integral to positive moral development, provided that each of these interests were moderately indulged (Kapadia, 1966). As such, Hindu philosophy describes four goals of human existence: *artha* (the accumulation of material prosperity), *kama* (aesthetic pleasure, usually referring to sexual pleasure), *moksha* (earthly liberation), and *dharma* (the right and proper way of living, encapsulating one's duties and responsibilities towards society) (Kapadia, 1966; J. Sinha, 2014; Wilson, 1980). Kapadia (1966) argued that this fourfold path allowed men to attend to all their urges in life and provided a path to achieving both materialism and spirituality. While this may seem paradoxical to the Western mindset, where materialism and spirituality are viewed as disparate and opposing concepts, the Hindu perspective allows materialism and spirituality to harmoniously coexist (J. Sinha, 2014).

The ancient Hindu lifespan was divided into four developmental stages for men (Kapadia, 1966): the student, the married householder, the retiree, and the ascetic hermit. Each of these stages involved pursuing different goals of human existence, in order to achieve different sacred obligations. For instance, the married householder pursued *kama* (through the rite of marriage) and *artha* (acquiring wealth to support one's family). On the other hand, the ascetic hermit renounced the world and dissolved his ties to society in order to pursue *moksha*. During this stage, men were religiously obligated to travel between villages and teach, whilst also focusing on cultivating an inner sense of spirituality. *Dharma* was meant

to be pursued throughout one's life and overruled the other goals of human existence. Because each stage involved pursuing different goals and achieving different sacraments, men had access to a variety of ways to fulfil *dharma*.

Women, on the other hand, were largely excluded from these sacraments. In the ancient Vedic period, women enjoyed a greater degree of status and freedom compared to their counterparts in the post-Vedic period (Kapadia, 1966; O'Connor & Earnest, 2011; I. Trivedi, 2014). Unlike post-Vedic women, young girls in the Vedic age were initiated as students in the same way that young boys were and could study the *Vedas*. This right was retracted in the post-Vedic period. Thereafter, the only sacrament that women were entitled to was marriage (Kapadia, 1966; Kumari, 1988; I. Trivedi, 2014), which became their only means for achieving *dharma*. Marriage was also the only containment field in which they were permitted to experience sexual pleasure (I. Trivedi, 2014).

In fact, marriage is so indispensable to Hindu-Indian development for both women and men that it is considered a sacrament and social obligation (Dhar, 2013; Kapadia, 1966; Kasanji, 1980; Kumari, 1988; Medora, 2003; I. Trivedi, 2014). Marriage is fundamental to fulfilling *dharma*, because it accomplishes three major purposes: 1) the production of children within a socially legitimised relationship, 2) the gratification of sexual urges, and 3) most importantly, marriage is a religious duty that achieves the needs of wider society (Chakraborty & Thakurata, 2013). Within this framework, marriage is seen as a lifelong sacrament (Mahajan, Pimple, Palsetia, Dave, & De Sousa, 2013) and is, therefore, indissoluble. Indeed, in Hindi there exists no word for 'divorce'; contemporary Indian people have adopted the English term to refer to the termination of marital relationships (I. Trivedi, 2014)[1].

Because marriage is so important to the Hindu worldview, marriage choice has significant meaning. Several mechanisms were established during Vedic society in order to ensure that individuals were married to appropriate partners, because the consequences of marriage—the children produced in marital contexts—were the lifeblood of society. One of the most important of these mechanisms is the Vedic caste system.

1.3 The Vedic Caste System

By now, a pattern should be emerging that indicates the immense value of order in the Hindu worldview. We have seen this repetition of an orderly and systematic hierarchy through the prescribed stages of development and the associated goals of human existence. It is apparent that each entity has its rightful place in the cosmos and has certain duties that it must fulfil

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[1] In Islamic contexts, divorce is possible and is called *talaaq* in Urdu. *Talaaq* may only be initiated by the male spouse (I. Trivedi, 2014).

to ensure that society thrives. It is needless to look further for a mechanism that exemplifies this so fully as the caste system does.

The original intention of the caste system was to stipulate a proper role for every being in society, where each individual and each caste had its own part to play for the betterment of society (Wilson, 1980). There existed four main castes: the Brahmins (the priests; not to be confused with the supreme divine being, *Brahman*), the Kshatriya (the warrior kings), the Vaishya (traders, merchants, farmers, and landowners), and the Sudra (the untouchables) (Dhar, 2013; Wilson, 1980). Although the system may have been instituted to improve society by cultivating mutual responsibility, contemporary writers have argued that the caste system attributed inferiority and impurity to the lowest caste and in doing so, propagated a system of injustice (J. Sinha, 2014; Wilson, 1980). For instance, those of Brahmin and Kshatriya status were entitled to numerous privileges and could expect leniency for certain crimes, while Sudra, on the other hand, would be subjected to harsh punishments for the same crime. The Sudra were an unfortunate caste to be born into, as they were labourers and servants who were responsible for conducting services that were thought to be ritually impure, like butchering meat, cleaning trash from the streets, and so on. Through association, they also became viewed as impure—hence the term 'untouchable'.

Marriage was only conducted within castes, because of the negative repercussions of caste intermingling: how would children of mixed caste know their proper positions in life? Which caste would they belong to? Additionally, the associations between caste and purity became deeply ingrained over time, and caste intermingling came to be viewed as a form of pollution (Dhar, 2013; Rastogi, 2009). For instance, the *Manusmriti* ("The Laws of Manu", an ancient legal text considered divine in its authority) declares severe punishment for a Brahmin man who takes a Sudra wife (he will end up in hell in his afterlife), and any children of such a union would result in the Brahmin man losing his caste rank (Bühler, 1886). Stigma about caste intermingling in India persists to the present day (Dhar, 2013; Goli, Singh, & Sekher, 2013).

In this context, interethnic intimacy would likewise be stigmatised, viewed as a contamination of lineage. The caste system ensures that procreative partnerships can be carefully engineered, although it lacks the complete ability to control marital choice. In that sense, the mechanism of arranged marriage becomes an important tool to control who marries whom, which is important not only on an individual level, but also has repercussions for the wider family and attached community. As such, the following section will explore marriage in the Hindu perspective in more detail.

1.4 Marriage: The Cornerstone of Indian Society

The Vedic period seems to have allowed greater freedom of partner choice for both women and men. Eight types of permitted marriage are described in the ancient texts, which were all considered legitimate during the period that the *Rig Veda* (the oldest existing ancient Indian sacred text) was composed (over 3000 years ago). However, the *Manusmriti* disagrees about the religious legitimacy of four of these types of marriage (Bühler, 1886). Those four illegitimate types of marriage included acquiring a bride through: 1) the bridegroom giving as much wealth as he could afford to the bride's family; 2) the groom physically overcoming the bride's family before abducting her; and 3) the groom abducting a sleeping, drugged, or intellectually-impaired woman. The final type of illegitimate marriage was known as the *Gandharva* marriage, which has the most similarities to the modern love marriage. Here, a woman and a man could choose to be together of their own choice and exchanged their vows in front of any living creature before sexually consummating their relationship. The *Manusmriti* views this type of marriage as lesser, seemingly because the purpose of such a marriage was that of fulfilling sexual desire and because parental consent was not required.

In the supreme form of marriage, the *Brahman* marriage, a daughter was bedecked in beautiful and expensive clothing and jewels, and then gifted to an educated man. The parents of the man would seek a suitable bride, but it was up to the father of the bride to ensure that the match was appropriate and that his daughter consented (Bühler, 1886). The contemporary arranged marriage has its roots in the *Brahman* marriage, where the families of unmarried sons and daughters seek suitable spouses for their children in order to form alliances between two different families. However, unlike in a *Brahman* marriage where an unmarried son and his parents would take the initiative in seeking a bride, in modern times it is appropriate for families to search for husbands for their daughters as well. It remains unseemly for unmarried men and women to look for their own partners because individual people, who are thought to be more prone to the passion of the moment, are not considered capable of finding spouses on their own. Therefore, the extended family is responsible for finding marriageable partners for the younger members of the family to ensure that potential partners are compatible, not just with the individual, but with the wider family as well (Davis, 1941; Pasupati, 2002; Rastogi, 2009). Traits such as caste, reputation, status, and economic prosperity are considered when a family is finding a spouse for their child. Romantic love is immaterial in view of the long-term aim of familial stability and continuity. In modern times, urban Indian families treat arranged marriage as a parent-organised matchmaking service, and young adults have the final say in deciding whether to marry the person that their parents have presented to them (Pasupati, 2002).

However, there is some evidence to suggest that young adults in India are pushing back against these conventions and increasingly attempting to conduct their own love affairs outside of parental control. Ira Trivedi (2014) argues that a 'love revolution' is currently underway in urban India, where an increasing trend of young people desiring the independence to choose their own partners can be observed. Practices that allegedly violate the sanctity of marriage, such as divorce, premarital dating, premarital sex, premarital cohabitation, and open marriage are on the rise, and are accompanied by growing tensions between young people and their older relatives. Even so, arranged marriage persists as the most common form of mate selection in India (I. Trivedi, 2014). The 'love marriage', where individuals choose their own partners free of parental interference, continues to be discouraged by the older members of society (Mines, 1998), who view it as a threat to the very foundations of Indian culture and Hindu religion—despite its historical precedence in the *Gandharva* marriage. It seems that there is an implicit sexualisation of the love marriage by older generations, whereby the relationship is thought to be founded purely on sexual passion. Importantly, something about this explicit sexuality is problematic and is prone to disparagement.

1.5 Indian Attitudes Towards Sexuality

It is remarkable that contemporary Indian society, anecdotally known for being sexually suppressed, should be equally well-known for having a rich erotic heritage (I. Trivedi, 2014). The ancient Indians were thought to have liberal sexual attitudes (Chakraborty & Thakurata, 2013; M. Gupta, 1994). During the ancient period, women, for example, possessed the freedom to choose their own sexual partners without requiring parental consent. However, a number of restrictions seem to have been laid on women shortly after the Vedic period, which limited their ability to navigate public spheres of influence (Chakraborty & Thakurata, 2013). For instance, not only were women excluded from initiation rites and learning the *Vedas* (the oldest Hindu scriptures), they were also confined to the domestic sphere and only permitted to achieve spiritual salvation through marriage and subsequent devotion and obedience to their husbands, and to experience sexual pleasure only through their husbands (Kapadia, 1966). Men, likewise, were supposed to be faithful to their wives but this was often not the case (M. Gupta, 1994; Kumari, 1988). The control of women's bodies transferred to men—to their fathers during childhood, to their husbands during marriage, and to their sons during widowhood (Bühler, 1886; Kakar, 1990). This remains pertinent even today, as some argue that women remain sexual capital in India (A. Trivedi, 2014).

Despite the increasing limitations placed on women's sexual conduct, evidence points to the liberality of sexual behaviours in ancient India. Sexual intercourse was depicted openly on temples and at other sacred sites (Chakraborty & Thakurata, 2013; M. Gupta, 1994; I. Trivedi, 2014), and Hindu mythology frequently describes divine love/sexual affairs (Kumari, 1988). The god Shiva (one of the preeminent gods in the Hindu pantheon) was simultaneously the greatest *yogi* (practitioner of yoga, usually associated with detachment from sexual, earthly urges) and the perfect husband and lover to his wife, Parvati (I. Trivedi, 2014). This alignment of the divine with sexual behaviour hints at the idea that sex was considered to be a form of sacred worship. Indeed, there existed Hindu religious scriptures that used sex during rituals as a means of achieving spiritual liberation through orgasmic release (I. Trivedi, 2014).

Additionally, the art of having sex was the subject matter of numerous treatises. Vatsyayana's *Kamasutra*, for instance, is the most well-known treatise of sex in the Western world and is usually treated as a titillating sexual manual. Although the volume does contain explicit descriptions of various sexual positions and techniques, it was written with a philosophical approach to sex (McConnachie, 2007; Vatsyayana, c. 300AD/2002). Written for elite, educated men who had entered the householder stage of development, the *Kamasutra* also contains sections on how to court unmarried virgin women, the correct behaviours in initiating sex with one's wife, and the appropriate manner for dealing with courtesans. It also suggests how to conduct extramarital affairs with the wives of other men and finally has a small chapter on using sexual aids during sex. Most importantly, Vatsyayana included some general observations about sexual desire and activity, which, perhaps, comprise the most significant section of his treatise. He established the proper context for gratifying one's sexual urges and how a man should create a lifestyle appropriate for pursuing pleasure. He also paid some attention to women's sexual desire and how best to satisfy it (McConnachie, 2007; Vatsyayana, c. 300AD/2002).

The common narrative is that Indian sexual liberalism was unaffected by most invading forces until the Victorian colonisation of India, which resulted in complete sexual oppression of Indians' liberal sexual attitudes (M. Gupta, 1994; O'Connor & Earnest, 2011), from which Indians have still not recovered. Even during Islamic rule in India, from the late tenth century to the mid-nineteenth century, the metropolitan areas of Islamic India were responsible for an outpouring of erotic poetry, art, and literature (Boyce, 2015; M. Gupta, 1994). Much of this body of literature was homoerotic in nature, suggesting that attitudes towards homosexuality during this time were positive, at least in aristocratic circles. However, it should be pointed out that Islam did bring some conservative practices to India, such as *purdah* (the seclusion of women from the eyes of men) (O'Connor & Earnest, 2011).

Scholarly work suggests that the consolidation of the British Raj was accompanied by an enforcement of puritanical Victorian sexual values onto Indian people (Chakraborty & Thakurata, 2013). Hinduism and its liberal sexual attitudes were regarded as barbaric by the British, who sought various legal reforms to enforce Victorian values on Indians. For instance, the British introduced legislation to criminalise sodomy, oral sex, the *hijra* population (transgendered individuals assigned male gender identity at birth), and the bodies of other sexual minorities (Boyce, 2015). The stigma that has come to be associated with these sexual behaviours and identities persists to the present day. For instance, homosexuality remains a criminal act under Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, where homosexuality is interpreted as an unnatural offence that is "against the order of nature".

Modern public attitudes towards sexuality can be further inferred through the massive, everyday problem that India has with sexual violence towards women (U. Manohar & Kline, 2014; A. Trivedi, 2014). Statistics from the National Crime Bureau of India revealed that over 34,000 rapes of women were reported in 2015, compared to over 24,000 in 2011. Overall, 327,394 crimes against women were reported in 2015, compared to 228,650 in 2011. These crimes include attempted rape, kidnapping/abduction, dowry deaths, and cruelty by husbands and their relatives (National Crime Bureau of India, 2016). However, women are unlikely to speak up and, therefore, crimes against them are highly under-reported (Tahhan, 2016). Public harassment of women, by one man or a group of men, is also common, and is known as "eve-teasing". This involves "leering, catcalling… to the more menacing exposure of sexual organs, public masturbation, and physical intrusions such as 'accidental' brushes, violent groping or even hitting women" (Misri, 2017, p. 305). This practice, if tolerated, is said to lead to greater degrees of sexual violence (Misri, 2017; Natarajan, 2016; Talboys et al., 2017).

Although the contributors of sexual violence are complex, it seems that the Indian media has had a huge impact on socialising Indian people to gender roles (I. Trivedi, 2014). In particular, the lack of positive sexual depiction and the overabundance of sexual assault depictions, especially in India's film industry, are problematic (Brook, 2014). All film content must be approved by censorship boards before it can be viewed by consumers. Consensual sexual relations are often not depicted in Indian films; on the other hand, scenes depicting sexual assault were commonly depicted in film (Kakar, 1990). Some have argued that the Indian film industry must own up to its role in inciting sexual violence in India, because it normalises harassment of women as a way of expressing love (Brook, 2014; Jamkhandikar, 2017; U. Manohar & Kline, 2014; Ramasubramanian & Oliver, 2003). Women are also usually viewed through the male gaze and are frequently depicted as sex objects who do not really mean "no" when they reject sexual or romantic advances (Brook, 2014). It is clear from

these above examples—both legal and social—that sexuality in modern India is a fraught and complex topic.

1.6 The Indian Family System

The hierarchical nature of the Indian family is also necessary to contextualise attitudes towards partner selection. Traditionally, the Indian family system is defined by collectivism, hierarchical relationships, and patriarchal dominance (M. Gupta, 1994; Medora, 2003; Naratadam, 2005; O'Connor & Earnest, 2011; Prakash & Singh, 2014; Sodowsky & Carey, 1987a; Sonpar, 2005). Older men are the heads of their households and men are elevated in status compared to women (Naratadam, 2005; Sonpar, 2005). Wives usually remain in the domestic sphere and conventionally do not work for a living in middle to upper-class households. Personal conduct reflects on the family at large; thus, individuals are expected to conduct themselves in ways that are always in service of family obligations (Naratadam, 2005; Sonpar, 2005; Wali, 2001).

Instead of the nuclear families that are common in Western countries, it is normal to see extended families living together in one house (Chadda & Deb, 2013; Wali, 2001). If that is not possible, it is common to see family members living close to one another. Elderly parents are meant to be looked after by their adult children and there is stigma surrounding placing one's ailing parents in a rest home. A man's duties to his parents override those he has to his wife (Sonpar, 2005), although his wife must respect and obey her husband above all. When a woman gets married, she leaves her family home to live with her husband and his parents, and no longer belongs to her birth family (Chadda & Deb, 2013; Naratadam, 2005). Women and children are expected to be obedient and docile, and their actions, especially those of women, reflect on the family's honour and reputation. As mentioned in Section 1.4, when a young adult comes of marriageable age, it falls to her/his parents and extended family members to seek potential spouses (Pasupati, 2002).

Although this familial structure persists in many areas of India, it is important to examine whether these traditional norms remain embedded for Indian families living overseas, particularly in Western nations. It is possible that Western values have influenced Indian immigrant families, resulting in changes in conventional values about family, marriage, and partner selection.

1.6.1 Indian Immigrant Families in the West

Research has been conducted by Indian scholars abroad about the implications of immigration for Indian cultural norms and traditions, and the adjustment and assimilation of

Indian immigrants in Western countries. It is important to consider this literature as it establishes the basis of Indian attitudes towards marriage/partner selection, love, and sexuality in Western contexts.

Most of the literature exploring acculturation of Indian immigrants does so in an American context, and may reflect a unique set of fears and worries for Indian immigrants in the United States. For instance, Bacon (1996) and Bhalla (2006) explain that Indian immigrants in the United States often fear the influence of Western culture on their children, which is viewed as corrupting and morally inferior. These fears may engender a deep-rooted desire in immigrants to preserve their culture in their children. Indeed, much of the literature on Indian immigrants in the United States discusses how first-generation Indians generally do not assimilate into American culture (Ahluwalia, 2002; Das Gupta, 1997; Dasgupta, 1998; Gingrich, 2004; Sodowsky & Carey, 1987a, 1987b), instead preferring to maintain a strong sense of Indian ethnic identity.

On the other hand, second-generation Indian immigrants frequently have different ideas than their elders about how to live in the United States, which generally causes intergenerational conflict (Das Gupta, 1997; Kurian, 1986; Sodowsky & Carey, 1987a; Stopes-Roe & Cochrane, 1989). First-generation Indian immigrants tend to have strong desires to preserve their cultural lifestyles (Dhruvarajan, 1993; Sodowsky & Carey, 1987a). This may result in a stagnation of Indian culture as immigrants attempt to preserve the precise elements of Indian culture that they have been exposed to, in fear that their children will not become effective cultural conduits (Dasgupta, 1997).

A considerable amount of the literature focuses on the sociocultural obstacles encountered by second-generation Indian immigrants. One of the crucial challenges that second-generation Indian immigrants frequently encounter is that of creating a cohesive sense of ethnic identity, which is well-documented in the literature (e.g., Ahluwalia, 2002; Das Gupta, 1997; Dasgupta, 1998; Pettys & Balgopal, 1998). The term 'borderlands', first coined by Latina writer Gloria Anzaldúa, has been applied to second-generation Indians to describe their identity challenges. Expected to behave in accordance with Indian culture at home, and then have to readjust to American norms to fit in outside of the home, many Indian-Americans perceive that they must straddle the borders of many different worlds in order to function normally. This challenge is further complicated by a discrepancy between first-generation parents' conceptualisation of 'Indian culture' and the reality of what Indian people in India actually do (Dasgupta, 1997). The product of this "museumization of practices" (Dasgupta, 1997, p. 580) often involves second-generation Indians feeling adrift and struggling to blend these various disparate elements into one coherent understanding of themselves and of the world.

Intergenerational conflict is most apparent when it comes to matters of the heart. As emphasised in the preceding sections, for Indians, it is not acceptable to have romantic relationships prior to marriage. However, the literature reports that second-generation youth want to participate in the dating practices of the West. This usually results in disagreements between parents and their teenaged children because dating behaviours are viewed as taboo (Kurian, 1986; C. Sinha, 2005). Scholars have surmised that the prohibition of dating is largely due to parents perceiving that dating is associated with premarital sex, a behaviour which, due to the sacrament of marriage, is also viewed with censure (Das Gupta, 1997; Dasgupta, 1998). Indeed, sexuality is usually not discussed openly in Indian households, and it is characteristic for there to be a lack of open communication between parents and their children about various topics, including dating, sexuality, and relationship expectations (Bacon, 1996; Kurian, 1986).

Second-generation immigrants report a variety of reasons for wanting to date, including wanting to fit in with their American friends and also wanting to choose their romantic partners by themselves (N. Manohar, 2008). Although many do date, it is common practice (especially for women) to hide these dating relationships (C. Sinha, 2005). When parents are aware of such relationships, they tend to feign ignorance, due to normative silence around sexual desire in Indian families (Naratadam, 2005). Second-generation individuals often reshape dating processes to alleviate parental fears. Where dating is usually seen as a way of having fun by American individuals from adolescence to early adulthood, second-generation Indians often use dating as a tool to find one's future spouse, often from a very young age (N. Manohar, 2008; C. Sinha, 2005). Thus, dating is characterised by exclusive long-term commitments, for both Indian teenagers and adults, as a way to diminish parental fears about the sexual nature of dating relationships. However, dating non-Indians (particularly if they are Black, Muslim, or White) remains heavily discouraged (N. Manohar, 2007). These dating restrictions carry over into marriage as well. Additionally, dating behaviours are not equally accessible for men and women. The literature widely reports that gendered double standards exist, where men are given the freedom to engage in any behaviour they wish, while women are subject to policing and monitoring of their bodies (Ahluwalia, 2002; Das Gupta, 1997; Dasgupta, 1998; Inman, Constantine, & Ladany, 1999; Kurian, 1986; Kurien, 1999; N. Manohar, 2008; Pettys & Balgopal, 1998; C. Sinha, 2005).

This literature suggests that dating is viewed by first-generation Indian parents as a betrayal of ethnic culture and indicates the depraved influence of Western culture on their second-generation children. These concerns may stem from the belief that sexuality should not intrude on Indian family life in any way.

1.6.2 Indians in New Zealand

There exists a minimal body of literature examining the experiences of Indian immigrants in New Zealand, despite the fact that the most recent census data indicates that Indian people comprise about 4% of New Zealand's total population (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). Existing research offers historical accounts tracking the trajectory of Indian migration and settlement patterns in New Zealand. Indians have been in New Zealand for well over a century, first arriving in very small numbers mainly from the provinces of Gujarat and Punjab (Friesen, 2008; Vallabh, 2013; Zodgekar, 1980). These first migrants were mainly men and were forced into labour/trade jobs because of the high costs of land. These jobs were usually in food retail, like greengrocers, dairies, and general stores. Women began arriving in the 1920s, before immigration restrictions were placed on Indian and Chinese immigrants (Bandyopadhyay, 2009; Friesen, 2008; Leckie, 2010). Immigrants from India and China were permitted only for family reunification purposes (Friesen, 2008). In 1921, only 671 Indians were living in New Zealand and constituted 0.5% of the total population (Bandyopadhyay, 2009).

The Immigration Act 1987 once again allowed Indian (and other Asian) migrants to enter New Zealand (Bandyopadhyay, 2009; Friesen, 2008). The military coups in Fiji, in particular, saw New Zealand receiving a massive influx of Indians from Fiji as they fled discrimination and persecution (Khan, 2011; Leckie, 2010). Historical accounts also explain that the increasing education of Indian migrants at tertiary levels saw them moving into professional and technical vocations (Leckie, 2010). However, racism and xenophobia were (and still are) problems frequently encountered by Indian immigrants (Bandyopadhyay, 2009; Friesen, Murphy, & Kearns, 2005; Leckie, 2010; Zodgekar, 2010).

Although Indians have a complex history of settlement in New Zealand, there is remarkably little focus on their experiences. There is a small body of work that looks at occupational outcomes for Indian migrants (Nayar, 2005, 2009; Nayar, Hocking, & Giddings, 2012; Nayar, Hocking, & Wilson, 2007; Pio, 2005, 2007, 2008; Sterling & Nayar, 2013), and an even smaller amount examining therapeutic implications (Ahmad, Woolaston, & Patel, 2000; Nayar, Hocking, et al., 2007; Nayar, Tse, et al., 2007; Wali, 2001). Most of the existing research investigates Indian ethnic identity (usually of second- or third-generation immigrants) in New Zealand. Such studies tend to explore: the plurality of Indian and New Zealand ethnic identities experienced by these Indians, and their attempts to synthesise them; experiences of racism/discrimination related to finding a job; and intergenerational conflicts about 'un-Indian behaviours', like breaching gender roles, dating, smoking, and drinking (Friesen, 2008; Friesen et al., 2005; Fuchs, Linkenbach, & Malik, 2010; Gilbertson, 2007, 2010; Raza, 1997; Vallabh, 2013; G. Williams, 2010). However, there is no research, to my

knowledge, that focuses on interpersonal relationships or how the clash between 'traditional' Indian values and 'modern' New Zealand ones may impact on wellbeing in this population. Furthermore, there is little empirical understanding of Indian family dynamics, normative forms of partner selection (like arranged marriage), and cultural attitudes towards certain types of social relationships, particularly within a New Zealand context. As such, there seem to be clear gaps in scholarly knowledge about one of the fastest growing populations in New Zealand.

1.7 Research Questions

The previous sections of this chapter have established the context of marriage, sexuality, and partner selection from an Indian perspective. It is clear that, within this context, interethnic relationships are problematic for several reasons. Firstly, the nature of an interethnic relationship means that it is not sanctioned by the family. An Indian person who has chosen to be in an interethnic relationship has done so, not only without his/her family having an active hand in creating the relationship, but also without the approval of his/her family. This is an issue because arranged marriage persists as the dominant form of partner selection in Indian society, and also for Indian immigrants living in the United States. Secondly, interethnic relationships breach normative rules about marrying within one's caste/culture, and may carry connotations of cultural/racial pollution.

At the same time, although there are theoretical resources describing the background of marriage, love, and sexuality in the Indian context, there is very little empirical research to support these resources. Furthermore, little is known about how attitudes towards these concepts have been influenced by other Western countries, apart from the United States. New Zealand, in particular, represents a unique Western context in which to investigate Indian immigrants' attitudes towards love, marriage, and sexuality, because those immigrants do not always come to New Zealand directly from India. Instead, they often come from other places as well, notably Fiji and South Africa. Additionally, New Zealand is a unique Western context wherein the indigenous Māori culture still strongly influences the dominant culture. As such, I have proposed three research questions to guide this inquiry:

- What are the discourses evident in the attitudes and perceptions of Indian adults in New Zealand regarding love, romantic relationships, interethnic intimacy, and partner selection?
- What discourses do Indian adults in heterosexual, interethnic romantic relationships draw on in their narratives of their experiences of their romantic relationships?

- How do hegemonic discursive practices limit and/or enable the possibilities for action for Indian adults in heterosexual, interethnic romantic relationships?

1.8 Structure and Organisation of this Thesis

This thesis has a somewhat unconventional structure, because the chapter on the philosophical stance of this thesis precedes the literature review. This choice was made because the feminist-poststructuralist approach of this project influences the structure of the literature review. This idea is explained further below.

Chapter Two explains the philosophical and theoretical foundations of this research. This inquiry is underpinned by a feminist-poststructuralist approach; accordingly, both poststructuralist and feminist schools of thought are presented and evaluated in this chapter. This project is influenced by the work of Michel Foucault, although his theoretical resources are not viewed as central to this thesis. In particular, I draw on Foucault's understandings of discourse, power, resistance, and genealogy to conceptualise my work. My exact approach to this research emphasises the 'feminist' aspect of my chosen methodology, given the prominence I have given to concepts like gender, race, and power. This chapter explains my consideration of how to appropriately synthesise feminist and poststructuralist ideas in order to adequately deconstruct assumptions that are taken for granted while also being concerned with inequality and power imbalances.

Chapter Three constitutes the literature review of this research inquiry. It follows the chapter on the philosophical foundations because there are concepts that are necessary to understand in that chapter, in order to better comprehend the structure of the literature review. Chapter Three is particularly concerned with discourses of interethnic intimacy in the academic literature. It outlines the causes and consequences of interethnic intimacy and briefly describes the history of interethnic intimacy in New Zealand. In light of this literature, this chapter concludes by fully explaining the rationale behind this research and by restating the research questions.

Chapter Four describes the methods used to conduct this research project. It explains the two phases, Study 1 and Study 2, used to answer my research questions. Chapters Five and Six explore the findings that emerged from Study 1 and address the first of the research questions listed above. In particular, these two chapters examine the competing sexuality discourses that were prevalent in participants' discussions of love, marriage, and partner selection in the Indian perspective. These chapters also discuss other hegemonic discourses of partner selection, like monogamy.

Chapters Seven and Eight investigate the findings that emerged from Study 2, which focuses on the experiences of Indian adults in heterosexual, interethnic romantic relationships in New Zealand. In particular, these chapters demonstrate how participants deployed certain discourses about homogamy to justify their relationships and to protect themselves from external invalidation. The problematisation of race, gender, and sexuality of interethnic relationships is also explored. Finally, Chapter Nine synthesises the findings that emerged from the overall doctoral project and discusses how this project contributes to existing knowledge. Additionally, this chapter comments on the overall significance of this research and discusses this project's limitations, recommendations, and suggestions for future research.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the research problem that is the focus of this thesis. The background of this project has been explored by explaining the cultural and religious significance of partner selection from an Indian/Hindu perspective. Moreover, this chapter has outlined traditional views towards marriage and sexuality and has further described the structure of conventional Indian families. Literature has been introduced in order to describe some of the ways in which these families have adapted to Western settings. Finally, the research questions of this inquiry have been presented and the structure of this thesis has been outlined.

The following chapter will provide a thorough explanation of the feminist-poststructuralist approach to this research and will justify why such an approach was chosen to explore these research questions.

Chapter Two: Philosophical Foundations

This chapter will outline the philosophical and methodological foundations of this research. A conscious decision was made to discuss these topics first, prior to exploring the literature constituting the field of interethnic intimacy. This is because the epistemological underpinnings are crucial to understanding the structure of the literature review found in Chapter Three of this thesis. As such, the discussion that follows will introduce, explain, and evaluate the usefulness of the research paradigm chosen for this inquiry: feminist-poststructuralism. This discussion will include development of key poststructuralist and feminist theories and concepts, as well as elucidation of the Foucauldian ideas used in this study.

In order to understand feminist-poststructuralism, it is important to first form an understanding of the two major theoretical positions that have been synthesised to form this paradigm. Therefore, poststructuralist theories will first be described in detail.

2.1 European Philosophy in the Twentieth-Century: A Glimpse of Structuralism and Poststructuralism

Poststructuralism encompasses a diverse range of theories that refuse to be coherently defined (Ehlers, 2016; Gavey, 1989, 1990; Weedon, 1987). Poststructuralist theories were first developed as a reaction against structuralist schools of thought (Leavy, 2007). While a detailed discussion of structuralism is beyond the scope of this thesis, a brief explanation is important in order to envision poststructuralism.

2.1.1 Structuralism: Universal Systems of Language and Meaning

Structuralist theories envision the world as being constructed of unobservable, hidden structures that underlie social phenomena (McHoul & Grace, 1993). First advanced by scholars such as the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (Bouissac, 2010) and the structural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, structuralism propagates the notion that everything that can be observed is the product of underlying, invisible social structures that are universal and unchanging (Ashcroft, 2007; McHoul & Grace, 1993; Sarup, 1983; J. Williams, 2006). For instance, Lévi-Strauss theorised that universal patterns and processes can be observed across all cultures (A. Jones, 1997), and that these systems of cultural behaviours (e.g., ritual behaviours, marriage systems, food culture, etc.) were directly reflective of human thought and language (Sarup, 1983). As such, all phenomena are interrelated; that is, no entity is

isolated or independent of others. The meaning of any such entity is incomplete without the consideration of other entities and structures that it is related to (Sarup, 1983).

Language is an essential concept in any structuralist worldview (Ashcroft, 2007), and is viewed as a system of meanings (Belsey, 2002). In a vast over-simplification of de Saussure's arguments, he argued that the relationship between a *sign* (a spoken or written word) and its *signified* (the meaning of the spoken or written word) was arbitrary; signs develop meaning through their relationships with other signs (Belsey, 2002; Bouissac, 2010; Danaher, Schirato, & Webb, 2000; Fischer & Bristor, 1994; Joseph, 2015; Weedon, 1987). There is no formalised agreement between speakers of a language about which signs are associated with certain meanings; rather it is implicit (Bouissac, 2010). Thus, the meaning of language becomes clear due to its structural relationships between signs, or words (Bouissac, 2010; Danaher et al., 2000; Fischer & Bristor, 1994).

However, while structuralist theories are useful for their consideration of deeper underlying systematic structures that produce reality (Danaher et al., 2000), they have also been criticised for a number of important shortcomings. Firstly, due to the structuralist notion of unchanging, deeper structures that are the foundation of all human experience (A. Jones, 1997; S. Mills, 2003), critics suggested that structuralism did not give any importance to the contribution of historical and sociocultural factors in the production of human culture. Secondly, these unchanging and deeper hidden structures also require our samples of participants to be homogeneous and, therefore, usually produces generalisability in results (Van Ness Sheppard, 2013). While this ability to generalise is often a strength of quantitative research, the focus of this research is to examine the heterogeneity of experiences as a way to investigate the discursive structures that participants draw on. Therefore, a structuralist approach was regarded as unsuitable for this research.

A number of French scholars, as a result not only of these shortcomings of structuralism, but also due to other historical events occurring in France at the time (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008; Danaher et al., 2000; S. Mills, 1997), began to develop ideas that refuted the key concepts of structuralist theories (S. Mills, 2003). These theories are referred to as poststructuralism and were explored in order to determine more effective ways of enacting political action and change (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008). Poststructuralism will be discussed further below, with a focus on the work of Michel Foucault.

2.2 Poststructuralism: The Rejection of the Absolute

Poststructuralist philosophies are united by their refutation of the idea that there are any absolute or stable truths about knowledge and reality (Barrington, 2008; Fischer & Bristor,

1994; Gavey, 1989, 1990; Leavy, 2007; H. McLaren, 2009; S. Mills, 2003). Knowledge is constantly being disrupted—it is fluid, transient, unfixable, unstable, and always changing (Baxter, 2003; Gavey, 1989; Weedon, 1987). The notion of arriving at a secure foundation of knowledge is dismissed in poststructuralism (Barrington, 2008; Fischer & Bristor, 1994; Leavy, 2007; H. McLaren, 2009), given the belief that we strive to work against and question assumptions, values, and beliefs that have been established as settled truths (Barrett, 2005).

This basic theme runs through most, if not all, of the major poststructuralist works. Theorists like Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Juliet Kristeva, and Hélène Cixous worked to undermine the idea of absolute knowledge through deconstructing and transforming it, in order to overturn those 'common-sense', ubiquitous notions which may, unknown to most individuals, unwittingly impose violence and inequality to certain groups of people on the basis of particular socioeconomic characteristics, such as sex, gender, age, race, socioeconomic status, and so on (Barrett, 2005; Barrington, 2008; Leavy, 2007; S. Mills, 2003; Weedon, 1987; J. Williams, 2006).

A brief note is necessary here to distinguish between poststructuralism and postmodernism, given that the two movements overlap in many areas and it is often difficult for theorists to clearly separate the two (Agger, 1991; Fawcett, 1998). This attempt to differentiate is further complicated by the fact that several poststructuralist theories have significantly influenced the postmodernist movement (Fox, 2014) and by how some theorists (e.g., Foucault) have been categorised as poststructuralist in one moment and postmodernist the next. Both movements reject structuralist and positivist conceptualisations of the world (Agger, 1991; Fox, 2014). Contemporary scholars suggest that it is possible to draw a line in the sand by defining poststructuralism as a theory concerned with language, power, and knowledge, whereas postmodernism might be said to be more involved with examining history, culture, and society, although both theories reject totalising narratives and ideologies that claim to be the established truth (Agger, 1991; Fox, 2014).

2.2.1 Language and Experience

As with structuralism, language—and its relationship to experience—is a concern at the heart of the poststructuralist endeavour (Barrett, 2005; A. Jones, 1997; Weedon, 1987). Language is considered to constitute the building blocks of social reality (Gavey, 1989; Weedon, 1987) and is perceived as *not* being expressive and transparent, directly reflective of reality (Barrett, 2005; Baxter, 2003; Gavey, 1989; S. Mills, 1997; Weedon, 1987). Rather, language constructs reality; the way in which we use language to create meaning from our experiences is a reflection not of the experience itself, but rather, of the linguistic, cultural, and social contexts bound up in that language (H. McLaren, 2009). As such, language is never

neutral—it is social and political, always situated in historicity (Weedon, 1987). Furthermore, the meaning of language is, again, never fixed (Barrett, 2005; A. Jones, 1997)—all texts can be, therefore, subject to multiple readings and continuous interpretation and re-interpretation (Blaise, 2005; Gavey, 1989; Weedon, 1987).

These ideas about the rejection of absolutes and the propagation of unstable forms of knowledge are reasonably consistent across the myriad of poststructuralist theories, and also applies to the poststructuralist concept of experience. Poststructuralist theories reject the notion of one absolute reality, in lieu of favouring multiple realities. These realities are constituted by discourses, rather than people's reports of their experiences (Ashcroft, 2007; Baxter, 2002a; Weedon, 1987). Here is where it differs from constructionism (Davies & Banks, 1992). Where constructionists might say that an experience of an event directly reflects an individual person's reality and provides insight into their social world, poststructuralism denies that any individual experience has inherent meaning and can be an authentic reflection of that person's reality (Ashcroft, 2007; Crotty, 1998; Davies & Banks, 1992; Gavey, 1989; Weedon, 1987). This is not to say that poststructuralists deny the very existence of experience (A. Jones, 1997; S. Mills, 1997). Rather, they assert that experiences cannot exist independently of the ways in which the meaning of these experiences are constituted by language (Gavey, 1989; Weedon, 1987). That is to say, no one ever creates "authentic" meaning from any single experience (Ashcroft, 2007; Davies & Banks, 1992) because how we create meaning is always rooted in the *discourses* of the time (Gavey, 1989; S. Mills, 1997; Weedon, 1987), a term which will be developed in further detail below. Thus, language and experience are rooted in the contextual conditions of the time (Weedon, 1987).

2.2.2 Subjectivity

While poststructuralists assert that individuals do not actively create meaning from experiences, they claim that individuals do choose to take up *subject positions* (Barrington, 2008; Davies & Banks, 1992; Gavey, 1989). Instead of theorising about a rational, coherent self that is agentic and in control, poststructuralism decentres the self (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008; Baxter, 2003; Fischer & Bristor, 1994; Gavey, 1989, 1990; S. Mills, 1997; Weedon, 1987). It argues that individuals are subject to shared cultural narratives (Barrett, 2005) and that this subjectivity is "constantly in process" (Davies & Banks, 1992, p.2).

For poststructuralists, subjectivity is an epistemological position that broadly refers to the notion that the self (or rather, the *subject*) is fragmented, inconsistent, and contradictory (Fischer & Bristor, 1994; Gavey, 1989; Jackson, 2001; S. Mills, 1997; Weedon, 1987). Individuals position themselves in different roles at different times in different places, according to the discourses that are in play (Ashcroft, 2007; Aston, Price, Kirk, & Penney,

2011; Barrett, 2005; Baxter, 2002a). These roles are called *subject positions* and allow for the idea that people act, think, and speak in inconsistent and contradictory ways (S. Mills, 1997). This subjectivity is always constituted by language and discourse (Alcoff, 1988; Gavey, 1989; Leavy, 2007; Weedon, 1987).

Subject positions are discussed variably in the literature. Wetherell (1998, p. 400) speaks of these positions in terms of a "portfolio" that individuals can readily access, selecting those they wish to take up, and taking these positions forward to other conversations. Other scholars disagree with this idea as it suggests that the subject positions that can be accessed are limitless and transferable across social contexts (Baxter, 2002a; Weedon, 1987). Instead, they argue that subject positions are confined according to the available discourses that individuals have access to at a certain time in a certain place (Barrett, 2005; Baxter, 2002a). One can position oneself in relation to a discourse only in terms of the subject positions that are constituted by that (and other related) discourses (Barrett, 2005; Gavey, 1989; Weedon, 1987).

A number of writers have expressed criticism of poststructuralism's stance on subjectivity because it decentres the individual and denies that individuals can be authentic authors of experience (Baxter, 2003; A. Jones, 1997; S. Mills, 1997). It rejects the possibility of a rational, controlled self who is an active agent of thought and behaviour in the world (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008; Fischer & Bristor, 1994; A. Jones, 1997; Weedon, 1987). However, it is worth pointing out that the idea of a rational self is derived from the liberal humanist tradition—a hegemonic discourse—that has dominated mainstream Western psychology and culture for decades (Danaher et al., 2000; Gavey, 1989; S. Mills, 1997; Weedon, 1987). Liberal humanism does not account for how individuals often behave inconsistently and irrationally, which may be a product of taking up different subject positions over time (Gavey, 1989; S. Mills, 1997). It also does not recognise that people may vary in their cognitive, emotional, and behavioural patterns from moment to moment—which is a key strength of poststructuralism.

The feminist-poststructuralist paradigm in this study embraces the poststructuralist commitment to questioning absolute truths, particularly where they concern truths about interethnic intimacy and values and attitudes towards love, sexuality, and romantic relationships from an Indian perspective. The philosophical paradigm used here also draws on some of the theoretical resources provided by Michel Foucault, one of the primary figures in poststructuralist history, which will be discussed below. However, Foucauldian theory is not regarded here as central to this research project, but instead is used to articulate some of the phenomena to emerge from data analysis.

2.3 Michel Foucault

Known as the "philosopher of discontinuity" (Barrington, 2008, p. 27), the work of Michel Foucault continues to have widespread impact across disciplines of knowledge, due to the unorthodox and revolutionary nature of his theories (Danaher et al., 2000; S. Mills, 2003). Foucault has simultaneously been praised and criticised for the intellectual developments that he contributed to philosophy and history, particularly for his reframing of the concepts of power, discourse, and knowledge (Danaher et al., 2000; Leavy, 2007; S. Mills, 1997). Foucault adamantly insisted that his ideas were not to be used as theories or straight applications of methodology; rather, he advocated the use of his ideas as a toolkit (Bourke & Lidstone, 2015; Foucault, 1974, as cited in O'Farrell, 2005; H. McLaren, 2009). In line with the notion of the toolkit, I have decided to draw on the Foucauldian concepts of most value to this research. These key concepts will be discussed extensively below. However, it should be emphasised that although many of Foucault's ideas are used in this research inquiry, feminist-poststructuralism remains the central philosophical focus of this project and is the lens used to analyse the data.

2.3.1 Discourse

Prior to Foucault, one might understand the term *discourse* as that which pertains to any act of speech, conversation, or written text (Barrington, 2008; McHoul & Grace, 1993; S. Mills, 1997). Foucault, however, reconceptualised the term to mean something that was inherently related to the functioning, operation, and effects of power (Bourke & Lidstone, 2015; Gavey, 1989; H. McLaren, 2009; S. Mills, 1997; Weedon, 1987).

Discourses may be thought of as areas of social knowledge that enact power relations, but go well beyond the realm of disciplinary subjects—such as the humanities, the social sciences, the physical sciences, the biological sciences, and so on—which may be thought of as being arbitrarily defined (Gavey, 1990). For Foucault, discourses did not just encompass particular truths or forms of knowledge, but also ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving (Fulton, 2015). A discourse, then, imposes limits on (but also allows access to) the availability of certain ways of being (Barrington, 2008; Cheek, 2008; S. Mills, 1997, 2003). This is because discourses are products and representations of social, cultural, political, and historical institutions (Danaher et al., 2000; Fischer & Bristor, 1994; S. Mills, 1997; Weedon, 1987). As such, our actions, thoughts, and emotions are the expressions of both the constraints and possibilities created by the socio-historical, the political, and the institutional contexts that we are situated in (Aston et al., 2011; Fischer & Bristor, 1994; S. Mills, 1997, 2003). Everything that we do—how we react to certain events, how we imagine and think, how we position ourselves in any situation, how we perceive our realities, and how we create

meaning from our experiences—is both restricted and enabled by the discourses of our time (Barrington, 2008; H. McLaren, 2009; S. Mills, 1997, 2003; Weedon, 1987).

This idea of limitation and permission implies that power relations are in some way important to the idea of discourse, and indeed, it is not just significant, but innate to the way that discourses operate (Bourke & Lidstone, 2015; H. McLaren, 2009; S. Mills, 1997; Weedon, 1987). In order to understand this, we must examine Foucault's ideas on the discontinuity in the history of ideas. Foucault, in his work *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, developed the argument that the popular notion of continuity in history was inaccurate. Rather, history—in particular, the history of knowledge, ideas, and scientific change— demonstrates that there is discontinuity between discourses (Barrington, 2008; Foucault, 2002a; S. Mills, 1997, 2003). History does not unfold in a linear progression of evolving ideas, where causes lead to effects, which lead to a gradual advancement of knowledge propelled forward by an indifferent, detached quest for truth (Danaher et al., 2000; McHoul & Grace, 1993; S. Mills, 1997).

Instead, there are often disruptions and discontinuities that occur in transitions between what Foucault referred to as *epistemes* (Danaher et al., 2000; S. Mills, 1997). An *episteme* refers to an historical period that is organised around the discourses that are in circulation at the time, which can include normative assumptions, beliefs, values, expectations, and lifestyles (Ashcroft, 2007; Danaher et al., 2000; Foucault, 2002b; Fulton, 2015; S. Mills, 2003). As such, an *episteme* represents the 'conditions of possibility' necessary for discourses to circulate; in other words, the conditions necessary for some worldviews and ways of thinking to be possible, which might very well be impossible during another *episteme* (Danaher et al., 2000). Several *epistemes* can be in effect at the same time and can overlap and interact with one another. In the same way, discourses can overlap, interact, and be in effect simultaneously (Cheek, 2008).

A good example of this theory in Foucault's work is his monograph, *The Birth of the Clinic*, which traces the evolution of medical development, particularly the development of the *clinique*, or the teaching hospital. Rather than seeing this modern development as being rooted in the establishment of an empirical system that was based in positivist scientific discourse promoting a gradual understanding in the medical profession of the human body, Foucault viewed the shift towards empiricism as a disruption of medical knowledge. He attributed this shift to changes in practice—namely, medical practices surrounding the diagnosis and treatment of disease—and also the conditions of possibility (which could include the social, the political, and the economic) led to a reorganisation and restructuring of medical knowledge and discourse (Foucault, 1963/2003).

Returning to the innateness of power relations in discourses, it can be seen that certain conditions of possibility (which, as noted, include the contextual specificities of the time) allow for the circulation of particular discourses. This means that not all discourses will carry the same weight in a particular society at a particular point in time (Bourke & Lidstone, 2015). Some are more favoured than others, as they can reinforce the interests of particular groups or institutions (Barrington, 2008; Danaher et al., 2000; Weedon, 1987). Therefore, some discourses carry more authority than other discourses, and prescribe the truths or the knowledges that are available (Ashcroft, 2007; Cheek, 2008; Foucault, 1978; Gavey, 1989, 1990; Weedon, 1987). An example of this, returning to the medical discursive field, are discourses of Western medicine and alternative medicine (Danaher et al., 2000; Fairclough, 1992; S. Mills, 1997). In Western society, discourses of Western medicine, partly due to their empiricism, are hegemonic; they serve the interests of multiple institutions and are reinforced by those same institutions that are best served by them (Danaher et al., 2000; Weedon, 1987). The forms of knowledge put forth by these discourses are asserted as absolute truths (Danaher et al., 2000; S. Mills, 1997). Discourses about alternative medicines differ in the authority they carry. Alternative medicines are those medicines that claim to have healing properties, but which are not supported by evidence generated by using the scientific method of empiricism (Danaher et al., 2000). Alternative medicine discourses thus hold less weight in Western society, primarily due to the hegemony of scientific discourse, to the point of being excluded by Western medicine discourse (Danaher et al., 2000; Fairclough, 1992; S. Mills, 1997).

The question of the 'true' efficacy of either of these discourses is not at stake here (A. Jones, 1997; S. Mills, 1997). In poststructuralism, we are not necessarily concerned with whether Western medicine truly is more effective in the treatment of illness than alternative medicine (S. Mills, 1997). The point is one of how biases in knowledge production can mean that one discourse is favoured over the other (Barrett, 2005; Foucault, 1980; A. Jones, 1997; S. Mills, 1997). Discourses of Western medicine are dominant because they follow hegemonic practices about how knowledge should be produced and reproduced, to the point of excluding other forms of knowledge and how they are produced (Danaher et al., 2000). Therefore, hegemonic discourses give the illusion of being 'natural' or 'common-sense' (Barrington, 2008). This process of knowledge generation—and knowledge dissemination— itself, is governed by power relations (Barrett, 2005; S. Mills, 1997; Weedon, 1987). In order to fully understand this, it is necessary to explain Foucault's concept of power-knowledge.

2.3.2 Power-Knowledge and Resistance

A discussion of Foucault's notion of discourse is incomplete without an examination of his concept of power-knowledge (S. Mills, 1997, 2003). Foucault challenged the idea that power is a possession that is wielded by individuals, groups, and institutions in order to dominate or manipulate other individuals or groups (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008; Fulton, 2015; S. Mills, 1997, 2003; Oksala, 2016). This notion of a top-down, coercive approach to power was incomplete for Foucault (Barrington, 2008; S. Mills, 2003). Instead, he reconceptualised power as a force (Foucault, 1978), which is best summarised here:

> Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application. (Foucault, 1980, p. 98)

Foucault, then, viewed power as a productive force, whereby human beings, groups, or public institutions could not wield power in and of themselves, but could merely function as channels for it (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008; Bourke & Lidstone, 2015; S. Mills, 1997). While power can be enacted in negative and oppressive ways, it is also a necessary and productive force, given that it is responsible for producing knowledge and truth (Ashcroft, 2007; Cheek, 2008; Fischer & Bristor, 1994; S. Mills, 1997, 2003). Thus, power both restricts and enables (Cheek, 2008; S. Mills, 1997, 2003). Power relations thus operate through a network of actions, and work in specific, localised, and unstable ways (S. Mills, 2003). It is not just channelled at the level of the state, but also operates at local and highly individualised levels. Power is at once everywhere and constantly changing from moment to moment (Foucault, 1978). As such, it is possible to be simultaneously 'powerful' and 'powerless' (Baxter, 2002a, 2002b; Foucault, 1978; Francis, 1999; Gavey, 2011; Kamada, 2009).

Power and knowledge, in the Foucauldian view, are intimately entwined with one another and cannot exist without each other (Cheek, 2008; Danaher et al., 2000; S. Mills, 2003). There can be no recognisable forms of knowledge or truth without the exercise of power, while power itself is a function of knowledge and truth (Fischer & Bristor, 1994). Whatever knowledge we have is affected by the dominant modes of knowledge production; that is, power struggles between various groups and institutions affect which forms of

knowledge production are deemed authoritative and legitimate, which again influences what knowledge is circulated as truth (Danaher et al., 2000; Fischer & Bristor, 1994; S. Mills, 1997, 2003; Weedon, 1987). Thus, the information that is available to us is influenced by institutional interests and is, therefore, political, and is never neutral (Barrington, 2008; Cheek, 2008; Fischer & Bristor, 1994; Gavey, 1989, 1990; S. Mills, 2003; Weedon, 1987). Knowledge, in turn, legitimises how power is exercised through these institutions and groups (Danaher et al., 2000; S. Mills, 2003).

An example of this in Foucault's work can be seen in *The History of Sexuality: The Will to Knowledge*, where he demonstrates how the (originally Christian) practice of confession is an example of power-knowledge in action (S. Mills, 1997, 2003). The confession is central to how Foucault understood power (Foucault, 1978; S. Mills, 1997, 2003) and has associations with atonement for one's sins. The confessional process involves speaking to a person of authority about one's past in order to atone for it (S. Mills, 2003) and is seen in practice, not just in the church, but also in other contexts, such as in therapy (S. Mills, 1997). Power relations are thus present between the confessor and the one being confessed to (Fadyl & Nicholls, 2013; O'Rourke & Pitt, 2007). Although confessors reveal their own experiences with a mind to gain insight into themselves, in doing so, they render themselves vulnerable to the control of others (Bastalich, 2009; S. Mills, 1997). In this way, there is a production of truth that occurs. The knowledge that is produced from such a confession is an enactment of power relations between the confessor and the authorised individual who witnesses the confession. Such knowledge, in the process, legitimises the confessional practice itself as a dominant mode of knowledge production.

Discourses, then, are a perpetuation of power-knowledge (Gavey, 1989; Weedon, 1987). As Foucault succinctly phrased it, "Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it." (Foucault, 1978, p. 101). Through tracing the effects of discourse, not only can we examine the mechanisms and functions of power, but also the points of resistance within power relations. Furthermore, where there is power, there is also resistance, or the possibility of resistance (Barrington, 2008; Foucault, 1978; Gatenby & Hume, 2004; S. Mills, 1997, 2003). That is, any system of power relations has the innate property of being prone to criticism. Although scholars have argued that power, as it is discussed by Foucault, is too ubiquitous for any resistance against it to be meaningful and effective (Ashcroft, 2007; Francis, 1999; Oksala, 2016), in fact, Foucault argued that resistance to power could be achieved by questioning, undermining, and disrupting those institutional norms that are taken for granted. In such a way, resistance has the potential to be a powerful tool for political and social change (Pickett, 1996). Additionally, it should be understood that Foucault did not

view power and resistance as strictly oppositional to one another. Although resistance co-exists with power, the diffuse and productive nature of power means that it can often create its own means of resistance (Pickett, 1996; Thompson, 2003).

2.3.3 Disciplinary Power

In his volume, *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault discussed two mechanisms through which power can be exercised. In the first mode, sovereign power, a top-down approach to power is espoused, whereby power is wielded by a monarch to exact punishment upon criminals for their violations of the law. These punishments are typically performed by executioners directly onto the bodies of criminals in such a way that declares the visibility and potency of the sovereign's power. On the other hand, the second mechanism—disciplinary power—differs in that it is exercised throughout societal institutions in order to correct or restore the behaviours of deviants to a normative standard (Foucault, 1995). It is this conceptualisation of disciplinary power that is particularly relevant to this thesis, because it establishes a theoretical framework for understanding the ways in which individual subjects regulate their own behaviours and conform to certain standards, despite the lack of an overt punitive authority.

Unlike the methods of torture, pain, and execution used by sovereign modes of power to enact punishment, disciplinary power aims to correct deviant behaviour through different mechanisms: those that observe, train, exercise, and supervise individuals. In such rigorous training and constant supervision, disciplinary power aims to produce subjects that are docile and compliant (Foucault, 1995). Three main principles are required to enact disciplinary power, the first being that of hierarchical observation. Foucault explored how constant surveillance is necessary to coerce individuals into behaving in ways that conform to the rules and regulations that are in place. However, what distinguishes hierarchical observation from surveillance is that, instead of having one omniscient authority in charge of this surveillance of all subjects (which is deemed impossible), the responsibility of monitoring subjects is dispersed amongst several authority figures, who are ranked in terms of hierarchy. Thus, not only are there always authority figures in close proximity who are responsible for monitoring subjects, but the nature of the hierarchy means that these authority figures are also under surveillance by those higher up in the hierarchy. Foucault argued that such hierarchical observation is both "indiscreet" (because this surveillance of subjects is omnipresent and constantly vigilant) and "discreet" (because it is a silent mechanism that is rarely articulated and which subjects are not consciously aware of) (Foucault, 1995, p. 177).

The second principle, that of normalisation, is the process by which certain forms of behaviour come to be viewed as ideal, and which are subsequently normalised. This normalisation allows such behaviours to become ubiquitous and perceived as 'natural'. What this entails is a spectrum of possible behaviours ranging in their degree of alleged normalcy, where 'good/normal' behaviours and 'bad/abnormal' behaviours occupy each extreme. As such, the mechanism of normalisation rewards individuals who perform 'normal' behaviours while simultaneously punishing those who perform 'abnormal' behaviours—that is, any behaviour that departs from the norm. These punitive measures are meant to be corrective: subjects' abilities and natures are measured and ranked, and then compared to normal or proper forms of behaviour. Behaviours which do not meet the standard are punished, in order to bring future instances of behaviour into line with the ideal standard. Therefore, it is through repetitive training that individuals are corrected. Normalisation is a potent mechanism for social control by establishing homogeneity amongst subjects, but, as Foucault argued, also demarcates the differences between individuals in terms of how well they can conform to regulations (Foucault, 1995).

Finally, the third principle of examination combines hierarchical observation and normalising judgement and allows knowledge to be linked to power. Foucault argued that examination is the "'formalization' of the individual within power relations" (Foucault, 1995, p. 190); that is, the process through which subjects are transformed into docile objects. Through constant surveillance and the normalising gaze, subjects can be known, measured, ranked, and punished, which can potentially render all subjects visible. The possibility of being constantly under surveillance and, therefore, being visible means that power can be exercised over individuals. Examination is also a formalised process where knowledge about individuals is documented and collated into archives; in that way, institutions can exert power over subjects through the accumulation of knowledge collected from examinations without using force.

Foucault used the metaphor of the Panopticon prison to provide an example of how these principles of disciplinary power could manifest (Foucault, 1995). The Panopticon was an architectural penitentiary plan designed by the philosopher Jeremy Bentham and was a prime example of omniscient, omnipresent surveillance. In Bentham's plans, it was a circular structure with cells arranged around a central guard tower. In their cells, inmates would not be able to observe other inmates, nor would they be able to tell if they were being observed by those in the central guard tower. However, the implication was that they could be monitored at any time by those in the guard tower. The prospect of being monitored at any moment thus prompts inmates to regulate their own behaviours in ways that conform to appropriate standards. Indeed, there is not even a requirement for anyone to be occupying

the guard tower—merely the illusion of constant surveillance is sufficient for inmates to self-regulate and to self-discipline. Therefore, by establishing the visibility of subjects in spaces where they may be reviewed or observed at any point in time, the subjects themselves are prompted to self-discipline in order to avoid punishment.

2.3.4 Archaeology and Genealogy

Thus far, we have seen the Foucauldian notion of archaeology in action already, through his works *The Order of Things, The Birth of the Clinic,* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge.* However, a more concrete definition is necessary. Throughout his work, Foucault aimed to accomplish a historiography of discourse, whereby he examined how discourse emerges and exists. He referred to this method as archaeology, where the goal is to investigate discursive operations at one point in time, through examining texts (Bourke & Lidstone, 2015; Fulton, 2015; Leavy, 2007; S. Mills, 1997; Powers, 2013). However, he later developed this approach further, given that it did not account for how discourses evolve over time. Therefore, in order to examine *transitions* in discourse, he developed the genealogical method, which was based on a similar method developed by Friedrich Nietzsche (Danaher et al., 2000). This method is an important part of Foucauldian historical analysis as it focuses on not just how discourses develop within themselves over time, but also examines the transitions between discourses (Danaher et al., 2000; Powers, 2013). His work *Discipline and Punish* provides a good example of this method being used to examine how discursive practices surrounding discipline and punishment of criminal behaviour have changed over time (Foucault, 1995), while *The History of Sexuality* offers insights into the emergence and development of sexuality as a discourse over historical periods (Foucault, 1978). As such, genealogy is intrinsically related to historical change, as it attempts to situate discourses in their historical contexts, links them to other related discourses of the time, and places emphasis on their power mechanisms (Fulton, 2015; Powers, 2013; Rawlinson, 1987; Wetherell, 1998).

Thus far, the major Foucauldian concepts that have influenced this research have been explained in depth. These ideas have contributed to the feminist-poststructuralist paradigm used in this study, as well as to the methodology of discourse analysis that will be used to analyse the data. As such, these ideas will later be synthesised coherently when addressing discourse analysis. For now, however, poststructuralist concepts will be evaluated in terms of their strengths and weaknesses.

2.4 Criticisms and Strengths of Poststructuralist Thought

A number of criticisms have been made of poststructuralist theory, which are worth addressing here (Leavy, 2007). Many of these critiques, on the whole, are answerable, yet still highlight some inadequacies with poststructuralist theory that are important to consider. These considerations led to my realisation that poststructuralism, on its own, would not be a sufficient paradigm with which to conceptualise this research. Therefore, an inclusion of feminist thought, particularly for its political aims (Gavey, 1989; Weedon, 1987), was deemed necessary.

The first major criticism of poststructuralism is of its basic tenet—the rejection of absolute forms of knowledge. To reiterate, it is impossible to fix meaning permanently and to form generalisations (Baxter, 2002b; Blaise, 2005; Cheek, 2008; Francis, 1999; Gavey, 1990; Weedon, 1987), and to arrive at *truth* as most people understand it: something that is enduring and constant. In psychological research, this lack of absolutes can be highly problematic, given that psychological researchers are strongly encouraged to generalise. Those generalisations can take the form of finding patterns, similarities, and differences across our data, or of finding solutions that will work across the population that we are concerned with. A poststructuralist, however, is sceptical of such a cause, and calls such generalisations 'grand narratives' (Francis, 1999; Gavey, 1990; Leavy, 2007). Grand narratives are essentially discourses that have become dominant and prevail in society over other discourses (Baxter, 2002a; Leavy, 2007); any such discourse is then a "will to truth" (Foucault, 1970/1981, p. 55), whereby it claims to be absolute truth, to the point of excluding other competing discourses (Baxter, 2002b, 2003; Francis, 1999).

Furthermore, although the poststructuralist is interested in deconstructing discourses, there is no way of determining which discourse is 'true' (Barrington, 2008). As noted above, poststructuralists are not concerned with the efficacy of one discourse over others, but instead choose to investigate the forms of knowledge that are produced and circulated by discourses. Discourses are all relative to each other, and no one discourse is 'true' (Barrington, 2008; Baxter, 2008), because of the poststructuralist rejection of grand narratives and universal causes (Aitchison, 2000; Barrington, 2008; Baxter, 2002a, 2002b, 2003; Gavey, 1990; Leavy, 2007). What some critics have suggested is that this means there are no solutions to be discovered, no methods of enacting change—especially given that Foucault did not explicate a framework of analysing power and resistance (Oksala, 2016)—given that there are no conclusions about the nature of truth that we can form (Francis, 1999). Such an analysis of discourse and power, some scholars have proposed, can only lead to a "dead end" (Ashcroft, 2007, p. 29).

However, I would argue that we need not be concerned with the alleged irreconcilability between the impossibility of fixing meaning in poststructuralist research and the need to generalise for our research to be effective. The true strength of poststructuralist research is in its ability to examine power relations and its points of resistance (Barrington, 2008; Weedon, 1987), while allowing for a multiplicity of ideas, voices, complexities, and contradictions to emerge (Baxter, 2002a, 2002b, 2003; Gavey, 1989). While poststructuralism cannot support grand narratives and universal causes (Baxter, 2002a, 2002b, 2003; Gavey, 1990), this does not mean that its analysis of power is inert and ineffective. Foucault advocated that it should, indeed, be used to enact change, aimed at transforming, rather than emancipating (Baxter, 2003; Kamada, 2009).

The second major critique of poststructuralist thought lies in its anti-humanism (Gavey, 1989; Weedon, 1987). To recap the poststructuralist concept of subjectivity, poststructuralism decentres the importance of the self (Fischer & Bristor, 1994; Gavey, 1990), claiming that the concept of the self stems from the liberal humanist tradition in the West that advocates individuals as rational, consistent, and active agents in the world, who choose how to think, feel, and behave (Gavey, 1989; Weedon, 1987). Again, poststructuralists express scepticism regarding the agency of individuals and instead believe that individuals are produced by discursive cultural structures (Barrington, 2008). This specific terminology recognises the produced nature of identity, whereby individuals are subject to their contextual circumstances, rather than actively creating identity (Barrington, 2008). This subjectivity is inconsistent, transient, and contradictory (Barrett, 2005; Weedon, 1987).

However, some feminist scholars have asserted that this framework of identity devalues people and denies the way that people construct meaning from their experiences. In turn, it rejects the significance of women's experiences (Weedon, 1987). It is important to point out that there are several counter-critiques. Firstly, it conflates the disparate concepts of anti-humanism and anti-women. Anti-humanism rejects the idea that individuals are consistent and coherent agents all of the time, while to be anti-women implies a hatred or dislike of women and girls. Secondly, the anti-humanist endeavour does not deny that people's—particularly women's—experiences are important; rather, it points out that the liberal humanist agenda does not acknowledge how individuals are "both governed by and resist specific forms of power" (Weedon, 1987, p. 74). That is, the decentring of the self (or the subject) underlines the need to understand how individuals and their experiences are constituted by language and discourse (Barrington, 2008; Weedon, 1987).

Many of the criticisms of poststructuralist work, particularly that of Foucault, have arisen from feminist/critical critiques (Aitchison, 2000; Barrington, 2008; Baxter, 2003; Gatenby & Hume, 2004; Leavy, 2007; Oksala, 2016). Given that the paradigm underpinning

this research is feminist-poststructuralism, it may appear that poststructuralism is at odds with feminism. In order to clarify this dissonance further, a discussion of feminist theory will follow.

2.5 Feminism: A Political Project

Feminism is founded on the idea that sexual and gender differences ought to make no difference in political and social inclusion in everyday life (Barrington, 2008; Hawkesworth & Disch, 2016). In the same way that an individual's socioeconomic status, ancestral heritage, and ethnic categorisation ought not to be legitimate grounds upon which to exclude them from political life, the feminist movement began as a campaign to champion women's equal inclusion in the political and public spheres that were previously the purview of men only (Weedon, 1987). As such, feminism aims to resolve social inequalities that are based in gender differences (Barrington, 2008; McNay, 2016; Weedon, 1987).

Traces of feminist thought can be found in early periods of human history, such as in the ancient world (Hawkesworth & Disch, 2016). However, what is typically described as modern feminism has its roots in the democratic revolutions of the eighteenth century in Western societies (Hawkesworth & Disch, 2016), and has since branched out in its theoretical traditions from there. Some scholars conceive of feminist theory as having developed in 'waves', although this has been more recently critiqued (Cullen & Fischer, 2014; Hawkesworth & Disch, 2016). Distinctions between waves are often arbitrary, given that they frequently overlap, and further, describing feminism as having evolved in waves often misses out on some of the intersectional work done by feminist scholars (Cullen & Fischer, 2014; Hawkesworth & Disch, 2016). Even so, it is simplest to describe the main ideas of feminism's history in such waves, given that to fully explain feminist theories would go beyond the scope of this thesis.

The first wave of feminism can be historically placed in the mid-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries and reflects a growing dissatisfaction amongst many women and men at that time regarding gender inequalities (Ehlers, 2016; Hawkesworth & Disch, 2016). During this first wave, feminists campaigned to achieve equal rights for women with regards to contract and property rights, and also for political enfranchisement for women (R. Phillips & Cree, 2014). Furthermore, this period in feminist history marks championing legislation that would protect females from sexual exploitation: for example, the feminist movement protested for the criminalisation of incest, for an increase in the age of sexual consent, and for legislation that would protect women and young girls from working in prostitution (R. Phillips & Cree, 2014).

This earliest wave of Western feminism was predominated by basic democratic rights—that, in essence, claimed that men and women were the same, with the same capabilities and, therefore, they should have the same rights (Ehlers, 2016). However, the second wave of feminism, from the 1960s to the 1980s (Ehlers, 2016; Hawkesworth & Disch, 2016), began to posit that there were essential differences between men and women and that gender was the cornerstone of all oppression experienced by women (Grant, 2016). More upper- and middle-class (typically White) women, who had previously been confined to the role of stay-at-home mother and housewife, had started joining the workforce, which had an impact on their expectations. These changes in social roles contributed to the campaigns of the second wave of feminism, which included arguing for equal employment rights and rights to equal pay between men and women (Ehlers, 2016).

Moreover, many of these protests also centred around women's health (Browner, 2016; Grigg & Kirkland, 2016; Oksala, 2016). The advent of contraception for women gave way to campaigns surrounding reproductive rights, abortion, domestic violence, rape and sexual assault, and pornography and prostitution (Gavey, 2009; Grigg & Kirkland, 2016; Heberle, 2016). The purpose of these campaigns was to raise awareness of the issues at hand and to enact some form of political and social change (S. Mills, 1997). The mantra 'personal is political' was a key slogan of the time (Baxter, 2003; Grant, 2016; Hawkesworth & Disch, 2016; S. Mills, 1997), inferring that political and gender oppression was manifested in everyday interpersonal interactions.

This period of feminism also propagated several important notions that are worth addressing. Firstly, second-wave feminism is distinguished by the central idea that sex, gender, and sexuality are not biological and innate traits that every individual is born with (de Beauvoir, 2011; Ehlers, 2016; Hawkesworth & Disch, 2016). Rather, feminists argue that rather than being 'natural', gender identity and sexuality are political constructs which can vary according to the historical and sociocultural period (Ehlers, 2016; Hawkesworth & Disch, 2016; M. Mills, 2016). Secondly, unlike poststructuralism, feminism places great value on investigating women's experiences, as a way to demonstrate the challenges encountered by women in their day-to-day battles with patriarchy (Grant, 2016). Through privileging the experiences of women (over those of men), feminism aimed to identify the inequalities and alternative perspectives of women, where before, existing theories, truths, and ideologies were the products of men. As such, experience is an important tool for feminism in exploring and analysing women's issues and systems of oppression, such as patriarchy (Grant, 2016).

Having acknowledged feminism's emphasis on the social construction of sex and gender, second-wave feminism is limited by its focus on essentialism (Baxter, 2003; Hawkesworth & Disch, 2016) and what R. Phillips and Cree (2014, p. 940) refer to as "rigid

ideological parameters". First and foremost, second-wave feminist theories suggested that women, collectively, were oppressed, given the patriarchal nature of society where men were always in dominant positions of power (Baxter, 2003; Ehlers, 2016; Govender, 2012; Grant, 2016; Hawkesworth & Disch, 2016; Weedon, 1987). This fundamental assumption divided men and women on either side of a boundary, which can be demonstrated in the various derivations of feminist theory that developed during this time. For example, radical feminism suggests that in the dominant patriarchal system, which prevails in most cultures globally, women are viewed as the "other", and have thus traditionally suffered from marginalisation (Grant, 2016). As such, radical feminists believe that society needs to be radically reordered so as to eradicate patriarchy and all forms of male supremacy entirely, and that women ought to be in positions of power instead (Ehlers, 2016; C. Montoya, 2016). This position attempts to group women into an homogenous category by positing that there is an essential nature of womanhood and that women ought to come first (Ehlers, 2016; Francis, 1999).

On the other hand, socialist feminism, while it does not support the claim that patriarchy is responsible for the oppression of women, does combine aspects of radical feminism with Marxist theory (Bergeron, 2016; Buchanan, 2010). Socialist feminism argues that economic, capitalist, and class systems are the source of gender inequalities between women and men, whereby women are subjugated due to men's superior wealth, power, and social status, and where women produce cheap labour through household work (Bergeron, 2016; Ehlers, 2016). This is because men have traditionally worked in the public sphere, which is rewarded in a capitalist society. However, work that has traditionally been the domain of women—such as domestic work—is not rewarded by our society (Bergeron, 2016; Chowdhury, 2016; McNay, 2016). Therefore, socialist feminists propose that this imbalance of power and wealth gives men dominance over women in society.

While radical and socialist feminism have two very different ideas about the source of women's oppression, it is clear that, at heart, they both carry the underlying message that women have traditionally been powerless while men have been powerful, and that this imbalance of power relations must be corrected (Hawkesworth & Disch, 2016). This notion, therefore, suggests that there are inherent differences between men and women (Alcoff, 1988; Weedon, 1987). This idea can be seen in other forms of second-wave feminism; for instance, cultural feminism argues that differences in male and female biology have given rise to gendered social behaviour (women are more nurturing, men are more aggressive) (Alcoff, 1988; Ehlers, 2016). In contrast, liberal feminism states that differences in social behaviour between men and women are not biologically founded, but rather due to the environmental conditions—men and women have different opportunities and resources and are exposed to differing societal norms about gender (Oksala, 2016). While these theories seem vastly

opposed in how they view women's oppression (Govender, 2012), in truth, they are positing the same idea: that there is a true nature of women, and that there is a true nature of men—and most significantly, that men and women have contrasting true natures (Alcoff, 1988; Ehlers, 2016; Gavey, 1989; Weedon, 1987).

This emphasis on essentialism and binary categorisations is a major limitation of second-wave feminism, which many feminist scholars have reacted against (Alcoff, 1988; Baxter, 2003; Ehlers, 2016; Hawkesworth & Disch, 2016). This has led to the development of other feminist intellectual ideas, commonly referred to as third-wave feminism. This wave of feminism is largely identifiable due to its incorporation of postmodernist/poststructuralist ideas (McNay, 2016), such as the idea that there may not be a 'true essence' of women or men; that, in fact, there are innumerable differences between the experiences of women, as there are with the experiences of men (Alaimo, 2016). Third-wave feminism suggests that it may be possible for both men and women to be simultaneously powerful and powerless (Gavey, 2011; Kamada, 2009). Furthermore, third-wave feminism argues that feminist projects should include men and women (Kamada, 2009), and that gender is performative, rather than being innate (Butler, 1990; Ehlers, 2016).

Given the noteworthy influence of poststructuralism on this feminist discourse, third-wave feminism (or feminist-poststructuralism) will be discussed in further detail below. Before doing so, however, it is first important to address some of the limitations of feminist theory, in order to explain why, as a philosophical paradigm, it was insufficient on its own to underpin this research, and why, therefore, it was synthesised with poststructuralist approaches for this research.

2.6 Criticisms and Strengths of Feminist Theory

As with poststructuralism, feminist theory has several limitations which are important to account for. Firstly, as we have already considered, the problematic nature of essentialist feminist philosophy suggests that men and women have inherent fixed differences (Ehlers, 2016; Francis, 1999). Not only does this raise divisive barriers between women and men, but it also creates a universalisation of gendered experience (Alcoff, 1988; S. Mills, 1997). In other words, essentialism homogenises women's experiences, assuming shared oppression and of subjugation under patriarchy (Francis, 1999; S. Mills, 1997), while also suggesting that men's experiences (especially of oppressing and of aggressing towards women) are universal (Alcoff, 1988; Baxter, 2003). The imposition of essentialism does not accommodate for the multiplicity of experience and subject positions (Baxter, 2003); that some women may have experienced power, status and privilege where others have not (Baxter, 2002a; Francis, 1999),

and that men, too, may have lacked those very same things that they are purported to have over women (Kamada, 2009).

This universalisation of women's experiences has proven to be a problematic issue for feminists who also identify as women of colour, and also does not recognise the intersection of sexism with other oppressive systems (Alcoff, 1988; Barrington, 2008; Cooper, 2016; Intemann, 2016; Love, 2016; T. C. West, 2012). Several feminist scholars have claimed that second-wave feminism, which largely campaigned for upper- and middle-class White women's equal employment rights, was irrelevant for women of colour, as well as working-class women, who had been working outside of the home for decades (Bergeron, 2016; T. C. West, 2012). They asserted that this brand of 'White feminism' neither understood nor addressed the challenges encountered by non-White women, and that racial and class barriers were just as important as gender barriers in overcoming social inequalities (Crenshaw, 1989; S. Mills, 2003). The causes that were deemed universal by White women were not seen as necessarily relevant by women of colour (Barrington, 2008).

A key development in feminist theory, which has endeavoured to provide an alternative perspective that reflects the complexity of the discriminatory experiences endured by women of colour, has been the concept of intersectionality (Cooper, 2016; Ehlers, 2016; Hawkesworth & Disch, 2016; J. A. Williams, 2016). Drawing on the work of Black feminist scholars who had already been articulating the narrow scope of second-wave feminism (Cooper, 2016; Mendoza, 2016; J. A. Williams, 2016), Kimberle Crenshaw wrote several essays introducing the idea of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991). At its heart, intersectionality poses a framework suggesting that analysing discrimination and power relations on a single-axis—gender—erased the discrimination experienced by women of colour (Crenshaw, 1989). This is because women of colour are subject to discrimination not just from patriarchal institutions, but also from racist ones, such as White supremacy discourse (Cooper, 2016). The interaction of gender and race can produce experiences of oppression for women of colour that White women are less likely to encounter (Hawkesworth & Disch, 2016; Intemann, 2016). Later, to fully account for other systems of oppression, classism and heterosexism were added to intersectionality's conceptualisation of the grounds upon which individuals can experience both privilege and oppression (Crenshaw, 1991; J. A. Williams, 2016). As such, intersectionality offers a way to discuss how some individuals can experience privilege in some aspects of their identity, while simultaneously experiencing oppression in others (Hawkesworth & Disch, 2016). Therefore, it dismantles the common second-wave assumption of shared universal experiences amongst women, and provides a way of examining the differences among women by pointing out that identity is multi-faceted (Ehlers, 2016; J. A. Williams, 2016).

A second limitation of using second-wave feminism to underpin this research is the concept of false consciousness. Initially a Marxist idea, false consciousness refers to the notion that individuals unwittingly absorb and subscribe to social norms that have been propagated through ideology, and due to internalisation of such ideologies, cannot perceive that to condone such norms is to play a part in one's own subjugation (Ehlers, 2016; Mahmood, 2001; Wetherell, 1998). In feminism, false consciousness has been appropriated in many areas where some feminists seek to emancipate women whom they argue have false consciousness, given their perceived commitment to patriarchal norms (McNay, 2016). For example, these scholars argue that women who adhere to traditional feminine roles, such as norms about pregnancy and motherhood increasing their self-worth, are undergoing false consciousness (e.g., Stoljar, 2000). Similarly, according to Mahmood (2001) and Scott (2010), some have argued that Muslim women endure oppression because of stringent guidelines around the concealment of the female body. McNay (2016) and Frank (2006) have also pointed out that some claim women's cosmetic preferences and choices are dictated by patriarchal impositions (e.g., K. Morgan, 1991).

While it may be accurate that some women do, in fact, enact gender roles and perform behaviours that support the patriarchal structure of our society, and that they may need liberation and emancipation from oppression, another perspective can be taken as well. Many women to whom radical feminists might apply the term 'false consciousness' may very well have self-consciously chosen to live their lives in a certain way (Friedman, 2003; Mahmood, 2001), and really may not have experienced sexism, misogyny, and oppression (Friedman, 2003; McNay, 2016). Furthermore, the notions of liberation and emancipation are fundamentally Western concepts and may not be able to fully capture the complexity of women who choose to live according to what are seen as traditional feminine traits, such as submissiveness and modesty (Mahmood, 2001).

False consciousness becomes problematic when it is wielded as a weapon to deny the way in which people analyse and interpret their experiences. It can also be misused as a way to argue that women are oppressed because their behaviours do not align with what a feminist 'ought' to do (McNay, 2016), and imposes the interpretation of another figure who claims to be an authority on what a particular experience actually means. As researchers, we must necessarily interpret (and to some extent, criticise) the experiences of our participants, but we realise that it is also important to do so sensitively, with a care to remaining true to how participants interpret their own experiences. It can be argued that such a misuse of false consciousness cannot acknowledge the multiplicity of experience and subjectivity. As McNay (2016) suggests, resistance can take more than one path, and is not necessarily confined to the outright rejection of patriarchal norms.

2.7 Feminist-Poststructuralism

Having demonstrated both the benefits and shortcomings of poststructuralism and feminism, it may be argued that, due to the philosophical standpoints of each paradigm, scholars should have misgivings about trying to synthesise them to form a coherent epistemological paradigm (Alcoff, 1988; Baxter, 2002b; Francis, 1999; Gavey, 1990; Leavy, 2007; Weedon, 1987). However, although some aspects of both paradigms may be irreconcilable (Francis, 1999; Leavy, 2007), there remains synergy between the two and there is still great value in self-reflexively and consciously making the decision to employ the most useful parts of both (Gatenby & Hume, 2004; Gavey, 1989; Leavy, 2007). As argued by Gavey (2011), feminist-poststructuralism—often placed within the overarching umbrella of third-wave feminism (Mann, 2013)—may involve acknowledging that there will necessarily be "theoretical impurity" (p. 187) in our research, given the vastly different views of the function of language, and also the contrasting objectives of each epistemology. For example, where feminism seeks to emancipate (McNay, 2016), poststructuralism is more concerned with transformative projects (Baxter, 2002a; Francis, 1999; Gavey, 1989; Kamada, 2009). In saying that, it is still possible to deploy a type of feminism that is heavily influenced by poststructuralist ideas.

Feminist-poststructuralism aims to combine the political project of feminism and the poststructuralist conceptualisations of subjectivity, discourse, power, language, and the historical production of knowledge (Gavey, 1989; Weedon, 1987). Some overall principles that an effective feminist-poststructuralist analysis should include have been put forth by Baxter (2003, 2008), and are presented below with further discussion of each principle. Many of these principles are already familiar to us due to above explanations of poststructuralist and feminist theories.

2.7.1 Discourse and Experience

Firstly, a feminist-poststructuralist approach to research recognises that our social realities are structured through discourse, and that these discourses are usually subject to overlapping—a concept that Baxter (2008) refers to as inter-discursivity. What this means is that the way in which individuals construct meaning from their experiences is influenced by the discourses that are available to us (H. McLaren, 2009; Weedon, 1987), and because discourses overlap with one another, we often draw on more than one discourse at a time in order to make sense of our experiences. Unlike the purist poststructuralist viewpoint, which views experience as having no inherent meaning (Gavey, 1989; Weedon, 1987), and

feminism, which values the meaning of experience above all else (Grant, 2016; Leavy, 2007), feminist-poststructuralists place themselves somewhere between these two perspectives by recognising that experience is a necessary starting point for understanding the ways in which discourse constitutes our social lives (Baxter, 2003; Gavey, 1989; Weedon, 1987). Instead of treating experience as an authoritative entity by which we can deduce the meaning of women's lives (often in a fixed and singular manner), feminist-poststructuralism acknowledges that experience is not reflective of social reality (Gavey, 1989; Weedon, 1987). This does not mean that experience does not exist; rather, that experiences are meaningful only insofar as they can tell us about discourse, and that they cannot be separated from language (Gavey, 1989; Weedon, 1987). In this view, then, the poststructuralist perspective of language prevails—language is not seen as transparent, expressive, or directly reflective of reality (Weedon, 1987). The meaning of experiences must be deconstructed and analysed, with reference to the historical development of discourses (Aston et al., 2011; Baxter, 2003).

2.7.2 Subjectivity and Identity

The feminist-poststructuralist stance on subjectivity takes a largely poststructuralist view as well. Firstly, it decentres the importance of the self (Fischer & Bristor, 1994; Gavey, 1989, 1990), which to a feminist understanding would be irreconcilable. However, feminist-poststructuralism does not deny subjects the interpretation of their experiences, but it does suggest that the way in which subjects do this is constituted by discourse, language, and power (Weedon, 1987). Furthermore, it sees subjects as fragmented, inconsistent, and contradictory (Weedon, 1987); unlike the feminist view, which prefers individuals' identities to follow the tradition of liberal humanism (Francis, 1999; Gavey, 1989; Weedon, 1987). Given this view of subjectivity, a feminist-poststructuralist approach implies that subjects' identities are performative, rather than essentialist (Baxter, 2008; Butler, 1990). What this means is that rather than being fixed and innate, aspects of identity are gradually acquired (such as gender) through language and collective cultural meaning (Ehlers, 2016).

Gender remains important in feminist-poststructuralism as a means of analysing power relations and inequalities (Davies & Banks, 1992); however, it is not the only grounds for doing so (Aston et al., 2011; Farvid & Braun, 2014). Feminism's intersectionality framework provides a useful way of thinking about the ways in which individuals can be simultaneously privileged and powerless by thinking about not just gender, but also race, class, and sexuality. The feminist-poststructuralist paradigm thus seeks to effectively demonstrate the complexity of subjects and subject positions, as well as providing a multiplicity of voices (Baxter, 2002b, 2003; Kamada, 2009). Therefore, this approach

recognises that generalisability is impossible, given the mosaic of experiences and voices that are possible (Baxter, 2002b).

2.7.3 Enacting Change

While feminist-poststructuralism retains its emphasis on enacting change politically, it seeks to do this in a more sensitive way, compared to feminism. As such, feminist-poststructuralism focuses on projects with transformative goals and not emancipatory ones (Baxter, 2002a, 2002b, 2003, 2008; Gavey, 1989; Kamada, 2009). Foucault's bottom-up approach to power is embraced, with projects sought that can enact change on a small-scale, specific, or localised setting (Baxter, 2003, 2008). This is because feminist-poststructuralism tends to remain wary of grand narratives and universal causes, as with poststructuralism (Aitchison, 2000; Baxter, 2003; Gavey, 1990).

2.7.4 The Researcher

Finally, the role of the researcher is highly important as well. Feminist-poststructuralism recognises that value-free research is frequently not possible, because researchers are equally as embedded in discourse as are the subjects of the research (H. McLaren, 2009). Therefore, this behoves the researcher to continuously engage in a process of reflexivity (Baxter, 2002b, 2003, 2008; Blaise, 2005; Govender, 2012).

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter has considered the philosophical foundations of this research in great depth, and has elucidated the feminist-poststructuralist paradigm with reference to poststructuralist and feminist theories. A justification has been provided for choosing feminist-poststructuralism to underpin this research, with consideration of the various advantages and disadvantages of both poststructuralism and feminism.

The following chapter constitutes the literature review of this research. This chapter discusses the pertinent literature on interethnic intimacy and includes a brief history of interethnic intimacy in New Zealand.

Chapter Three: Interethnic Intimacy in the Academic Literature

Now that the feminist-poststructuralist lens of this inquiry has been discussed, the method with which the subsequent literature review is conducted can be clarified. The purpose of this chapter is to explore how discourses of interethnic intimacy are constituted within the literature, which is essential to understanding how instances of interethnic intimacy, as well as interethnic couples themselves, have been positioned. The objective here is to demonstrate how interethnic couples are limited and enabled by the competing discursive structures that they have been situated within.

This chapter is divided into several sections. Part One describes normative theories of mate selection to draw attention to the contrasting ways in which interethnic intimacy have been constructed, with a more detailed account of the theories that have been posited as plausible causes for interethnic intimacy. In doing so, I highlight the discursive shifts in how interethnic couples have been positioned—from dysfunctional and disturbed individuals to well-adjusted and well-educated people.

Having addressed the discourses surrounding the causes and characteristics of interethnic intimacy, Part Two examines the consequences of interethnic intimacy. Part Three outlines a brief history of interethnic intimacy in New Zealand, while Part Four presents the sparse body of literature on Indian adults in interethnic relationships. This discussion of the limited work in this area demonstrates the gaps in the literature and, finally, provides a rationale for this research.

Before proceeding any further, it would undoubtedly be helpful to the reader to clarify the nomenclature used in this thesis. The terms *interracial*, *intercultural*, and *interethnic* have all been used interchangeably by academics to describe romantic relationships where the partners are not of the same ethnic/cultural group. For the sake of clarity, these terms will also be used synonymously. Conversely, the term *co-ethnic* is employed to discuss same-race/ethnicity romantic couples.

3.1 Part One: Who Marries Whom?

Mate selection is often defined in marital terms, given that societies across the world use marriage as a way to organise mating behaviours (Coontz, 2006). As such, the question of who marries whom is one that has been thoroughly examined by scholars from a range of disciplines. However, the motivations underlying human mate selection are variable and multitudinous, and so many theories have been posited as possible answers to this puzzle.

Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss all the existing theories of partner selection, it is necessary to provide a brief description of the major theories to demonstrate how theories of interethnic intimacy contrast.

In social psychological literature, it is generally agreed that factors of interpersonal attraction form the basis of the development of romantic relationships. Repeated contact (where individuals come into contact with one another frequently), as well as similarity (of attitudes, characteristics, and values) both contribute to attraction (Huston & Levinger, 1978; Moreland & Beach, 1992). Physical attraction also plays a role (at least at the beginning of romantic relationships), as research has shown that attractive people tend to be treated more positively than those viewed as unattractive (Langlois et al., 2000), and thus enables physically attractive individuals to be viewed as desirable prospective mates. Attraction and liking, however, are categorically different from love (Rubin, 1973, as cited in Vaughan & Hogg, 2011). Numerous frameworks theorising about love have been proposed, such as Robert Sternberg's (1986, 1988) Triangular Theory of Love. According to Sternberg's model, there are three important dimensions comprising love: intimacy (emotional familiarity and friendship), passion (sexual attraction), and commitment (the desire to be together). The various combinations of each of the three dimensions result in different types of love, which can change over time. For example, intimacy on its own results in liking, which may be thought to reflect most types of friendship, while the combination of intimacy and passion results in romantic love. On the other hand, the combination of passion and commitment is called fatuous love, which may be applicable to whirlwind marriages where sexual attraction and the desire to be together may be present, but mutual liking has had little opportunity to develop. The combination of all three dimensions is viewed as the ideal form of love: consummate love (Sternberg, 1986, 1988).

Discourses of romanticism, particularly where they concern romantic or passionate love, have deeply influenced the appropriate methods of partner selection in Western societies especially (Coontz, 2006; Medora, Larson, Hortaçsu, & Dave, 2002; Moran, 2004). As a historical movement, romanticism emerged in the mid-18th century as a hegemonic discourse that has profoundly affected how we approach love and partner selection (Coontz, 2006; Wetherell, 1995). That is, love is thought to be crucial for developing and maintaining long-term relationships (such as marriage), particularly in contemporary Western societies (Coontz, 2006; Ingoldsby, 2003; Medora et al., 2002; Vaughan & Hogg, 2011). However, it is important to recognise that love, or even attraction and liking, have not always been necessary precursors for spousal selection (Coontz, 2006; Ingoldsby, 2003; Medora et al., 2002). The idea that love should be the foundation of marriage is a recent innovation that has become the dominant discourse in the past three centuries (Coontz, 2006; Ingoldsby,

2003; Moran, 2004). Prior to that, in numerous societies around the world, marriage was an economic and political institution wherein love was not considered necessary at all. Marriage is responsible for performing a variety of functions that vary culturally (Coontz, 2006). Marriage might be said to be responsible for defining exclusive sexual relationships and reproductive boundaries for 'legitimate' children, but it is also used as: a mechanism to form alliances with other families; to gain specific legal rights; to divide labour between partners in the marriage; and to pool wealth, resources, and property and establish inheritance rights of that wealth and property (Coontz, 2006). Even then, in some societies around the world, marriage is not the prime mechanism for accomplishing these purposes, and is replaced with other systems.[2]

Given that most societies, both historical and current, have treated love as unnecessary for marriage (Coontz, 2006), it is interesting that love should currently hold dominance as the primary motivation for forming marital relationships. Romantic discourse embraces the idea that 'love conquers all' and the notion of having a 'soulmate' who will be an ideal match for oneself (Medora et al., 2002; Wetherell, 1995). In this discourse, one should always have sexual desire for the romantic object (Regan, Kocan, & Whitlock, 1998). This discourse proliferates the idea that partner selection should be motivated by one's personal desires and feelings, rather than practical considerations. This discourse of romantic love has become so ubiquitous that other forms of partner selection (e.g., arranged marriage) are viewed as quaint or questionable methods in the Western psyche (Grearson & Smith, 2009; Pasupati, 2002). In line with this view, much of the work on marriage and partner selection upholds the idea of the 'love marriage' (Vaughan & Hogg, 2011): the assumption that individuals are responsible for choosing their own partners rather than having partners chosen for them, based on criteria other than love. It should be noted that while romantic discourse may be pervasive in contemporary Western societies, it should not be assumed to be relevant for most other cultures around the world.

As theories of mate selection have only been developed in the past century in Western contexts, many of them closely adhere to romantic discourse as they assume individuals make their marital choices based on emotions that are derived from several factors. For example, Social Homogamy suggests that individuals tend to marry those who are similar to them. Similarities between prospective partners may manifest in a variety of areas, such as ethnicity, culture, age, socioeconomic status, and also traits like hobbies, educational background, and so on (Epstein & Guttman, 1984; van Grootheest, van den

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[2] For example, the Na of China (an agricultural people in the Himalayan region) have a sibling-household system, whereby brothers and sisters live together and raise the children of the sisters (there is a strong incest prohibition) and do not use the institution of marriage. See Hua (2016).

Berg, Cath, & Willemsen, 2008). This similarity breeds attraction, which in turn leads to the development of love. Likewise, Ideal Mate Theory proposes that individuals seek potential partners who symbolise one's image of the perfect mate (Epstein & Guttman, 1984; Karp, Jackson, & Lester, 1970; Regan, 1998), a concept which embodies romantic discourse.

However, not all major theories of mate selection propagate romantic discourse and these theories vary in how well they are accepted in academic spaces. For instance, the evolutionary psychology perspective advances Darwin's theory of sexual selection to suggest that natural selection has affected a range of desirable traits related to reproduction. The idea is that partner selection differences exist between men and women due to the differential parental investment between genders (Bjorklund & Kipp, 1996; Buss & Schmitt, 1993; Trivers, 1972). The core tenet of this theory is that the sex with the greater investment in bearing and raising children is more discerning in partner selection (Trivers, 1972); thus, women seek qualities in mates that will ensure that they and their children will be looked after (e.g., good financial prospects, ambition, intelligence, etc.). On the other hand, men seek female mates who would be ideal candidates for bearing and raising children—that is, they should be young, fertile, and physically attractive.

To demonstrate these gender differences in mate selection, Buss (1989) conducted a study asking respondents in 37 countries to rank 18 characteristics in order of how important those traits were in a potential partner. There was a similar ranking between women and men in terms of characteristics like love, attraction, kindness, intelligence, etc., but Buss found that women desired male partners who were ambitious, wealthy, and driven to succeed financially, whereas men wanted female partners who were physically attractive. Importantly, such sexual selection differences allegedly hold in societies that have less gender equality; Eagly and Wood (1999) showed that in societies where women have more economic power, mate preferences between genders become increasingly similar.

Evolutionary psychology has been widely critiqued (e.g., Buller, 2000; Gannon, 2002; Peters, 2013). Behaviours that seem to undermine reproductive success cannot be explained by evolutionary psychology, such as homosexuality (Confer et al., 2010). Falling birth rates in developed countries (Nargund, 2009) also weaken the evolutionary psychology perspective of mate selection. These behaviours suggest that reproduction and the continuation of the human lineage may not be a historical constant in mate selection, and that other factors may be more salient in mate selection. For instance, in individualistic societies where romanticism is influential, many people purport to marry mainly for love, rather than to perpetuate their family lineages.

The sway of romantic discourse may exclude other potential theories of how people choose their partners, especially those that deal with more practical considerations. For

example, Social Exchange Theory states that all individuals have a finite number of resources, and so they seek partners with resources that they desire. Individuals weigh up the costs and benefits of partnering with certain people based on whether their resources complement one's own (Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998; Vaughan & Hogg, 2011). Although this theory supports the traditional form of marriage from the previous three thousand years, where marriage was largely an exchange or pooling of resources between individuals/kin groups, accompanied by an intention to form cooperative relationships, it may be less pertinent to mate selection in Western societies now, due to the rise of romanticism (Coontz, 2006). However, it may remain more applicable to collectivist societies, like India, where arranged marriage remains the most common form of spousal selection. Moreover, although Social Exchange Theory lacks the emphasis on the dominant discourse of romanticism that currently reigns in the West, it still offers an important piece of academic understanding of how partner selection works elsewhere.

As prominent as romantic discourse may be in constituting human partner selection in the West (Coontz, 2006), the principle of endogamy holds greater sway globally (Gaines, Clark, & Afful, 2015; Song, 2015). Endogamy refers to the principle of marrying within one's group, where the 'group' can be defined variably as one's race, ethnic group, class, tribe, religion, and so on (Ingoldsby, 2003). The most common form of endogamy is ethnic/racial endogamy (Lucassen & Laarman, 2009).

Although the vast majority of relationship research is conducted in Western societies, census data, nation-wide surveys, and other such quantitative evidence indicate that ethnic endogamy prevails as the dominant form of mate selection throughout the world. With reference to Western societies, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand, quantitative analyses suggest that, despite their multicultural inhabitants, high rates of endogamy are still the norm. For instance, Jacobson and Heaton (2008) conducted comparative analyses of intermarriage rates in six different contexts: The United States, Hawaii (as an exceptional case within the United States), Canada, South Africa, New Zealand, and the Xinjiang Province in China, due to the differences between these six contexts in terms of their immigration histories, their ethnic compositions, and the varying degrees of oppression of their respective indigenous peoples. Across all six contexts, ethnic endogamy was found to be the most common pattern of marriages. Within most of the Western societies—the United States, Canada, and South Africa—populations were found to be approximately 90% endogamous. New Zealand and Hawaii, however, had comparatively lower rates of co-ethnic marriage occurring, with endogamy rates of around 85% (Jacobson & Heaton, 2008). It is worth pointing out that much of these analyses are dated, given that it is based on data that is at least twenty years old (e.g., the New Zealand analysis is based on

the 1996 census data). As such, rates of intermarriage have presumably evolved in the intervening decades.

Scholars have observed that, while most people have the tendency to choose mates of their own ethnicity, rates of ethnic exogamy are steadily increasing (Gaines et al., 2015; Ingoldsby, 2003; Osanami Törngren, Irastorza, & Song, 2016). Ethnic exogamy here refers to the notion of choosing a mate outside of one's own ethnic or racial group. Census data from the United States, where the majority of research concerning interethnic relationships is conducted (Gaines et al., 2015; Kalmijn & van Tubergen, 2006), demonstrates that interethnic marriages represented 3% of all marriages in 2000 (Qian, 2005). While this may seem like a minuscule percentage, it is not difficult to understand the significance of such a percentage in light of the fact that interethnic marriages represented only 1% of all marriages in the United States in 1970 (Qian, 1997). Further statistics delineate the surge in interethnic marriages; in 2010, 15.1% of all new marriages in the United States were interethnic (Passel, Wang, & Taylor, 2010).

Similar trends can be observed in other Western nations. Census data from 2011 in the United Kingdom indicated that of the 25.7 million individuals living as part of a couple (either married, cohabiting, or in a civil union), 9% (2.3 million people) were in interethnic unions. These numbers suggest a slight increase from 7% in the 2001 census (Office for National Statistics, 2014). While census statistics on ethnic intermarriage in the United Kingdom are not available for previous censuses, given that questions asking about ethnicity were only introduced in the 1991 census (Office for National Statistics, 2012), nation-wide surveys show a slow increase in long-term interethnic unions (Muttarak & Heath, 2010).

It is not within the scope of this thesis to exhaustively discuss demographic trends in intermarriage around the world; suffice it to say that gradual increases in ethnic intermarriage can be observed in many countries around the world. These trends can also be seen in Europe (Kalmijn & van Tubergen, 2006; Lucassen & Laarman, 2009; Rodríguez-García, Solana-Solana, & Lubbers, 2016), Canada (Hou, Wu, Schimmele, & Myles, 2015; S. Lee & Boyd, 2008), Australia (Hiew, Halford, van de Vijver, & Liu, 2015; Khoo, 2011), and New Zealand (Callister, Didham, & Potter, 2007; Didham & Callister, 2014).

Overall, however, the occurrence of interethnic relationships—both long-term relationships like marriage and cohabitation, and short-term dating relationships—remains low. There is a clear preference for endogamous mate selection, which seems to be governed by several discourses that are overlapping and operating simultaneously. These discourses include those of racial purity, homogamy, and identity, and interact in such a way to create positions where people prefer to marry those who look like themselves. This may indicate the existence of a false dichotomy where those who look like the self are believed to think,

feel, and have the same cultural understandings and values as the self. Not only that, people seem to prefer *other* people to marry within their own group as well. This is reflected in the academic literature, which reports that societal attitudes towards interethnic intimacy tend to be negative (Bratter & Eschbach, 2006; Lehmiller, Graziano, & VanderDrift, 2014; Miller, Olson, & Fazio, 2004), suggesting that people believe that others should not be marrying outside of their racial group. Discourses of homogamy, identity, and racial purity thus intersect to exclude interethnic intimacy. Interethnic intimacy is then constructed as being deviant as it challenges the norm of endogamy (Clark-Ibáñez & Felmlee, 2004). The following section will describe societal attitudes towards interethnic intimacy, primarily in the United States but also elsewhere in the world.

3.1.1 Societal Attitudes towards Interethnic Intimacy

The contentious history of the United States regarding interethnic romantic relations is well documented, with many scholars describing opposition towards interethnic couples (Bratter & King, 2008; Bystydzienski, 2011; Castle Bell & Hastings, 2011; Childs, 2008; Gaines et al., 2015; Gaines et al., 1999; MacNeil & Adamsons, 2014; McVeigh, 2004; Skinner & Hudac, 2017). This is particularly true for interethnic couples composed of one African American and one Euro-American partner (these ethnic groupings will henceforth be referred to as 'Black' and 'White' respectively, in line with how they are referred to in everyday usage). Black-White interethnic couples in the United States have faced institutional resistance in the form of legislative measures (Bratter & King, 2008; Eastwick, Richeson, Son, & Finkel, 2009). In 1920, as many as 30 states had legislation prohibiting the intermarriage of Whites and Blacks, while 15 states also forbade Asians to marry Whites (Field, Kimuna, & Straus, 2013). Although many of these statutes were dissolved over time, up until 1967, it remained illegal in 16 states for Black-White couples to intermarry (Field et al., 2013).

The Supreme Court decision in 1967 to overturn all anti-miscegenation laws (laws forbidding ethnic intermarriage) in the landmark case, *Loving v. Virginia* (1967) (AhnAllen & Suyemoto, 2011; Foeman & Nance, 1999; Gaines et al., 2015; Miller et al., 2004) marked a crucial development in the interethnic history of the United States. The case originated from the decision of Mildred Jeter (a Black-Native American woman) and Richard Loving (a White man) to travel to Washington from their home state of Virginia to get married, given the anti-miscegenation laws in Virginia. Upon their return to Virginia, they were prosecuted and convicted according to those laws.

Legislative opposition to interethnic couples has existed elsewhere in the world as well, such as Germany and South Africa (Osanami Törngren et al., 2016) In South Africa,

the apartheid system segregated ethnic groups and prohibited marriages and sexual relationships across racial lines (Hyslop, 1995), while in Nazi Germany, the Nuremberg Laws established racial ideologies and made it illegal for those of Jewish or 'coloured' origin to marry those of German 'blood' (Ezzell, 2002). Such anti-miscegenation legislation is telling because they demonstrate the circulation of discourses of racial purity. These discourses of racial purity laid down the idea that there existed clear biological differences between racial groups (Afful, Wohlford, & Stoelting, 2015). The logical consequence of this idea was to then declare that there must exist a racial hierarchy where mixing would 'contaminate' the superior racial group (Ezzell, 2002). Of course, whether this discourse of racial purity is scientifically accurate or not is irrelevant. Racial purity discourses function as a means for exerting institutional control over the bodies of citizens (e.g., Hyslop, 1995). In all of the historical contexts where anti-miscegenation legislation existed, people of different racial groups worked closely alongside one another—such as in South Africa, where White working-class women were joining the labour force (Hyslop, 1995), and Black slaves working with White indentured servants in early colonial America (Moran, 2004). It is highly unlikely that interracial attraction did not exist in such contexts (Moran, 2004). Discourses of racial purity, therefore, could be deployed as a method of social control to ensure that racial mixing would be viewed as immoral. Under such a discursive (and legal) hegemony, instances of interracial marriage would be rare.

Even though anti-miscegenation legislation has been abolished in all three of these places, the literature on interethnic intimacy reports on-going opposition towards interethnic couples, especially in the United States. Literature from as early as the 1940s, spanning to the present day, have often reported public resistance towards intercultural marriages, particularly Black-White marriages (Allport, 1958; Beigel, 1966; Hernton, 1965; Myrdal, 1944). Polls taken by various sources during these decades, such as Gallup and national magazines/newspapers, reported high rates of opposition towards romantic relationships between individuals of different racial groups (Beigel, 1966). In recent decades, survey polls taken in the United States demonstrate increases in explicit acceptance towards intercultural relationships (Qian, 2005). However, this is starkly at odds with the experiences of intercultural couples themselves, who have reported being treated with racism, which in some cases escalates to outright violence and hostility (Hibbler & Shinew, 2002; Iwasaki, Thai, & Lyons, 2016; Keyser, 2011; Leslie & Young, 2015; Osuji, 2013; Rodríguez-García et al., 2016; Yahya & Boag, 2014).

It is clear from the research that dissonance exists in the American psyche between explicit and implicit attitudes towards intercultural intimacy. It is likely that this unease about racial intermingling derives from the unique context of race relations that dominates

American history. As is well known, Black Americans were once enslaved by White Americans and underwent various forms of subjugation, including sexual subjugation (Afful et al., 2015; Moran, 2004). Children born of such unions were considered to be Black according to the 'one-drop rule', which declared that even one drop of 'Black blood' would contaminate the purity of White racial lineage, regardless of how much 'White blood' these individuals had. These attitudes persist to the present day (Khanna, 2010), and signal the deeply embedded biases against, and distrust of, Black people that are present amongst many White Americans. Thus, the troubled nature of Black-White relations in the United States represents a confounding variable that contributes to the country's general intolerance for exogamy.

Because there is a painful history surrounding intimacy between Blacks and Whites, this may be why, as one source has commented, the United States appears to have an obsession particularly with the racial aspect of intercultural relationships (Lucassen & Laarman, 2009). Elsewhere in the world, such as Europe, it is the cultural/religious differences that dominate concerns regarding these relationships (Lucassen & Laarman, 2009). It is with these historical and racial lenses, then, that the research on intercultural intimacy from the United States must be viewed.

3.1.2 The Motives and Causes of Interethnic Intimacy

In this context of discomfort with racial intermingling, those who engage in interethnic intimacy have often been positioned as psychologically dysfunctional. This is in direct contrast to those who engage in normative endogamous relationships. Relationship researchers generally agree that human beings are social animals that thrive when they have healthy relationships (e.g., friendships, romances, familial bonds, etc.) (e.g., House, Landis, & Umberson, 1988; Kawachi & Berkman, 2001; Santini, Koyanagi, Tyrovolas, Mason, & Haro, 2015). Romantic relationships are viewed as beneficial for humans (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Girme, Overall, Faingataa, & Sibley, 2015).

On the other hand, interethnic couples have often been positioned as the exception to this consensus. For several decades (from the 1940s to the 1970s/1980s), interethnic intimacy was singled out in the literature as a questionable phenomenon. Where normative spousal selection was often seen as natural, for many years interethnic intimacy was viewed as deviant (Aldridge, 1978; Clark, Harris, Hasan, Votaw, & Fernandez, 2015; Foeman & Nance, 1999). This positioning of interethnic couples as pathological is discussed below, accompanied by an examination of how discourses constituting interethnic intimacy have shifted over the years to become more aligned with normative mate selection.

Dysfunctional and Hypersexual Rebels

Some of the earliest commentators on interethnic intimacy propagated a variety of myths and stereotypes about interethnic couples, which subsequently affected academic perceptions of why individuals engage in interethnic relationships (Foeman & Nance, 1999). Many of these stereotypes and myths (e.g., the sexual appeal and virility of Black men over White men; the alleged tendency of Black people to marry White people for status; and the supposed White tendency to marry Black people due to neuroticism) attributed pathological motives to those in interethnic relationships, and perpetuated the idea that interethnic intimacy reflected psychological dysfunction (Bratter & Eschbach, 2006).

For example, Beigel (1966) presented a series of case studies of interethnic couples, and demonstrated how many entered into these relationships due to feelings of inferiority and rejection from their own ethnic group—which led them to find partners from a lower-prestige ethnic group to regain a sense of power. Notably, there are methodological inadequacies with this study, given that most of Beigel's subjects presented with pre-existing clinical issues that affected their intimate relationships and who, therefore, were probably not representative of the general adult population of interethnic couples. For instance, approximately a third of the participants experienced emotional instability (some had considered suicide), while many experienced feelings of worthlessness, as well as sexual and physical shortcomings. A few displayed psychotic tendencies. Several of the women subjects had even disclosed incest experiences during childhood and adolescence. It may be that these early developmental experiences then affected their motives for entering interethnic relationships. Therefore, it is probable that those in interethnic relationships that have not presented with psychopathology are also less likely to have pathological motives for their relationships.

Other such studies of this era are likewise characterised by methodological weaknesses. Aldridge (1978), in a review of interethnic literature at the time, noted that some sociologists theorised that interethnic couples formed these relationships due to rebellion towards their parents, rejection of/by potential partners of their own ethnic groups, or due to having bizarre psychological needs. However, she pointed out that while there existed a tendency to pin ulterior motives to such couples, there was also a lack of empirical evidence to support these ideas. Moreover, same-race couples could also be prone to pathological motives. These arguments are supported by other writers reporting back on the assumptions of dysfunctionality in the early literature (Bratter & Eschbach, 2006; Clark et al., 2015; Davidson, 1992; McNamara, Tempenis, & Walton, 1999; Schueths, 2014; Troy, Lewis-Smith, & Laurenceau, 2006). Scholars since then have found no evidence to support the thesis of dysfunctionality in interethnic couples (Gaines et al., 1999).

Furthermore, sexual motives are attributed to those in interethnic couples (Aldridge, 1978; Beigel, 1966; Davidson, 1992; Lampe, 1982). As mentioned, one myth at the time regards the sexual vigorousness of Black men, and the appeal of this to White women (Beigel, 1966). Hernton (1965) argued that White women and Black men were overwhelmed with sexual desire for one another, and that the former especially were constantly struggling against attraction and profound sexual fantasies for the latter. Contrary to these arguments, Beigel (1966) found little evidence to support this. Interethnic couples allegedly value sexual attraction more highly than co-ethnic couples and display exhibitionistic tendencies, but again, there is no empirical evidence to support this (McNamara et al., 1999; Troy et al., 2006). While other studies have reported that sexual curiosity about other races sometimes plays a role in interethnic relationships (Aldridge, 1978; Lampe, 1982), it is not the main reason to engage in interethnic relationships. Instead, non-racial reasons have been reported as the main reason for interethnic intimacy, such as personal liking for the individual (Lampe, 1982; Lewis, Yancey, & Bletzer, 1997). Additionally, if sexual curiosity and attraction are the main drives of interethnic intimacy, then we should observe a bi-directional vector of attraction: that is, interethnic couples composed of Black women and White men should report sexual attraction as their primary motives, as in the alleged case of White women and Black men. However, there have been no studies in the past two decades—to the researcher's knowledge—that support the notion that interethnic couples (regardless of their ethnic-gender composition) are mainly driven by overwhelming sexual attraction for one another.

Status Exchange Theory: Trading Privileges

Status Exchange Theory, also known as Social Exchange Theory, revolves around the idea that individuals select their partners by exchanging social or economic resources to gain resources that they previously lacked (Vaughan & Hogg, 2011). This theory predates literature on interethnic intimacy and was first introduced in relation to interethnic intimacy by Davis (1941) and Merton (1941), both of whom wrote separate essays discussing instances of hypergamy (where an individual of a lower class marries someone of a higher class).

Both writers used the example of Black-White intermarriage in the United States as an illustration of this sort of hypergamous status exchange in the United States (given that Black people have historically been a group with much less status and privilege compared to White people, and that the divisions between the two have been pronounced), particularly where it involved the marriage of a Black man with a White woman. In such marriages, they noticed a pattern of Black men with high-status and economic/educational resources marrying low-status White women with few economic/educational resources. Such marriages, they argued, involved an informal exchange of privileges—the Black man traded

his economic privilege for the racial privilege of his wife, while the White woman gained economic resources in exchange for the protective buffer of her racial privilege. In this way, both partners compensated for a lack of a particular advantage in the other partner. Thus, Status Exchange Theory assumes that there exists a hierarchy in status of ethnic groups (Fu & Heaton, 2000). Both Davis (1941) and Merton (1941) maintained that this particular type of marriage—between a Black man and a White woman—supports Status Exchange Theory, whereas there is little to support status exchange where it concerns the marriage of a White man with a Black woman. It is thought that the White man gains neither economic nor racial advantages by marrying a Black woman, who in contrast gains both types of privilege.

Importantly, it should be understood that both Davis and Merton argued this on purely theoretical grounds, and neither had empirical evidence to stand by. It is understandable how status exchange might have been a persuasive argument for Black-White intermarriage in an era of divisive Black-White race relations in the United States, as it helped to answer the question of why a White person might marry a Black person in 1940s America (Rosenfeld, 2005).

Indeed, Status Exchange Theory has taken root in the literature as a probable cause of interethnic intimacy, and many studies since the Davis-Merton hypothesis have examined the manifestation of status exchange in intermarriage (looking beyond Black-White couples) and attempted to provide data in support of it. It should be noted that the evidence for status exchange is inconsistent and contradictory (K. Wu, Chen, & Greenberger, 2014). While there are many studies that support status exchange, sometimes partially (Fu & Heaton, 2000; Gullickson, 2006; Kalmijn, 1993; Qian, 1997), there are just as many that refute it as a predictor of interethnic relationships (Chen & Takeuchi, 2011; Fujino, 1993; Jacobs & Labov, 2002; McClintock, 2014; Rosenfeld, 2005). This may be due to differences in statistical methodology that demonstrate different answers to the same question. For example, Rosenfeld (2005) demonstrated how recent empirical work has relied strongly on young intermarried Black-White couples, most of whom are Black husbands with White wives. Due to their ages (in their twenties), most of these couples were still receiving tertiary education, and because the Black husbands tended to be slightly older than their White wives, they were slightly further ahead in their schooling. This means that the Black husbands did, indeed, have a higher educational level than their wives, but this effect was only temporary given the on-going nature of their schooling, and eventually, this effect disappeared so that couples became educationally homogamous. In fact, even the studies that found evidence of status exchange also acknowledged that contemporary interethnic couples are likely to be equal on other significant traits, such as educational level (Qian, 1997).

Social Homogamy & Propinquity: A Shift Towards Similarity

A more recent shift has taken place in the literature as Social Homogamy has increasingly been considered as a predictor of interethnic intimacy. Previously, Social Homogamy had been proposed more broadly as a theory of mate selection that applied to the general population, where primarily endogamous mate selection occurred. However, the literature indicates changes in how interethnic couples are being positioned. Where before their cultural, ethnic, religious, racial, psychological, and lifestyle differences were highlighted, more recent scholarly developments display an emphasis on the many similarities that two people in an interethnic relationship can share.

Briefly, Social Homogamy states that individuals tend to select partners with whom they match on a number of social, structural, and psychological attributes (Epstein & Guttman, 1984; van Grootheest et al., 2008). These traits may include race, culture, and ethnicity, but also structural traits like educational attainment and socioeconomic class, as well as social and psychological traits such as: leisure pursuits; attitudes, beliefs, and values; religion; and personality traits like kindness, loyalty, vitality, and so on. Individuals are more likely to marry those who are similar to themselves or who have had similar life experiences to themselves (M. Johnson, 2016; Kosslyn, Rosenberg, & Lambert, 2014). Similarity breeds the perception of compatibility and, therefore, of long-term relationship stability (Tidwell, Eastwick, & Finkel, 2013). It is widely regarded in the literature that partners in relationships who are too different from one another are less likely to remain together compared to couples who are more homogamous (Collisson & Howell, 2014; M. Johnson, 2016; R. Montoya & Horton, 2004).

Perhaps discourses of homogamy are so globally prevalent in constituting mate selection because they assume that when we marry someone of our own ethnic group, there is a greater chance of mutual understanding and of having similar cultural and family backgrounds (Nave, 2000). However, it seems that interethnic couples have increasing access to discourses of homogamy (Killian, 2002). Most couples report that, despite their racial, cultural, or ethnic differences, they match in similarity on other crucial attributes (Foeman & Nance, 1999; Killian, 2002) . According to Foeman and Nance (1999), most of the research suggests that interethnic couples have similar backgrounds in education and social class. Additionally, social status appears to be less important in partner selection compared to having shared values and interests, as interethnic couples can be found from all economic backgrounds (Moore, 1999).

Much of the literature supporting the argument of Social Homogamy involves surveying or interviewing interethnic couples themselves, rather than conducting statistical calculations of socioeconomic status from afar (the latter process is often seen in studies

examining status exchange in interethnic couples). Kouri and Lasswell (1993), for instance, examined two different potential theories of interethnic intimacy: racial motivation and structural theory (where the relationship is formed through structural facilitations in the environment). They interviewed 29 Black-White couples in Los Angeles, 26 of whom were married, while the other three cohabitated. The authors determined that most of the individuals were attracted to their partners due to discovering similar values and interests, and that many had formed close friendships prior to becoming romantically involved—which was in line with structural theory. Only six couples reported racial motivation (such as having certain racially-influenced preferences or preferring the physicality of a certain race), but all quickly came to like their partners' personalities. Furthermore, most of the couples were homogamous in terms of their social status as well.

These findings are supported by other studies examining Social Homogamy in interethnic couples. Lewis et al. (1997) surveyed 371 individuals from 38 states within the United States; 292 respondents (who were in Black-White marriages) were included in the final sample for analysis. The authors examined the racial and non-racial factors that motivated these individuals to choose their spouses, and found that, for over 70% of the respondents, non-racial factors were the most important factors for spousal selection. Specifically, respondents stated that having common interests and entertainment pursuits were very important, as well as physical attractiveness (regardless of race). For 21% of the respondents, socioeconomic status had been a very important factor in their choice of spouse. Therefore, when individuals perceive that they are similar to one another, this can increase attraction—as well as decreasing levels of anxiety (T. V. West, Magee, Gordon, & Gullett, 2014). Perceived similarity, in this instance, does not necessarily equate to being of the same race, but rather can refer to similarities in other areas, like: personality, hobbies, social background, and so on.

It is possible that these findings may be influenced by how interethnic couples believe that they are perceived by society. Killian (2002) suggests that interethnic couples are acutely aware of discourses of homogamy, particularly racial/ethnic homogamy, that regulate partner selection in the broader population. As such, interethnic couples tend to both subvert and comply with discourses of homogamy, by trivialising their phenotypical differences and emphasising the importance of their internal characteristics. Indeed, many qualitative studies interviewing interethnic couples reveal a pattern whereby the couples minimise or erase the ways in which they are different—predominantly their racial and ethnic differences—while simultaneously accentuating all the ways in which they are alike—including their shared interests, values, religion, and life experiences (Brummett, 2016; Bystydzienski, 2011; Karis, 2003, 2009; Killian, 2003, 2012; Seshadri & Knudson-Martin, 2013). Based on this, I argue

that romantic relationship development may be governed by hegemonic discourses of homogamy, which interethnic couples attempt to access in order to normalise their relationships. In doing so, they can access subject positions that mitigate their obvious visibility (due to clear phenotypical differences), which thus provide a degree of protection from external threats. This argument will be revisited in subsequent chapters.

A discussion of Social Homogamy as a predictor of interethnic intimacy is incomplete without a consideration of how homogamy can be established in the first place; that is, what opportunities exist for interethnic couples to meet and form relationships? Another widely accepted predictor of attraction in social psychology is the theory of propinquity. Propinquity refers to the geographic proximity of individuals to one another as a factor of attraction; very simply, the more exposure and repeated contact individuals have with one another, the more likely they are to form an attraction (Epstein & Guttman, 1984; Ingoldsby, 2003)—due to the greater opportunities that repeated contact allows for getting to know the person and discovering any shared characteristics. In multiracial, diverse communities, propinquity allows individuals to meet and familiarise themselves with members of other ethnic groups. This repeated exposure breeds familiarity, which results in greater opportunities for interethnic dating (Aldridge, 1978).

Multiracial environments, then, are critical for individuals from different ethnic groups to intermingle (Aldridge, 1978), especially when they are residential or occupational environments (Aldridge, 1978; Lampe, 1982). Racially-integrated environments, like work and school, are among some of the many places where interethnic couples can meet (Kouri & Lasswell, 1993). Limited contact with other ethnic groups, particularly during primary and high school, can result in either a lower likelihood of dating members of other ethnic groups, or merely a lack of desire to do so because of a lack of knowledge about those other ethnic communities (Lampe, 1982; Levin, Taylor, & Caudle, 2007). This is, perhaps, why people of colour are four times as likely to date interracially compared to White people, as they have more opportunities for contact and exposure with other ethnic groups relative to White people (Clark-Ibáñez & Felmlee, 2004).

Therefore, the social distance between ethnic groups can either enhance or diminish opportunities for interethnic intimacy (Bratter & Eschbach, 2006). For example, the divisive nature of relations and great social distance between Black and White people in the United States (McVeigh, 2004) can limit interethnic relationships between members of each group (Bratter & Eschbach, 2006). Conversely, Asian peoples tend to integrate more easily into the majority White culture in the United States and are relatively preferred by White people as neighbours (Emerson, Chai, & Yancey, 2001). This means that these two groups have greater

social proximity and thus have fewer geographical and structural barriers to interethnic intimacy (Bratter & Eschbach, 2006; Qian & Lichter, 2007).

Parental Factors

The finding that propinquity is a key predictor of interethnic relationship formation suggests that interethnic couples develop attraction and form relationships similar to same-race couples (Aldridge, 1978; Lampe, 1982; Moore, 1999). It also suggests the existence of competing discourses resisting previous constructions of interethnic couples as mentally disturbed by attempting to reposition those who engage in interethnic intimacy as well-adjusted and psychologically normative.

However, it seems that with continuing social resistance towards interethnic intimacy, discourses of homogamy remain strongly embedded, particularly where they pertain to endogamous mate selection. This is reflected by continued opposition from parental figures towards marriage outside of one's ethnic group, which is documented in the literature. Scholars have asserted that parental factors may be a greater consideration for interethnic couples, compared to same-race couples (Castle Bell & Hastings, 2015; Clark-Ibáñez & Felmlee, 2004; Liu, Campbell, & Condie, 1995; J. Mills, Daly, Longmore, & Kilbride, 1995; Yahya & Boag, 2014). A great deal of academic attention has focused on familial reactions to interethnic relationships, and so researchers have examined how the family can influence the individual propensity to engage in interethnic intimacy.

Many of these studies collect data from undergraduate university students, for whom forming relationships are characteristic of the developmental life stage they are in. Much of this research agrees that perceived approval from one's family is the single most common and powerful predictor of interethnic intimacy (Clark-Ibáñez & Felmlee, 2004; Liu et al., 1995). Liu et al. (1995) surveyed 461 American introductory psychology students of different ethnic backgrounds about their ethnic dating preferences, and found that for a hypothetical relationship, perceived approval from family and friends significantly predicted the degree of ethnocentrism. Similarly, Clark-Ibáñez and Felmlee (2004) surveyed 318 students from a multicultural Californian university and reported that perceived approval from family and society affected their choices to date interracially—but did not affect their internal prejudices. The women in this study were more likely to report that pressure from their families and society was an important reason to refrain from interethnic dating, relative to the men, a finding which has been reported elsewhere (Mok, 1999; M. Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1995). One striking finding to emerge from Clark-Ibáñez and Felmlee's (2004) study was the idea that students' decisions to date cross-culturally was explained more by the ethnic diversity of their parents' friends, rather than that of their own friends. In other words,

respondents were more likely to date interculturally if their parents had diverse social networks of their own, because what they saw their parents doing had a greater effect than what they thought their parents believed about interethnic friendships and romances.

Perceived strong familial disapproval by young people has also been associated with reluctance to form interethnic relationships (Yahya & Boag, 2014). This perceived disapproval is often correlated with young peoples' perceptions of how important it is for their parents to preserve their cultural and religious traditions. Yahya and Boag (2014) found that, in their interviews of 55 Australian university students, the greater the parental pressure about interethnic intimacy, the greater the reluctance to engage in such intimacy. Thus, while many young people are likely to refrain from interethnic romances if they perceive that their families would disapprove, other research has found that declining parental control also motivates the formation of interethnic relationships (Rosenfeld & Kim, 2005). While children remain at home, parents have more control over their children's choices, and can interfere in romances that they disapprove of. However, once young people leave the parental home, they gain more independence to make their own choices (Rosenfeld & Kim, 2005).

Additionally, some relationships persist despite parental disapproval (Yahya & Boag, 2014), which is suggestive of the Romeo and Juliet effect. The Romeo and Juliet effect, a social psychological concept named after the eponymous Shakespearean play, argues that parental opposition to a relationship may, in fact, result in an intensification of the romantic feelings and commitment of the couple (Driscoll, Davis, & Lipetz, 1972). It appears that this is a manifestation of discourses of romanticism, where lovers are encouraged to put themselves and their feelings for one another before everything else. This can include their families, who are often positioned within this discourse as cruel and who lack understanding of the vagaries of the heart. However, empirical evidence for this effect is mixed and inconsistent, and more recent research suggests that other sources in the couple's social network may compensate for familial disapproval (Felmlee, 2001; Sinclair, Hood, & Wright, 2014; Sprecher, 1988). In such scenarios, the relationship is able to thrive. There is some evidence to support this thesis where it concerns interethnic couples (e.g., Bystydzienski, 2011; Foeman & Nance, 2002; Shibazaki & Brennan, 1998).

Emotional Attraction: A Love Like Any Other

From the late 1970s onwards, academics began to reposition interethnic couples in a more favourable light by arguing that they are together for many of the same reasons that co-ethnic couples are: for love (Aldridge, 1978; Lampe, 1982; Moore, 1999). Indeed, most interethnic couples report that the main reason that they are together is that they love and/or

like each other (Lampe, 1982, Moore, 1999). This recognition by academics also suggests that there may be no need to distinguish theories of mate selection between interracial and same-race couples.

In saying so, however, many interethnic couples continue to feel external pressures from society to justify the existence of their relationships, which they appear to do by subscribing to discourses of romanticism, specifically where they relate to endorsing the naturalness of romantic love (Steinbugler, 2007, K. Wu et al., 2014). Romanticism discourses seem to interact with post-racial discourses to produce subject positions for interethnic couples where they can erase the category of race in the face of a greater good: love. For example, in a large ethnographic study exploring gender and sexual identity in 40 American same-sex and heterosexual Black-White couples, Steinbugler (2007) found that many of these couples displayed signs of 'colour-blindness' in their relationships. Like Killian (2002), couples minimised their racial differences and perceived themselves as just like any two people who had fallen in love and chosen to be together. Race was viewed as a minor issue in light of the centrality of love in the relationship, and couples discussed not seeing 'colour'. (Steinbugler, 2007). By emphasising their emotional intimacy, the interracial couples in this study deployed hegemonic discourses of the naturalness of romantic love in order to gain access to subject positions that protected them from external scrutiny.

Similarly, K. Wu et al. (2014) hypothesised that interethnic daters were more likely to view their partners as more attractive on a variety of attributes compared to same-race daters. Wu and her colleagues conducted two studies in the United States—the first involved 245 undergraduate students from a range of majors who were currently in relationships. They completed a questionnaire where they rated themselves, and guessed their partners' ratings of them, on 27 attributes measuring: cerebral traits (e.g., intelligence, academic ability, ambition, goal orientation, etc.); relational traits (e.g., compassion, affection, trustworthiness, etc.); vibrancy (e.g., social skills, confidence, extroversion, etc.); and attractiveness (physical attraction, sexiness, etc.). The researchers found that those in interethnic relationships tended to report that their partners viewed them as significantly more physically attractive, cerebral, and relationally aware compared to the same-race daters—although there were no differences in self-ratings between the two groups. The authors followed up on these findings in a second study by asking 100 interethnic and same-race couples to rate themselves and their partners on the same attributes. Once again, interracial daters rated their partners higher on the cerebral and attractiveness traits relative to the same-race daters. However, this was not a reflection of actual differences in intelligence between the two groups, as an analysis of GPA of the interethnic and same-race daters found no difference (K. Wu et al., 2014). The authors proposed that the interethnic couples in their study perceived that there were more rewards

than costs with regards to remaining in the relationship. This is consistent with previous research, which demonstrated that many interethnic couples also remain together despite family and societal disapproval, suggesting that the costs of external censure are outweighed by the internal benefits of the relationship (Rose & Firmin, 2013; Yahya & Boag, 2014), such as giving and receiving love, as well as creating a sense of belonging and increasing self-esteem (Clark et al., 2015).

Thus far, we have discussed the changes in the discursive constructions used to constitute interethnic intimacy. Where those who engaged in interethnic intimacy were once positioned as mentally unstable and pathological, the literature now endorses a new image of the interethnic partner: someone who is young, well-educated, non-religious, urbanite, who is highly likely to be a member of an ethnic minority. These particular characteristics are explored in further detail in the below sections.

3.1.3 The Characteristics of Interethnic Couples

Aldridge's (1978) essay summarises some of the key characteristics of interethnic couples reported in the literature of the time. For example, those in interethnic relationships were more likely to be: less religious than those in co-ethnic relationships; to have come from stressful parental families; to be from urban areas; to have been married previously; and, in the case of Black-White couples, to be composed of Black men with White women. Additionally, Shibazaki and Brennan (1998), who conducted their study in the United States, found that individuals in interethnic relationships often had lower self-esteem than their co-ethnic counterparts. Some of these alleged characteristics reinforce the positioning of dysfunctionality, as can be seen with the idea that interethnic couples might have a history of failed and traumatic relationships and poor psychological health.

However, since then, other research has attempted to reposition those in interethnic relationships by focusing on the homogeneity of their socio-demographic attributes, and portraying a different picture of those in interethnic relationships. Certain types of people are thought to be more likely to engage in interethnic relationships. These characteristics are discussed in more detail below.

Ethnicity and Sex Differences in Interethnic Intimacy

Ethnic differences in interethnic intimacy are, perhaps, some of the most consistent findings that have arisen in the literature. One of the most common findings is that Black-White relationships and marriages are more likely to be composed of a Black male-White female pairing than a Black female-White male pairing (Aldridge, 1978; Jacobs & Labov, 2002; Kalmijn, 1998; McClintock & McBride, 2010; Qian & Lichter, 2007). At the same time,

however, scholars have used statistical analyses to demonstrate that both Black and White people exhibit strong preferences for endogamy and that their rates of exogamy remain low, compared to other ethnic groups (D'Souza, 2010; Fujino, 1993; Jacobs & Labov, 2002; Qian, 1997; Qian & Lichter, 2007; Yancey, 2007). Conversely, Native Americans, Hispanics, and Asians tend to have relatively high rates of intermarriage compared to other ethnic groups (Fujino, 1993, 1997; Jacobs & Labov, 2002; S. Lee & Yamanaka, 1990; Qian, 1997; Shinagawa & Pang, 1988), although some sources caution against comparing rates of intermarriage between ethnic groups due to the substantial differences in population sizes (Qian, 2005; Qian & Lichter, 2007).

Even with this caveat, such comparisons are rife in the literature, possibly because they are an indicator of the social distance between ethnic groups and the ease with which certain groups may intermarry. Black-White intermarriages, for instance, tend to be one of the most uncommon types of intercultural marriage and are likely indicative of the large social distance between the two groups. The high rates of Hispanic and Asian intermarriages, on the other hand, particularly with the White majority, is suggestive of the social mobility that both groups enjoy (Bratter & Eschbach, 2006; Emerson et al., 2001; Qian & Lichter, 2007).

However, an analysis of ethnicity is insufficient to determine who has ease of access to interethnic marriage. Studies have argued that it is, in fact, the combination of sex and ethnicity that paints a more illuminating picture of social mobility. As we have seen, Black men are more likely than Black women to intermarry, although evidence regarding this is inconsistent. On the other hand, the literature consistently agrees that Asian women, far more than Asian men, have a propensity to engage in interethnic marriages and relationships (AhnAllen & Suyemoto, 2011; D'Souza, 2010; Jacobs & Labov, 2002; Liang & Ito, 1999; McClintock & McBride, 2010; Mok, 1999; Shinagawa & Pang, 1988; Yancey, 2007), even in New Zealand (Callister et al., 2007; Didham & Callister, 2014). There seems to be inconsistency regarding the partners with whom Asians intermarry. While some have suggested that Asians intermarry with those from other Asian ethnic groups (Shinagawa & Pang, 1988), others have argued that Asians tend to marry those of the White majority (Fujino, 1993; Jacobs & Labov, 2002). Again, it is useful to delineate sex differences for clarification, and in doing so, a clearer pattern emerges. In intermarriage, Asian women are more likely to marry White men, while Asian men are more likely to marry women from Asian ethnic groups not their own (Fujino, 1993, 1997; Kalmijn, 1998; Qian, 2005).

Why do Asian women seem to prefer White husbands in intermarriage? Several theories posit answers to this question. The main reason appears to be that Asian women value what they perceive as the egalitarianism of White men, compared to their Asian

counterparts. There persists a strong stereotype that Asian men closely adhere to traditional values regarding culture, particularly where it concerns gender roles that state that women ought to be submissive and obedient homemakers. It may be in attempting to escape what they perceive as restrictive gender roles that Asian women pursue White men as romantic partners, believing them to be more romantic, chivalrous, and egalitarian (Liang & Ito, 1999; C. Morgan, 2013; Pyke, 2010; Qian, 2005) . Additionally, for Asian Americans in the United States, it may be that they have become accustomed to Eurocentric standards of beauty. Some studies suggest that Asians (both women and men) find Whites more attractive than they do other Asians (S. Chow, 2000; Fisman, Iyengar, Kamenica, & Simonson, 2008; Fujino, 1993). It is possibly these two factors, in combination with each other, that contribute to Asian women's preference for White male partners.

Nativity and Generational Status

Nativity (i.e., referring to where one was born) is related to the degree of acculturation to mainstream society that an immigrant has achieved. It has been suggested that the more integrated that immigrants are into the dominant host society, the more likely they are to mingle with members of that host society in increasingly intimate interactions. Thus, in literature from the United States, American-born individuals are more likely to marry interculturally compared to foreign-born immigrants (AhnAllen & Suyemoto, 2011; Chen & Takeuchi, 2011; S. Lee & Fernandez, 1998; S. Lee & Yamanaka, 1990; Liang & Ito, 1999; Shinagawa & Pang, 1988).

The literature focuses primarily on Asian Americans in studies of nativity and acculturation in interethnic marriage. This may be because the Asian population is one of the fastest growing immigrant groups in the United States (Shinagawa & Pang, 1996; Tsunokai, McGrath, & Kavanagh, 2014). The effect of greater rates of interethnic marriage for American-born individuals versus foreign-born immigrants seems to be especially strong for Asian Americans. For example, research shows that first-generation Asian immigrants in the United States (those who were not born in the United States, and who only moved there during adolescence or later) are less likely to intermarry with members of the host society (i.e., White or Black Americans), given that they have their own traditions and values that may not integrate so well with those of Americans (D'Souza, 2010; S. Lee & Yamanaka, 1990; Mok, 1999). S. Lee and Yamanaka (1990) also suggest that first-generation Asian immigrants may already have been married prior to immigrating to the United States, or may have stronger ethnic and cultural ties to their own communities and may be unfamiliar or uncomfortable with American culture, the language, and so on. Indeed, Kalmijn (1998) theorised that the influence of one's social group can prevent exogamy. Strong group

identification and group sanctions about exogamy can prevent individuals from intermarrying and thus promote endogamy. In comparison, second-generation (and further) Asian individuals (those born in the host country, in this case the United States, or who moved there at an early age) have had more time to assimilate to the values of the host country, plus they may have lost some of their connection with the culture of their immigrant parents. Furthermore, the longer a family has been in America, the more likely there is to be familial acceptance of an intercultural relationship, given that the family has had plenty of time to become acculturated to American culture (AhnAllen & Suyemoto, 2011).

As such, research has found that second-generation individuals are more likely to intermarry than first-generation immigrants. A comparison of Asian intermarriage patterns between 1980 and 1990 census data from the United States shows that in 1980, American-born Asian men were four times more likely to intermarry compared to their foreign-born counterparts. In 1990, this trend decreased slightly; American-born Asian men were only somewhat less likely than American-born Asian women to intermarry (S. Lee & Fernandez, 1998). Again, it is likely that foreign-born Asian men retain stronger ethnic ties to their culture, making them less predisposed to marrying a woman from another culture or ethnic group. American-born Asian women are also more inclined to intermarry than foreign-born Asian women (Chen & Takeuchi, 2011). American-born Asian women may perceive that they must navigate two cultures that differ vastly in the gender roles that women can take up; on the one hand, American culture may be perceived as egalitarian and with greater opportunities for women, whereas Asian cultures may be perceived as traditional, limiting women to the domestic sphere with the roles of wife, mother, and housekeeper. Having been exposed to both lifestyles, American-born Asian women may decide to reject their parents' culture by choosing to engage in relationships with White men, who they perceive as more egalitarian and caring than Asian men, who are often viewed as chauvinistic and patriarchal (S. Chow, 2000; C. Morgan, 2013; Pyke, 2010). The portrayal of Asian men in Western media may serve to reinforce the lack of appeal of Asian men, who are often portrayed as weak and feminine (C. Morgan, 2013; Pyke, 2010).

Overall, the literature agrees that American-born Asians are more likely to intermarry than foreign-born Asians. However, foreign-born Japanese American women presented an exception to the rule: they were more likely to intermarry compared to American-born Japanese American women (S. Lee & Yamanaka, 1990; Shinagawa & Pang, 1988). Scholars have explained this by noting the disproportionate numbers of war brides entering the United States; indeed, foreign-born Japanese American women were more likely to be married to American veterans than to non-servicemen (Shinagawa & Pang, 1988).

Educational Attainment

In recent decades, literature has increasingly positioned those in interethnic couples as well-educated. The general theme in the scholarship is that the higher the level of education obtained, the greater the likelihood of being involved in an interethnic relationship (Jacobs & Labov, 2002; Kalmijn, 1998; Liang & Ito, 1999; Qian, 1997; Shinagawa & Pang, 1988; M. Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1995). However, this statement appears to come with some qualifiers as not all ethnic groups are equally predisposed to marrying exogamously as a result of receiving higher education.

For instance, S. Lee and Yamanaka (1990) examined the patterns of intermarriage in the Asian American population using a 5% sample of the 1980 census data, and discovered that those Asian women who had received more schooling had been more prone to intermarrying. For example, American-born Japanese and Filipino women, foreign-born Vietnamese women, as well as both native- and foreign-born Chinese women who had married interculturally were shown to have higher levels of education than those who had not married interculturally. On the other hand, higher levels of education did not appear to make a difference on ethnic exogamy for American-born Indian and Vietnamese women. Inversely, American-born Indian, Korean, and Japanese men who had married intraculturally had *more* schooling than those who had been married interculturally.

Likewise, another study again showed that highly-educated individuals, especially women of ethnic minority groups, were more likely to date interculturally (M. Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1995). However, this particular study focused only on the interethnic dating patterns of White, Black, and Hispanic individuals; through its omission of Asian individuals and by focusing on dating rather than marital patterns, it cannot be easily compared to S. Lee and Yamanaka's (1990) analysis.

Qian (1997) used similar data to S. Lee and Yamanaka (1990)—a 5% sample of both 1980 and 1990 census data—to demonstrate that educational attainment affected the intermarriage rates of ethnic minority groups in the United States only; White people were no more likely to intermarry due to having higher levels of education. In line with theories regarding limited marriage markets and imbalanced sex ratios (Kalmijn, 1998), Qian showed that the prevalence of endogamy increased for ethnic groups that were larger in size. However, educational attainment was not positively correlated with interethnic marriage for all ethnic minorities. Hispanic men and women were more likely to intermarry with increasing education, while, in contrast to some of S. Lee and Yamanaka's findings, endogamy increased for Asian men and women with increasing levels of education. On the whole, however, he argued that interethnic marriage was more common for both men and women with high educational attainment.

It is worth pointing out that many of these studies examining the impact of educational attainment on the prevalence of interethnic marriage focus primarily on Asian Americans and their tendency to intermarry. This can be problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly, it tells us little about the impact of educational attainment on the tendency of other ethnic groups to intermarry. Indeed, there appear to be fewer studies looking at the correlation between educational attainment and intermarriage for other ethnic minorities. Gullickson (2006) specifically examined cases of Black-White intermarriage by using census data from 1980, 1990, and 2000, and found that while Black men and women with lower levels of education (e.g., they had received a high school diploma or less) were less likely to be in an interethnic marriage than those with higher education, he found little evidence suggesting that educational attainment was, in general, positively associated with an increase in the probability of interethnic marriage. However, he observed that this statement was more accurate for the Asian American population, for whom assimilation through intermarriage was far more likely.

Generally, the literature does appear to agree that ethnic minorities have a higher chance of marrying interculturally (D'Souza, 2010; M. Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1995), particularly when they are college graduates as opposed to not having college education (Jacobs & Labov, 2002; Qian, 2005). Young adults with college-educated parents are also more likely to engage in interethnic dating than those whose parents were high school-educated only (D'Souza, 2010). College education affords individuals the opportunity to mingle with a variety of other ethnic groups on a larger scale compared to their high school or community/neighbourhood environments, which may be more socially, racially, and economically segregated. Qian (2005) argues that this could be why educational attainment and high rates of intermarriage are so frequently linked to the Asian American population, given that Asian Americans attend college at higher rates compared to other ethnic minority groups. Indeed, a number of other studies support the notion that for Asian Americans, educational attainment influences intermarriage (Chen & Takeuchi, 2011; Liang & Ito, 1999; Qian & Lichter, 2011; Tsunokai et al., 2014).

It is clear, then, that educational attainment does not always straightforwardly predict interethnic marriage (Lucassen & Laarman, 2009), and may instead have a mediating effect. Lucassen and Laarman (2009), using existing data on the intermarriage patterns of migrants in Europe, noted that due to Black Africans' integration into working class White society in Britain, those with no qualifications were equally likely to marry Whites as those with higher qualifications. What this suggests is that educational attainment on its own cannot be said to have a direct positive relationship with rates of intermarriage; rather, other factors are likely to have interacting effects (Furtado & Theodoropoulos, 2011).

We have seen that educational attainment has meaning, to some extent, for the rates of interethnic marriage for ethnic minority groups, particularly Asian Americans. However, even among Asian Americans, this trend is not so straightforward. Asians are an incredibly heterogeneous group, spanning multitudinous ethnic groups, religions, cultures, languages, and so on. Therefore, studies purporting to analyse the intermarriage patterns of the Asian American population are not always comparable, given that 1) various groups that have significant cultural differences are often conflated, and 2) we must be cautious in checking which Asian ethnic groups are being included in the analysis. For example, many studies have included Indians (a South Asian ethnicity) in their analyses of Asian intermarriage patterns (e.g., Jacobs & Labov, 2002; S. Lee & Yamanaka, 1990; Liang & Ito, 1999), while other studies on Asian intermarriage patterns focus mainly on East Asians, such as Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans (Chen & Takeuchi, 2011; Fujino, 1997; Mok, 1999).

By and large, however, various Asian ethnic groups (Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Indian, Vietnamese, Korean, etc.) are often blended into one larger group for analysis—primarily because 1) the smaller sample sizes they comprise on their own are problematic for statistical analysis, and 2) census data from the United States uses four main racial categorisations: White, Black, Hispanic, and Asians. When analysing the Indian case separately from other Asian ethnic groups, the evidence is inconsistent about how educational attainment affects rates of intermarriage amongst the Indian population (S. Lee & Yamanaka, 1990; Qian, Blair, & Ruf, 2001).

Finally, it is also necessary to point out that most interethnic couples are educationally homogamous; that is, they tend to have relatively equal levels of education (Qian, 2005). This finding supports the theory of Social Homogamy as a form of mate selection, whereby individuals attempt to partner with someone as similar to them as possible on various traits.

Religiosity of Interethnic Couples

As early as the 1950s, the literature concurred that interethnic couples tended to be less religious than co-ethnic couples (Aldridge, 1978; Golden, 1953; Schnepps & Yui, 1955). Schnepps and Yui's (1955) examination of the case of American men married to Japanese war brides suggested that the less devout were more inclined to intercultural marriage, whereas Golden (1953) found that interracial couples were likely to be interfaith couples as well. Some of these findings have been supported by more recent and more methodologically sound research, while others have not; for many couples whose relationships cross racial and ethnic lines, a shared religion is often more important than the cross-racial nature of their relationship, and is frequently the strong foundation for the couple's relationship (Graham, Moeai, & Shizuru, 1985; Lucassen & Laarman, 2009).

Thus, the positioning of interethnic couples as less religious than co-ethnic couples has been inconsistent, and the literature is unclear as to how, exactly, religion manifests itself as an aspect of intercultural marriages and relationships. Some studies have suggested that those who are more religiously conservative are less inclined to engage in interethnic intimacy (Perry, 2013, 2014; Yancey, 2007), but this does not preclude those who do possess a profound faith in their religion from having an interethnic partner and from finding satisfaction in their relationships (Bystydzienski, 2011; Heller & Wood, 2000). Bystydzienski (2011) interviewed over 30 American couples from a variety of religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. Where religion was concerned, most of the couples were non-practicing, primarily due to external pressures—such as from family members and their communities—to conform to some extent. In other cases, partners retained their own religion, but made compromises with their partners to accommodate their differences. Religion was viewed as one aspect of cultural identity, which couples worked on together to reinvent, by becoming aware of those differences, exploring them, and piecing them together (or discarding them) to create a new religious identity that suited both partners in the couple.

Where interethnic couples are also interfaith couples, then, there seems to be a process of negotiation and compromise in terms of religion. This may indicate that these couples do not have extremely fixed ideas about doctrine, and that in terms of religion and spirituality, they have the cognitive flexibility to accommodate other beliefs and worldviews. This may be in line with other research that suggests that those who are more conservative in their religious faith are less willing to date interculturally (Perry, 2013; Yancey, 2007).

Despite the numerous links made between interethnic couples and religion, very little research has been conducted to shed light on this positioning of interethnic couples. A series of studies conducted by Perry (2013, 2014, 2016) attempted to fill this gap by determining the precise link between religiosity and willingness to have an interethnic relationship. Perry used data from the 2007 Baylor Religion Survey, collected by the Gallup organisation to determine the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours of Americans regarding religion and spirituality, focusing on those of the Protestant faith. He distinguished between public practices (such as attending religious services) and private, devotional practices (such as private prayers and reading sacred texts by oneself).

Perry's (2013) analysis showed that those who more frequently engaged in public practices compared to those who did not were less likely to have an interethnic relationship. Furthermore, those who considered themselves more religious were also less likely to date interculturally. Interestingly, those who engaged in private devotional practices frequently were *more* likely to have an interethnic relationship. Perry theorised that these findings may have demonstrated differences between religious fundamentalism and the 'quest' orientation.

The former involves having authoritarian tendencies and strict adherence to doctrine and racial intolerance, whereas the latter relates to being open to having religious doubts, the ability to be self-critical and to change one's mind, and also with racial tolerance (Perry, 2013; Van Droogenbroeck, Spruyt, Siongers, & Keppens, 2014). However, it is also important to question the direction of the correlation that Perry found. Perhaps those who engaged in private devotional practices were not more likely to be in interethnic relationships, specifically due to having a religious quest orientation. Instead, it is also possible that those in interethnic relationships were more likely to engage in private religious practices than in public ones, due to apprehension around being judged in public spaces for being in such relationships.

Perry's (2013) findings were extended by his 2014 analysis, which showed a significant link between religion and interethnic romance through the desire for religious and cultural endogamy. Where he previously linked more frequent church attendance with a lower likelihood of engaging in an intercultural relationship (Perry, 2013), he showed that those who attended church more frequently were more desirous of maintaining endogamy, and were, therefore, less willing to breach cultural and religious boundaries in pursuit of a romantic relationship (Perry, 2014). This was less about religion and more about group processes of socialisation and wanting to maintain group boundaries along racial and cultural lines. Furthermore, early religious socialisation also affected one's likelihood to have an interethnic relationship (Perry, 2016). Those with Jewish parents were more likely to date interculturally than those with Protestant parents. In addition, those who attended church services more frequently while living in a non-Western region of the United States (particularly in the South) were less likely to date interculturally than those who attended church less or who lived in a Western region of the United States (Perry, 2016).

Perry's (2013, 2014, 2016) studies have made a significant contribution as they appear to be the first studies examining how interethnic romances are linked to religion and provides a more nuanced breakdown of religious variables associated with interethnic dating. However, further work is needed to address why and how this may affect interethnic couples raised in other faiths. Moreover, it is important to remain cautious in interpreting the correlational effects of such studies, as there may be additional variables that could explain the religious orientation differences observed between interethnic and co-ethnic partners.

Thus far, this chapter has explored the discursive background of interethnic intimacy and the ways in which those in interethnic relationships are likely to be positioned. In light of these discursive structures, the following section will shift its focus by examining the repercussions of these discourses on interethnic couples themselves.

3.2 Part Two: The Consequences of Interethnic Intimacy

Interethnic relationships have been singled out in the literature as a type of relationship that warrants further examination, suggesting that there are numerous challenges facing those in these types of relationships. This kind of research often presumes that co-ethnic relationships are the normative form of relationship, the ideal to which other kinds of romantic relationships are compared to. As such, many of these studies examining the consequences of interethnic relationships are comparative.

Research on the consequences of interethnic intimacy usually examines these outcomes on three levels: 1) the repercussions of the individual's/couple's interactions with society; 2) the effects for the individual's/couple's relationships with families and friends, and 3) the impact on the couple's relationship. This subsequent section of the chapter focuses on the last two points, given that the societal impact of interethnic relationships has already been investigated in Part One of this thesis.

3.2.1 Reactions of Family and Friends

It is common for those in interethnic relationships (compared to those in co-ethnic relationships) to experience severe deteriorations in their relationships with their family members, and sometimes their friends (Leslie & Young, 2015; MacNeil & Adamsons, 2014). This phenomenon has been well-documented in the literature for many decades (e.g., Beigel, 1966; Bystydzienski, 2011; Castle Bell & Hastings, 2015; Fontaine & Dorch, 1980; Harris & Kalbfleisch, 2000; Hibbler & Shinew, 2002; Keyser, 2011; Kouri & Lasswell, 1993; Poulsen, 2003a, 2003b; Rosenblatt, 2009; Steinbugler, 2007). It has been suggested that parental reactions to discovering that one's child is in an interethnic relationship are often influenced by societally-held attitudes and stereotypes regarding other ethnic groups, such as: beliefs about supposed biological differences between 'races' and concerns about class, caste, religious, or racial mixing (Beigel, 1966).

Based on these attitudes and beliefs, parents are prone to reacting strongly when they find out that their children are in interethnic relationships due to the belief that such relationships veer away from "natural bounds" (Beigel, 1966, p. 188). Those in interethnic relationships continue to encounter disapproval from their families and friends, which can manifest as rejection (like being disowned or ostracised), discrimination, and even violence (Beigel, 1966; Clark et al., 2015; Harris & Kalbfleisch, 2000; Rose & Firmin, 2013; Steinbugler, 2007), especially when they are interfaith relationships as well (Bystydzienski, 2011). Those entertaining the idea of engaging in an interethnic relationship may avoid doing so because they fear negative repercussions with friends and family (Harris & Kalbfleisch, 2000).

Evidence from clinicians suggests that even when individuals have positive and satisfying relationships with their families, the nature of these relationships can take a dramatic turn for the worse once the individual discloses being in an interethnic relationship (Poulsen, 2003a, 2003b). Opposition from family members can be so forceful that it may have severe backlash for the couple, such as discouraging further development of a potential relationship or even wreaking extreme damage to pre-established relationships (Rosenblatt, 2009). This damage might not take the form of terminating the relationship, but can cause individuals in the relationship to become stressed and angry, and may also cause them to grieve for the loss of family support and other relationships (Rosenblatt, 2009; Steinbugler, 2007). However, many interethnic couples tend not to receive opposition from their families when there are already other such couples within the family (Rose & Firmin, 2013). It is possible that such families already have racially tolerant attitudes and are accepting of interethnic intimacy. This means that individuals in the family will be less hesitant about finding interethnic partners. On the other hand, existing interethnic couples in these families may have paved the way by changing once intolerant attitudes towards interethnic intimacy within their families, and thus providing other family members with the opportunity to safely have interethnic relationships.

There are numerous studies investigating the impact of family approval and disapproval on interethnic couples (e.g., Castle Bell & Hastings, 2015; Keyser, 2011; Kouri & Lasswell, 1993). Many of these studies focus on Black-White interethnic couples. For example, Killian (2001a, 2001b) conducted research with 10 Black-White married couples in New York, many of whom discussed how family members were initially opposed to their relationships, occasionally in a very dramatic way. Likewise, Hibbler and Shinew (2002) interviewed six married Black-White couples in Illinois, who reported that their friends and family had withdrawn from them for race-related reasons, and that in many cases, the couples were forced to retreat from friends and family to protect themselves from hostility. All the couples agreed that support from their loved ones was essential and rewarding (see also Clark et al., 2015), but very few had received it. To compensate, couples try to gain support from other accepting members in their social networks (Bystydzienski, 2011; Poulsen, 2003a, 2003b; Steinbugler, 2007).

However, although many intercultural couples experience negative reactions from their families upon disclosure of their relationships, some also experience love and acceptance (McNamara et al., 1999; M. Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1995). M. Tucker and Mitchell-Kernan (1995) conducted a survey of Californian residents ($n = 1116$) who had dated interracially in the past. Most respondents reported that their families had known of the relationship and few had objected. It also seems that time has an alleviating effect. Many

interethnic couples report that, over time, their families have come to accept their relationships. Kouri and Lasswell (1993) interviewed 29 Black-White couples in Los Angeles, a city which has more ethnic and cultural diversity compared to other areas in the United States. Participants reported that while some family members initially disapproved, most families eventually accepted the relationship, and that Black families in particular tended to demonstrate more acceptance of the relationship from the beginning, compared to White families. Interestingly, when family disapproval did occur, it did not discourage couples from continuing their romances, which is supported by findings from Killian (2001a, 2001b).

Supplementing this qualitative research, Keyser (2011) conducted a quantitative survey of adults who were or who had once been in heterosexual interracial relationships. Although 30% of survey respondents reported that their parents had disapproved of their relationships in the past, around 75% said that their families currently approved of their relationships. It should be noted that the high proportion of those reporting current approval may indicate those individuals who chose to remain in their relationships, given that the sample was composed of both current and past partners in interracial relationships. Similar to findings from Kouri and Lasswell (1993), Keyser observed that 90% of respondents said that even if their friends and family disapproved of their interracial relationships, this would not be sufficient motivation to end the relationship. However, approval did affect how intercultural couples navigated the subject of race in their relationships. Greater approval resulted in race being a less salient topic between partners and they had fewer arguments around race, compared to couples who experienced less family approval.

Other research looking at how parental approval and disapproval affects interethnic couples has been carried out as well. Castle Bell and Hastings (2015) conducted interviews in the United States with each partner in 19 Black-White relationships and identified three types of parental approval/disapproval that resulted in different outcomes for couples: dual-approval (where parents of both partners approved of the relationship), one-sided approval (where only one partner's parents approved), and dual-disapproval (where both sets of parents disapproved). Dual-disapproval was not experienced by any of the couples in this study. When couples experienced dual-approval (where parents of both partners approved of the relationship), couples felt accepted and relieved during disclosure, and experienced feelings of validation and could rely on familial support to cope with external threats. The family home was viewed as a safe space for these couples. On the other hand, those who experienced one-sided approval experienced greater levels of stress and anxiety—particularly for the individual with the unsupportive parents. The couple felt threatened and invalidated and put more effort into attempting to gain approval. Although there are some minor issues that have not been considered in this study—such as considering that one parent may

approve of the relationship while the other might not—this research changes the varying forms that parental approval can take and how this might be bound up in power dynamics. Disapproval can affect intercultural relationships in harmful ways. However, it should also be pointed out that even if couples lack parental approval, their friends tend to be more supportive of the couple (Rose & Firmin, 2013). It is unclear to what extent that support from friends can counter the negative effects resulting from a lack of parental/familial support. Furthermore, parental approval seems to vary according to the ethnicity of the partners; Field et al. (2013) demonstrated that parental approval for Asian-White couples was higher than for Black-White couples.

3.2.2 Individual and Couple Outcomes

This section deals with the effects of being in an interethnic relationship on the couple themselves, and touches on: relationship stability and satisfaction, cultural issues, psychological wellbeing, social isolation, communication, conflict management and resolution, sex and gender role ideology, and coping strategies.

Relationship Stability and Satisfaction

The literature on interethnic intimacy displays a preoccupation with the stability of interethnic relationships. Although relationship research generally has given a great deal of attention to factors that contribute to relationship dissolution (Le, Dove, Agnew, Korn, & Mutso, 2010), it equally attends to maintenance strategies and factors of successful romantic relationships (e.g., L. Baker & McNulty, 2011; Overall & McNulty, 2017; Stafford & Canary, 1991). The latter trend has not gained as much momentum compared to the former in the interethnic intimacy literature. Stability is usually measured by ascertaining the success of relationships, typically through measuring rates of divorce or relationship termination and the behaviours associated with dissolution (e.g., Bratter & King, 2008; Monahan, 1970; Zhang & van Hook, 2009).

Research from the early decades of the twentieth century often found that interethnic marriages were more prone to ending in divorce compared to co-ethnic marriages. However, there were numerous methodological flaws with such inquiries, and other early scholars from the latter half of the twentieth century claimed that the evidence was contradictory (e.g., Aldridge, 1978; Monahan, 1970). Monahan (1970) contended that that there were no statistical records that showed that (Black-White) intercultural marriages were inclined to be unstable. Additionally, he demonstrated that there were issues with how previous investigations of instability were conducted, including non-random selection of the couples; inaccuracies or omissions in census data and marriage records where they concerned racial

categorisation of the couples; and not accounting for overrepresentations in some populations of interethnic marriages (like military personnel and war brides). Monahan reasoned that failing to account for these issues of methodology resulted in inconsistent data about intercultural marriages.

Since this early period of research, literature examining the stability of interethnic relationships has become sparser (Zhang & van Hook, 2009). D'Souza (2010) found that interethnic unions tend to be shorter in duration compared to co-ethnic relationships, and this general finding seems to be upheld in most of the recent literature (Bratter & King, 2008; Wang, Kao, & Joyner, 2006; Zhang & Van Hook, 2009). In a study examining intercultural and intracultural dating amongst American adolescents, Wang et al. (2006) found that, after controlling for a range of variables, teenagers who were in intercultural dating relationships were 11% more likely to terminate their relationships than those who were in intracultural dating relationships. However, with age, these teenagers in general were less likely to break up with their partners. Given the comparatively short-lived nature of romantic relationships amongst adolescents (Meier & Allen, 2009), it is, perhaps, not the ideal assessment of relationship stability for interethnic relationships in the general adult population.

There may be cultural variances in the acceptance of divorce that need to be accounted for when measuring marital stability in relationships. Zhang and van Hook (2009) undertook one such study that has attempted to address this issue by examining how various ethnic and gender combinations of intercultural couples may be more prone to marital dissolution compared to others. Using ethnic divorce convergence theory, which states that the propensity to terminate a marital relationship amongst intercultural couples lies somewhere between the divorce rates of the pertinent ethnic groups (F. Jones; 1996), the authors used a longitudinal sample of over 23,000 American married couples (who were interviewed multiple times over three to four years) to assess the stability of their relationships. Racial categories included the standard Black, White, Asian, Hispanic, and other minority groups. Native American endogamous marriages and White-Native American marriages were excluded due to small sample sizes. Overall, the researchers found that interethnic marriages were indeed less stable than co-ethnic ones. More importantly, however, this pattern did not hold when intercultural marriages were broken down into different ethnicity-gender categories. Intercultural marriages involving Black partners were the least stable, and the Black-husband and White-wife pairing was the least stable pairing of all. On the other end of the spectrum, intercultural marriages involving Asians (regardless of gender) were more stable than endogamous White marriages.

Similar to Zhang and van Hook (2009), Bratter and King (2008) found that although interethnic couples were more prone to divorcing compared to co-ethnic couples, once again

this observation was not consistent across all ethnic and gender pairings. In line with Zhang and van Hook's findings, Bratter and King found that Black husbands married to White wives had twice the chance of divorcing compared to endogamous White couples. On the other hand, Asian husbands and White wives were 59% more likely to divorce than endogamous White couples. Inversely, White husbands with Black wives were 44% less likely to divorce than endogamous White couples, while White husbands with Asian wives were only 4% more likely to divorce than White husbands married to White wives.

These findings may reflect the differences in societal pressures and constraints that these different types of couples receive, as well as the social distance between ethnic groups, which is often contingent on gender (Canlas, Miller, Busby, & Carroll, 2015; Shinagawa & Pang, 1996; Z. Wu, Schimmele, & Hou, 2015). Moreover, it seems that women of colour are more acceptable than men of colour as spouses to the White majority, hinting at the differences in racial/gender stereotypes and the social mobility between the two sexes (Canlas et al., 2015; C. Morgan, 2013; Pyke, 2010; Tsunokai et al., 2014).

On the other hand, literature on interethnic intimacy has also examined the relationship satisfaction of interethnic couples, which typically uses survey questionnaires or qualitative questions to measure how satisfied individuals are in their romantic relationships. Empirical evidence lacks agreement about how happy and satisfied interethnic couples are with their relationships. Fontaine and Dorch (1980) investigated the problems and benefits of intercultural relationships by using a large random sample of White, Black, and Hispanic families in Kansas, which included 137 married couples (30 of whom were intercultural). They interviewed each spouse about their problems with family members, friends, and those in their communities, as well as about their satisfaction with family life, and then compared the responses between the intercultural and intracultural participants. They determined that the intercultural partners perceived that they experienced more external problems; that is, more problems outside of the relationship regarding their relationships with relatives, friends, and community members. The frequency of these issues often manifested as the partners participating less in their communities, as well as identifying with their neighbourhoods less, compared to the intracultural partners. However, there were no differences between the intercultural and intracultural partners on how they experienced internal family problems; that is to say, there were no differences in problems within the couple unit itself. Interestingly, the intercultural partners reported being more satisfied with their marriages than the intracultural partners, and also attributed their problems to causes outside of the family/couple unit. It is possible that because the intercultural couples experienced more external challenges compared to intracultural couples, they entered their relationships knowing there would be additional obstacles and learned to cope with them, which resulted

in developing more effective coping strategies and greater resilience, making them better at resolving internal family issues (Bystydzienski, 2011). It is also possible that interethnic couples develop an 'us versus them' mentality due to perceptions of greater external pressures, which allow them to bond more intimately to resolve internal issues (Clark et al., 2015).

On the other hand, Hohmann-Marriott and Amato (2008) reported that intercultural couples had lower quality relationships and less satisfaction, and speculated that it was for the exact same reasons suggested by Fontaine and Dorch (1980). According to Hohmann-Marriott and Amato, intercultural couples were more likely to have greater challenges in their relationships, due to a number of factors, including having entered the relationship with: more complex relationship histories; a greater likelihood of parental divorce; and fewer resources and social support. Not only did these factors decrease relationship satisfaction, but couples also experienced more conflicts and had greater expectations of the relationship ending.

The inconsistency in these findings extends further into the literature. Several studies report that interethnic couples experience lower relationship satisfaction than their co-ethnic counterparts (Bratter & Eschbach, 2006; Fu, Tora, & Kendall, 2001; Hiew et al., 2015); on the other end of the spectrum, research also demonstrates that interethnic couples experience greater relationship satisfaction compared to co-ethnic couples (Negy & Snyder, 2000; Troy et al., 2006). Other studies report few differences in relationship satisfaction between intercultural and intracultural couples (Lantsman, 2003; MacNeil & Adamsons, 2014; Shibazaki & Brennan, 1998). Like Fu et al. (2001), Lantsman (2003) found that couples across the board generally reported high levels of relationship satisfaction, although unlike the former study, Lantsman showed that intracultural and intercultural couples had similar levels of satisfaction with their relationships. Interestingly, women in intercultural relationships demonstrated the highest levels of commitment to their relationships out of all the partners in both types of relationship. Shibazaki and Brennan (1998) also found no differences in relationship satisfaction, but noted that different dimensions contributed to satisfaction. For the intercultural couples, relationship satisfaction was affected by interactions with family, friends, and the public, whereas for the intracultural couples, the public did not register as a contributing factor to relationship satisfaction.

These inconsistent findings suggest that there are factors that mediate how challenges and pressures affect relationship satisfaction for interethnic couples. We have seen that in some cases, problems and challenges can result in greater relationship quality, whereas in others, it leads to lower relationship satisfaction. Dainton (2015) indicated that certain maintenance activities mediate relationship satisfaction for interethnic couples. Via an online

survey with those in interethnic marriages, she discovered that respondents' perceptions of how their partners used maintenance activities predicted marital satisfaction. For instance, where infidelity and avoidance were negative predictors of satisfaction, effective conflict management and greater use of social networks positively predicted satisfaction. Likewise, greater infidelity predicted less commitment, while greater use of social networks and more openness between partners was a positive predictor of commitment. Overall, satisfaction predicted commitment.

Therefore, it seems that there are a variety of factors affecting relationship satisfaction for interethnic couples. Firstly, greater social support, particularly from friends and family members (and the public, to a lesser extent) helps improve couples' responses to obstacles encountered in their relationships. On the other hand, activities that would be destructive for any relationship—such as infidelity, avoiding one's partner, not engaging in effective communication or conflict management—also hinder satisfaction and commitment. This is in line with what the research says about relationship satisfaction for intercultural couples: that their relationship functioning is no different to that of intracultural couples, and that they are not inherently dysfunctional (Troy et al., 2006).

Cultural Issues

One of the most significant problems encountered by intercultural couples is the challenge of negotiating between and integrating two usually very different cultures in their everyday lives (Graham et al., 1985). Problems faced by intercultural couples are usually founded in conflicts about culture, rather than race (Bischoff, 2005), as most couples find that the former is more salient in their relationships than the latter (Bystydzienski, 2011). Culture informs how individuals think, feel, and behave, and is also the source of norms and rituals (Vaughan & Hogg, 2011). When there are such stark contrasts in even the most fundamental of behaviours and norms—such as in eating habits, financial habits, rituals undertaken at important stages in the developmental life cycle, and other living habits— conflicts can arise between couples, regardless of ethnic or cultural background.

Individuals also tend to have certain understandings and expectations that are based in cultural development, such as economic expectations in spousal selection; the standards of financial wellbeing in one's culture; understandings of gender roles; expectations around the gendered division of labour; expectations around the emotional or financial responsibilities to one's parents, as well as one's spouse's parents; expectations and understandings of sexuality and love; cultural standards about when to have children and how to raise them; and so on (Rosenblatt, 2009; Ting-Toomey, 2009). However, such conflicts can arise and become exacerbated because of clashes between these cultural

expectations, as intercultural couples may discover that their lifestyles are vastly different and may need to determine a way to reconcile their differences.

While such conflicts can exist due to cultural differences between two individuals in an intercultural partnership, the research suggests that intercultural relationships are no less rewarding, intimate, and fulfilling than intracultural relationships. Heller and Wood (2000) interviewed 25 co-ethnic Jewish American married couples and 25 interethnic couples where one partner was Jewish. They discovered that the co-ethnic and interethnic couples accessed different pathways to achieve similar levels of intimacy. For the co-ethnic couples, their shared religion and ethnic bond provided ways of understanding each other; the interethnic couples, on the other hand, achieved intimacy through the joint exploration and negotiation of their differences. Scholars have contended that this process of negotiating differences is essential for healthy interethnic relationships, because although couples may have initiated their relationships on the basis of other similarities—like shared interests, similar socioeconomic status, social networks, and so on (Rosenblatt, 2009)—any failure to acknowledge cultural differences can result in faulty impressions of similarity (Bystydzienski, 2011; Heller & Wood, 2000). In turn, these inaccurate impressions could result in misunderstandings between the couple and ultimately in less understanding and intimacy (Heller & Wood, 2000). Despite experiencing tensions due to cultural differences, however, interethnic couples report the necessity of respecting and being patient with one's partner as the most important component of negotiating cultural issues (Rodríguez-García et al., 2016).

Interethnic couples report numerous advantages of being culturally different, including gaining a broader understanding of the world, learning about other cultures, seeing things from a new perspective, and reflecting on their own ethnic identity and heritage in ways they had not thought of prior to being in an interethnic relationship (AhnAllen & Suyemoto, 2011; Bratter & Eschbach, 2006; Chen & Takeuchi, 2011; Clark et al., 2015; Foeman & Nance, 2002; Heller & Wood, 2000; Karis, 2003, 2009; Lantsman, 2003; Leslie & Letiecq, 2004; Leslie & Young, 2015; Negy & Snyder, 2000; Steinbugler, 2007; Yodanis, Lauer, & Ota, 2012). Couples find that the cultural diversity and exposure frequently benefits and enriches their lives together (Clark et al., 2015; Lantsman, 2003; Negy & Snyder, 2000; Seshadri & Knudson-Martin, 2013; M. Wong, 2009). However, the process of negotiating and integrating culture is not a simple one. Seshadri and Knudson-Martin (2013) used a grounded theory approach to inquire how 17 American intercultural couples from a range of ethnic backgrounds managed racial and cultural differences. The authors established four relationship structures to categorise how couples organised their cultural differences (Integrated, Coexisting, Singularly Assimilated, and Unresolved), which in many ways are suggestive of the Acculturation Model for immigrants first set forth by Berry (1980) as cited

in Ward (2008). Couples who fell into the Integrated category were able to harmoniously merge their cultures in everyday living, reflecting mutual validation and celebration of each other's cultures (like immigrants in Berry's Integration category). Those in the Coexisting category (similar to Berry's Separation category) did not merge their cultures—keeping them separate—but still respected their partners' culture and lifestyle and valued their differences, while those in the Singularly Assimilated category (like Berry's Assimilation category) demonstrated how one partner's culture took dominance over the other's in daily life, often viewed by the other partner as the right way of doing things. The Unresolved couples, however, were unable to manage their cultural differences, which created tensions in their relationship (this is reflective of Berry's final category, Marginalisation). This research demonstrates why it is important for intercultural couples to find an effective method of managing their differences; failure to do so can create rifts in the relationship (Seshadri & Knudson-Martin, 2013). Indeed, several sources suggest that many intercultural couples benefit from co-creating a culture that is a hybridisation that draws strongly from both cultures. This process is known as cultural fusion in cultural psychology (Croucher & Kramer, 2016). This fusion allows interethnic couples to celebrate the best parts of both cultures while simultaneously discarding those aspects which they view as undesirable or irrelevant to their union (Bystydzienski, 2011; Tili & Barker, 2015; M. Wong, 2009).

However, the salience of cultural differences within the relationship, and the degree to which they become a source of conflict frequently depends on the environment that the couple inhabits. Through her work interviewing 32 intercultural couples in the United States from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, Bystydzienski (2011) found that when intercultural couples live in ethnically diverse environments where they have multiple sources of social support, couples value their differences, which are rarely a source of conflict. Conversely, when couples live in environments that tend to marginalise either one or both partners and where the couple lacks social support, the stress of marginalisation highlights their cultural differences, which then become a source of conflict. However, it is not the racial differences between the two partners that act as a source of conflict; rather it is the cultural differences that are salient. Furthermore, many couples report engaging in a phenomenon known as colour-blindness (Karis, 2003; Killian, 2002, 2012; Lantsman, 2003; Steinbugler, 2007), whereby they claim that the race of their partner is not important to them, a statement which is often accompanied by other statements like, "we are just like any other normal, boring couple", and "I saw him/her, not the colour of his/her skin". While such statements are meant to be reassuring and mitigate the impact of racial and cultural differences between the couple, Childs (2008) argues that colour-blindness is a detrimental phenomenon that, in dismissing colour, in fact invalidates the experiences of people of

colour, including their experiences of racism and discrimination. Thus, in dismissing the colour of their partners, those in intercultural relationships may also be dismissing the societal significance of being a person of colour. Yet at the same time, interethnic couples display increased awareness and empathy for their partners' experiences of racial discrimination (AhnAllen & Suyemoto, 2011; Castle Bell & Hastings, 2011; Foeman & Nance, 2002; Karis, 2003; Killian, 2001a, 2001b, 2002; Poulsen, 2003a, 2003b; Schueths, 2014; Steinbugler, 2007; Twine & Steinbugler, 2006).

Although interethnic couples have a variety of cultural issues to navigate, their reasons for coming into therapy are usually the same as those of co-ethnic couples (Poulsen, 2003b), such as conflicts over misaligned expectations, infidelity, a lack of communication, sexual dissatisfaction, extended family, and child-rearing. This last issue can be problematic particularly for interethnic couples (Aldridge, 1978; Beigel, 1966). Reconciliation over cultural conflicts can be less complex for a childless couple, given that each partner does not have to impose their own cultural beliefs, lifestyles, etc., on the other partner. However, intercultural couples may quarrel over how their children should be raised, particularly with regards to religious faith (Seshadri & Knudson-Martin, 2013). Children born of intercultural unions may also struggle with identity issues, unsure about which of their parents' ethnic backgrounds they ought to identify with. Indeed, there is an enormous amount of research attending to racial socialisation and biracial/multiracial/bicultural/multicultural identity development of the children of interethnic couples (e.g., Brunsma, 2005; Hall, 2001; Poston, 1990; Rockquemore, Brunsma, & Delgado, 2009; Stone & Dolbin-MacNab, 2017). Although reviewing the multitude of literature on this topic is not possible within the scope of this thesis, it is important to note that this body of research suggests that ethnic identity development in bicultural/multicultural children should be treated mindfully by their parents (Ting-Toomey, 2009). Furthermore, those in intercultural couples believe that the multiplicity of cultural perspectives enriches the lives of their children (Negy & Snyder, 2000).

Communication & Conflict Management

Communication patterns are typically influenced by culture (MacNeil & Adamsons, 2014; Ting-Toomey, 2009), because language is one of the key features of culture. Therefore, when two individuals from different cultures form an intimate relationship, communication issues often arise (Leslie & Young, 2015). This can lead to problems in resolving conflicts. A sub-section of literature on interethnic relationships accordingly delves into the topic of communication and conflict resolution, focusing primarily on couples where the partners come from very different cultural backgrounds (e.g., White and Asian cultures).

Much of the research has concluded that, like most other couples, interethnic couples resolve conflicts by eroding communication barriers and remaining empathic, sensitive, and committed to their relationships (Bystydzienski, 2011; MacNeil & Adamsons, 2014; Tili & Barker, 2015; Ting-Toomey, 2009). Most interethnic couples have internal, everyday issues to overcome, which are sometimes compounded by differences in language—both verbal and bodily—as well as by differing cultural expectations of what (e.g.) love means. These cultural differences often mean partners have very distinct ways of decoding communication patterns (Leslie & Young, 2015; Ting-Toomey, 2009). For instance, Ting-Toomey (2009) distinguished the patterns of communication decoding between individualist and collectivist cultures. Individualist cultures tend to have low-context communication, which means that people from these cultures frequently communicate explicitly and clearly, without much room for inference. On the other hand, collectivist cultures more commonly employ high-context communication, which more often relies on inference, interpretation, and using subtle and nonverbal cues to communicate (Tili & Barker, 2015; Ting-Toomey, 2009). Misunderstandings can arise between two partners in an interethnic union where one uses low-context communication and the other uses high-context communication, because each partner expects certain cues from the other and can misinterpret the meaning of some behaviours.

It is important, then, for interethnic couples to attend to how their cultural backgrounds affect communication and to develop culturally sensitive strategies to improve their communication with one another (Bystydzienski, 2011; Ting-Toomey, 2009). For example, Tili and Barker (2015) examined communication in White American-East Asian intermarriages, using qualitative interviews to assess how spouses developed intercultural communication competence. The researchers found that being self-aware, mindful, open-minded, respectful, and appreciative of one's partner's culture aided couples in understanding and reconciling cultural differences. Self-disclosure, which was difficult for the Asian spouses due to their preference for high-context communication, was also another key competency to improve communication. Most importantly, couples reported creating a new form of communicating that facilitated the development of a "third culture" (Tili & Barker, 2015, p. 206)—a creative synthesis of both cultures, much like the process of fusion theorised about elsewhere in the literature (Croucher & Kramer, 2016).

Most of the research likewise reports that intercultural couples experience changes in their communication styles to accommodate for cultural differences (AhnAllen & Suyemoto, 2011; Bystydzienski, 2011; Tili & Barker, 2015; Ting-Toomey, 2009). Some research suggests that intercultural couples were more likely to resolve conflicts using direct nice strategies (such as by acknowledging and managing the problem, supporting one's

partner, and seeking and offering disclosure) than intracultural couples, whereas intracultural couples tended to use indirect nasty strategies (like minimising the seriousness of the problem as well as one's personal responsibility for it, changing the topic, and implying negativity) more often than intercultural couples (MacNeil & Adamsons, 2014). On a similar note, Canlas et al. (2015) showed that intercultural couples demonstrated high empathy scores compared to intracultural couples, given that the former consciously use empathic forms of communication because they are aware of the cultural obstacles facing them. Overall, while intercultural couples have many communication barriers, they tend to focus on overcoming them by working together.

Psychological Wellbeing & Social Isolation

Although the literature thoroughly discusses all the challenges that interethnic couples frequently encounter, there is very little research that adequately examines how these problems affect the couples' psychological wellbeing. On the other hand, one common consequence of how these obstacles affect interethnic couples' wellbeing concerns how they become socially isolated, which is more well-documented in the scholarship.

As previously explored in this chapter, interethnic couples were positioned as inherently dysfunctional and prone to psychopathology, and some studies demonstrated the various pathological motives of interethnic couples (e.g., Beigel, 1966). More recent research does support the notion that interethnic couples experience greater mental distress than co-ethnic couples (D'Souza, 2010), although there is no evidence maintaining previous claims that such couples are innately mentally disturbed. Certainly, Bratter and Eschbach (2006), in their study of marital distress in interracial couples, determined that intermarriage was not synonymous with greater psychological problems—at least, not for all ethnic and gender pairings.

While such findings may be heartening for interethnic couples, there is a dearth of literature focusing on the mental health of such couples—an important topic given the difficulties they face from external sources. One of the few studies that has addressed this topic examined both mental and physical health (Irby-Shasanmi, 2014). Using existing data from the National Survey of American Life and the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, the researcher performed statistical analyses that showed that interethnic couples tended to have poorer health, compared to co-ethnic couples. In particular, they had more mental health problems, such as anxiety, which was specifically associated with being in an interethnic relationship. Women in interethnic relationships also experienced more mental health problems than those in co-ethnic relationships. These anxiety and other mental health issues were likely related to a lack of social support given that many of those in intercultural

relationships reported being the target of racial discrimination on a daily basis, having more negative family interactions, and having fewer emotional and social resources to draw on in general (Irby-Shasanmi, 2014).

In the same vein, researchers have explored how interethnic couples have fewer social resources to draw on and how their social networks often become restricted for various reasons (Hibbler & Shinew, 2002; Hohmann-Marriott & Amato, 2008; Rosenblatt, 2009). For example, family members, friends, and the public tend to make their disapproval known by withdrawing from or behaving in discriminatory ways towards the couple (Hibbler & Shinew, 2002). Given such outpourings of social disapproval, interethnic couples may experience a range of negative feelings for having engaged in intermarrying (like embarrassment, anger, or guilt), and may also feel pressured to ensure that the relationship works because of the high levels of public scrutiny of the relationship (Clark et al., 2015). The negative impact on wellbeing, however, can be mitigated if family members accept the relationship; this support can act as a protective buffer against other backlash from other members in the social network (Clark et al., 2015).

The lack of social support frequently results in the partners in the relationship to develop a closer and stronger bond, in order to compensate for the lack of support from members of their social networks that would usually provide a protective buffer for the couple (Clark et al., 2015; Hibbler & Shinew, 2002; Leslie & Young, 2015; Rosenblatt, 2009). Establishing effective coping strategies is another method of maintaining psychological wellbeing in the face of the lack of social support from loved ones (Hibbler & Shinew, 2002).

Gender Role Ideology

There has been little empirical research sufficiently addressing how interethnic couples manage conflicts regarding gender roles, although several scholars have written theoretical essays on the subject. For example, Rosenblatt (2009) writes that partners in interethnic relationships may expect the other to enact certain gender roles and that women, especially, may find themselves being asked to occupy roles they are unfamiliar with. This can go in either direction; women who have grown up with more egalitarian values may find that their male partners—if they were raised in more traditional cultures—ask them to take up gender roles more suited to the traditional culture. This can be a source of conflict for couples if the female partner has not agreed to assume roles considered more traditional for a woman—such as being a mother, wife, and housekeeper—and if the male partner has the expectation that she should take up such roles (Bystydzienski, 2011). Conversely, women from more traditional cultures may discover that their partners do not wish for them to occupy those gender roles within the relationship—in fact, some research suggests that

women who have grown up in a traditional parental culture may deliberately distance themselves from that culture, and seek a partner with egalitarian beliefs regarding women's and men's roles in everyday life (C. Morgan, 2013; Yodanis et al., 2012). Yodanis et al. (2012) investigated how some individuals may pursue interethnic relationships due to interest in enacting ethnic identities of other cultures. While the authors did not directly emphasise gender role ideology, a link was established between gender and ethnic identity. For instance, detachment and an inability to connect with one's own culture might motivate individuals to seek out prospective partners from cultures that they feel a greater connection to—which is significant especially for women who believe their own culture cannot provide them with the opportunities for independence that they desire (Yodanis et al., 2012).

In a similar manner, C. Morgan (2013) examined the implications of gender ideologies in second-generation Asian Americans where they concerned engaging in interethnic intimacy. Morgan used pre-existing data from Wave III of the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study, using a grounded theory approach to analyse 88 in-depth interviews with second-generation Asian Americans between the ages of 23 and 27. He found that women and cohabiters were more likely to be in intercultural relationships, compared to men and those that were either married, single, or in a dating relationship. Once again, gender ideologies played a key role in women's choices to pursue intercultural relationships, as they perceived that men from their own cultural backgrounds would pigeonhole them into restrictive roles. This was an exclusively female finding: there were no men that perceived women from their own background as too 'traditional'. It seems that Asian women who desire interethnic relationships often perceive that their own cultures are too patriarchal and controlling of women, and thus view men from their own ethnic background in the same way, while also constructing White men as egalitarian and respectful of women's rights (C. Morgan, 2013; Pyke, 2010; Rodríguez-García et al., 2016).

This phenomenon is more pronounced when women have experiences of their fathers being dominating and controlling, and additionally have experienced negative relationships with men from their own ethnic groups (Bhattacharyya, 2006; C. Morgan, 2013). Therefore, the rejection of men from their own background, and the pursuit of men from cultures perceived to be more egalitarian, represents a rejection of their parents' culture for these women. It also acts as an assertion of their desire for independence, given that many of these women report receiving much more parental pressure than the men did with regards to romantic relationships, as well as in relation to experiencing more rules and restrictions on their behaviours compared to the men (C. Morgan, 2013).

Overall, what little research there is on the importance of gender ideologies in interethnic relationships seems to have reached the consensus that most interethnic couples

prefer to take up egalitarian gender roles in their everyday lives (Bystydzienski, 2011; Rosenthal & Starks, 2015). Greater egalitarian beliefs can act as a protective safeguard for intercultural couples against stigma from family, friends, and the public, and can improve relationship satisfaction (Rosenthal & Starks, 2015). Additionally, Bystydzienski (2011) addressed gender roles directly in her qualitative study examining the experiences of 32 interethnic couples, and found that most of the partners had been exposed to traditional gender roles in some form while growing up. However, within their own relationships, they found it was easier to deviate from such gender roles. They preferred to share housework, child-rearing, working outside of the home, and other such responsibilities between them, instead of allocating domestic duties to the female partner and financial responsibilities to the male partner. Bystydzienski discovered that most partners admitted that, if they had been in co-ethnic relationships, they might have been more likely to conform to traditional gender roles, given that there would be additional pressures from their families to conform to their culture. However, being in an interethnic relationship was constructed as innately unconventional, allowing couples the freedom to be more flexible in their lifestyles and steer away from traditional customs. In this way, couples could select the best parts of their cultures and discard the aspects that they saw no use for (Bystydzienski, 2011).

Coping Strategies

This section will discuss how interethnic couples deal with external pressures, such as negativity from friends and family members as well as harassment and hostility from the public. Due to the dominant theme in the literature conceiving of intercultural couples as inherently dysfunctional, much of the research regarding these couples has been problem-focused. In recent years, however, scholars have been giving attention to the strengths of intercultural couples and the coping strategies that they utilise in order to overcome societal obstacles (Castle Bell & Hastings, 2011; Datzman & Gardner, 2000; Hibbler & Shinew, 2002; Iwasaki et al., 2016; Killian, 2001a, 2001b, 2003; Rose & Firmin, 2013; Seshadri & Knudson-Martin, 2013).

Several researchers have investigated the societal obstacles encountered by Black-White couples, given the severity of the backlash faced by these couples (Datzman & Gardner, 2000; Castle Bell & Hastings, 2011; Hibbler & Shinew, 2002; Killian, 2001a, 2001b, 2003; Rose & Firmin, 2013). Black-White couples often report experiencing overt forms of racism, such as being physically harassed in public spaces. However, it is more common for Black-White couples (and interethnic couples in general) to experience subtler types of racism, which are known in the literature as racial microaggressions. Racial microaggressions are seemingly harmless communications, but which contain implicit negative

messages/stereotypes about certain ethnic groups (Hughey, Rees, Goss, Rosino, & Lesser, 2017; Sue et al., 2007). Three main types of microaggression have been identified: microassaults (purposeful, verbal/nonverbal attacks that are explicitly intended to harm the victim), microinvalidations (implicit behaviours or communications that silence the experiences of a particular group), and microinsults (offensive behaviours or communications that insult individuals, also usually implicit) (Iwasaki et al., 2016; Sue et al., 2007). Many interethnic couples report experiencing public harassment in some form. The most common experience is being stared at by strangers (Datzman & Gardner, 2000), which a type of microinsult. Couples also report experiencing microinvalidations, such as being on the receiving end of other discriminatory and exclusionary practices like being refused service in public places (Hibbler & Shinew, 2002).

Interethnic couples respond to these prejudices in a variety of ways, usually by ignoring or avoiding the racist incident, and rationalising why it happened (Castle Bell & Hastings, 2011; Datzman & Gardner, 2000; Killian, 2001b). However, couples also choose to retaliate and speak up about the incident (Castle Bell & Hastings, 2011; Datzman & Gardner, 2000; Killian, 2001b, 2003), as well as trying to educate the public. Education about racism is often viewed as the most significant method of raising awareness and understanding and many couples believe it is necessary to implement community programmes on the topic (Castle Bell & Hastings, 2011; Datzman & Gardner, 2000; Iwasaki et al., 2016). Many couples also feel that, due to concerns about their safety in public spaces, it is necessary to withdraw from leisure activities in public spaces and to avoid locations that they deem unsafe for them (Hibbler & Shinew, 2002; Killian, 2001b, 2003). As such, it is safer to live in more ethnically diverse communities and to surround themselves with supportive social networks (Bystydzienski, 2001). Finally, communicating with one's partner about discriminatory incidents and appropriately using humour are methods used to acknowledge and validate the meaning of the experience within the couple unit as a means of gaining strength from one another, and to further develop resilience to such incidents (Bystydzienski, 2011; Castle Bell & Hastings, 2011; Rose & Firmin, 2013; Seshadri & Knudson-Martin, 2013).

Thus far, this chapter has sought to explore the discourses surrounding interethnic intimacy in the academic literature, as well as the ways in which interethnic couples are positioned in these discursive structures. It was also important to investigate how interethnic couples are affected by these discursive hegemonies, which the current section of the chapter has attempted to do by examining outcomes for the couples in relation to their internal functioning and also their relationships with external parties. For a more complete understanding of the context of this study, the next section of this chapter will provide a brief examination of interethnic intimacy in New Zealand.

3.3 Part Three: A Brief History of Interethnic Intimacy in New Zealand

The literature is surprisingly sparse when it comes to documenting interethnic intimacy throughout New Zealand's history (Callister, 2003)—surprising because New Zealand is well-known for being a culturally diverse society and because research argues that most of the population endorses its multiculturalism (Ward & Masgoret, 2008). It is even more interesting that there does not exist a great deal of examination into interethnic relationships in New Zealand, given that numerous studies have emerged over the past decade concerning intergroup relations in New Zealand (e.g., Brune, Asbrock, & Sibley, 2016; Milojev, Sengupta, & Sibley, 2014; Sengupta, Barlow, & Sibley, 2012).

However, funnelling down into particular types of intergroup contact appears to result in fewer concerted efforts in empirical research. For example, only one study could be identified that looked at the implications of interracial friendships, focusing on Māori people (the indigenous peoples of New Zealand) and Pakeha people (the Māori term for non-Māori, which is used to refer to New Zealand Europeans). Fozdar (2011) investigated the development of Māori-Pakeha interracial friendships in New Zealand by interviewing 10 Māori and 11 Pakeha individuals with the aim of scrutinising the common-sense assumption that interracial interaction and intergroup contact should result in improved race relations and the dissolution of race-based prejudice. Fozdar challenged the idea that interracial friendships were a site where race relations could be openly and safely discussed by participants and their friends. Although some participants claimed that they had no interest in having conversations about race, many admitted to avoiding the subject on purpose. Post-racial, colour-blind discourses were articulated whereby many claimed that they did not see the race of their friends, and similarities in other areas were promoted. When participants became aware of racial differences between themselves and their friends, the usual course of action was to immediately suppress further discussion so that these differences did not become an area of conflict. Therefore, Fozdar argues that despite New Zealand's overt claims of racial unity, it is clear that underlying and often silenced tensions between ethnic groups, particularly between Māori and Pakeha, continue to exist.

More pertinent to this discussion is the literature on interethnic romantic relationships in New Zealand, yet what exists mostly involves historical views of the sexual and romantic relationships between Māori and Pakeha during the early contact and colonial periods (Grimshaw, 2002; Stevens, 2013; Wanhalla, 2008, 2013). Historically, intimate relationships have existed between Māori and Pakeha since European traders, sealers, and whalers first arrived on the shores of New Zealand and formed both sexual relationships and

formalised marriages with Māori women. The traditional view of historians has been that these relationships were primarily economic and political in nature and that indigenous women's bodies were a commodity in establishing and preserving such alliances. Both the Māori communities and the European explorers involved typically benefitted from such exchanges. Europeans would gain access to land—albeit temporarily—and could integrate into the tribe that they married into for protective advantages. Likewise, the Māori found it useful to form alliances with the Europeans for access to some goods. While much of this is accurate and many Māori women married European men for the benefit of their tribes, it is also true that women often had agency in their choices and sometimes married for love (Wanhalla, 2008, 2013). These customary Māori marriages were often later formalised by the Christian church and became enduring unions once the missionaries arrived.

Aside from these historical accounts, contemporary research on interethnic intimacy in New Zealand is scarce. There are only a handful of evidence-based studies that directly examine the implications of interethnic romances in New Zealand, focusing exclusively on Māori-Pakeha relationships (Harré, 1966, 1968 ; Schäfer, 2007, 2010).

Harré (1966) investigated the incidence of interethnic dating between Māori and Pakeha students at Auckland Teachers' College, and further explored whether there were correlations between interethnic dating and the backgrounds of their students and parents. Using group interviews and questionnaires with a predominantly Pakeha sample (out of the 236 students, only 18 were Māori), he found that, overall, there was a fairly high incidence of interethnic dating. All of the Māori participants had dated Pakeha at college, while most of the Pakeha sample had been out with a Māori person at least once. Pakeha women were more likely to date Māori men compared to Pakeha men. Reasons suggested by students for this high incidence included: 1) little concern and consciousness of race in college; 2) Pakeha women perceived Māori men to be more attractive, manly, and sexually desirable compared to Pakeha men; 3) Pakeha women frequently arrived at college with prejudices towards Māori that were inherited by their parents, which usually dissolved during college; and 4) because of the tendency of the Māori participants to view one another as siblings, oftentimes Māori men preferred to date Pakeha girls. Curiously, these attributed motivations mimic some of those reported in the American literature at that time—that those who dated interracially are likely to do so out of rebelliousness and racialized sexual desire—while also suggesting that racial identity was not considered important by those in these interracial relationships.

The reported reactions of parents upon discovering that their children were dating interracially is also significant. Very few parents outright forbade such relationships, but very few encouraged them either. Pakeha male-Māori female relationships were more normalised by the Pakeha partner's family members and friends compared to Pakeha female-Māori male

relationships, where the latter were more prone to experiencing adverse reactions from parents, and where the former expected more positive reactions to hypothetical marriage. Māori parents, on the other hand, mostly approved of these interethnic relationships, since upward mobility via marriage was viewed as an attractive prospect.

Two years later, Harré extended his investigation with his research into Māori-Pakeha intermarriage in Auckland (Harré, 1968). Here, he used official marriage records to provide a statistical analysis of mixed marriage, and showed that Māori-Pakeha intermarriage increased between 1950 and 1960. Additionally, Pakeha immigrants were more likely to marry Māori than were New Zealand-born Pakeha. He concluded that this type of marriage was very common and normal, suggesting a great degree of racial integration, and speculated about the types of problems that Māori-Pakeha couples faced. Interestingly, mixed couples were not especially prone to divorce, and the children of such marriages were readily accepted by their families. However, this effect of low divorce rates for mixed couples may also be a product of the era—overall, divorce rates were low for the general adult population during the 1960s, although a sharp increase was observed from the 1980s onwards due to changes in divorce legislation (Statistics New Zealand, 2001)

Although Harré's (1966, 1968) investigations were important preliminary steps into investigating intimate relations between ethnic groups in New Zealand, it was not a comprehensive inquiry and there has been a distinct lack of work conducted to develop this field further. Since then, only Schäfer (2007, 2010) has furthered empirical research into the field of interethnic intimacy in New Zealand with her qualitative contribution on the lived experiences of 38 married/de facto individuals in Māori-Pakeha relationships. Through interviewing these partners, Schäfer found that while all relationships take maintenance work, these couples in particular reported having to work even harder to resolve cultural differences—a finding which supports previous research from the United States, described herein. However, a finding not previously accounted for elsewhere takes into consideration the long-term effects of colonisation that continue to be felt by Māori. The Māori participants in Schäfer (2007, 2010) stated that these effects, as well as either the intentional or ignorant racist attitudes of their partners, were a challenging part of their relationships. Consequently, some Māori participants felt oppressed by their Pakeha partners. On the other hand, other Māori participants said that their Pakeha partners supported and aided in their struggles for equality and that sharing culture became a positive source of intimacy within their relationships. In support of previous findings, Schafer (2010) found that participants' experiences of being in interethnic relationships improved their intercultural competence, or their ability to navigate unfamiliar cultures.

These findings are important for several reasons. Firstly, they provide a more recent snapshot of Māori-Pakeha relations in the most intimate possible setting at the micro-level, and how such couples navigate challenges, including racism and dealing with the 'otherness' of one's partner. Secondly, it seems clear that tensions in intimate intergroup relations continue to exist and that it can be challenging to navigate those potential sources of conflict. This is particularly significant in the context of New Zealand race relations, a country that is anecdotally recognised as being a nation of cultural diversity and racial tolerance, but which, according to some sources, has been guilty in recent years of increasing racial intolerance and denial of racism (Kobayashi, 2009; Lewin et al., 2011). Given the little we know—thanks to Harré's (1966, 1968), Schäfer's (2007, 2010), and Fozdar's (2011) contributions—of Māori-Pakeha relations on such an intimate level, it appears that the minimisation of colour can be detrimental to racial/ethnic unity and intergroup relations in New Zealand. However, the ethnic composition of New Zealand's population has drastically changed in the last 50 years. It is no longer sufficient to examine Māori-Pakeha relationships given the increasing numbers of other cultures—like Pacific peoples, Middle Easterners, Africans, and particularly Asians (who are certainly not a homogeneous cultural group by any means)—who live in New Zealand.

There are also several additional sources that provide statistical analyses of ethnic intermarriage using census data (Callister, 2003; Callister et al., 2007; Didham & Callister, 2014), some of which includes other ethnic groups in New Zealand, such as Pacific Islanders, Asians, and Others. Callister (2003) used 1996 census data to demonstrate that marriages between Māori and non-Māori continued to occur at high rates, but noted the importance of investigating intermarriage rates of other ethnic groups in New Zealand. Consequently, Callister et al. (2007) and Didham and Callister (2014) respectively used 2001 and 2013 New Zealand census data to demonstrate patterns of intermarriage in New Zealand and how they changed over time. For instance, they showed that rates of intermarriage in New Zealand were increasing continuously, mimicking the trends of other Western nations like Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, although rates of intermarriage differed between ethnic groups. In 2001, Europeans had low ethnic intermarriage rates, while intermarriage rates were high for Māori and Pacific individuals. Asians were another group that intermarried frequently, although Asian women intermarried more often than did Asian men. However, in 2013, endogamous marriage for Māori, Europeans, and Pacific peoples had decreased somewhat, whereas Asian men and women were more likely to choose spouses from different Asian ethnic groups rather than from different racial groups. These changes in intermarriage rates were linked to the influences of migration.

While useful in its own right—as it not only paints a helpful demographic picture of who marries whom in New Zealand, but also supports previous research of exogamous mate selection—a statistical analysis does not explore the context of interethnic marriage and relationships in New Zealand. As Callister et al. (2007) argue, much of the existing literature from the United States cannot be directly applied to the New Zealand context, given that the period of slavery in the former nation has deeply impacted its debates around intermarriage. Furthermore, New Zealand's long history of interethnic relationships, colonisation (the effects of which are still felt), and widespread immigration means that we should examine intimacy between ethnic groups with a unique lens.

Therefore, part of the rationale for this doctoral study is that we currently know very little about why interethnic couples in New Zealand choose to be together, what challenges they face, and how they navigate these obstacles. These questions are especially important where they relate to non-Māori and non-Pakeha ethnic groups in New Zealand—an area which is understudied—and how those cultural backgrounds contribute to the nature of interethnic relationships. It is important to address these gaps in the literature in order to increase our understanding of the social proximity (or distance) between various ethnic groups in New Zealand, particularly at the micro-level of personal romantic relationships. A romantic relationship between two people of different ethnicities can amplify the tensions between the peoples of those two ethnicities, as the level of intimacy implied by a romantic relationship is arguably greater than other forms of social relationships, like friendship.

Thus, this study will attempt to attend to these gaps by inquiring into the nature of interethnic relationships in the New Zealand context where they concern the Indian population. The Indian case was chosen for several reasons. Firstly, Indians have traditionally represented a unique example in the interethnic intimacy literature because of their very low intermarriage rates compared to other Asian ethnic groups (Qian et al., 2001). Secondly, while there is some research examining Asian intermarriage, which sometimes includes Indians, it may be methodologically problematic to include Indians in the Asian population when examining intermarriage, given that their patterns of endogamy are vastly different. Thirdly, although the proportion of Indians in New Zealand is relatively small compared to other ethnic groups, India is one of the top source countries of migrants arriving in New Zealand and the number of permanent Indian migrants in New Zealand is only expected to grow. Given this reasoning, it is important to consider the limited body of literature that examines Indian adults in interethnic relationships, in order to fully develop the rationale for this research project.

3.4 Part Four: Indian Adults in Interethnic Relationships

To date, only a few studies have examined interethnic marriage in the context of Indian immigrant populations. Statistical analyses of intermarriage patterns tend to include Indian adults as one of many ethnic groups, probably because the sample sizes of Indian immigrants in Western countries are not sufficiently robust or sizable for isolated analysis. For example, Shinagawa and Pang (1988) were only able to include foreign-born Indians in their analyses of intermarriage patterns amongst the Asian American population, due to the low numbers of American-born Indians at that time. Such analyses may also be methodologically questionable given that they often assume homogeneity across Asian ethnic groups despite the immense cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity of the innumerable ethnic groups found across the Asian continent (Jethwani, 2001; S. Lee & Yamanaka, 1990; Sohoni, 2002; Wickramasinghe, 2008). Therefore, any scholarly exploration of interethnic intimacy in Indian populations should always acknowledge its cultural and ethnic limitations, given that it may be impossible to fully capture the 'Indian' experience of interethnic intimacy.

Overall, research has found that out of all the Asian ethnic groups in the United States, Indians have one of the lowest rates of exogamy (Chen & Takeuchi, 2011; Fu & Hatfield, 2008; S. Lee & Fernandez, 1998; S. Lee & Yamanaka, 1990; Min & Kim, 2009; Qian et al., 2001; Rastogi, 2009; Sohoni, 2002). Based on United States 1990 census data, Qian et al. (2001) found that Indians in the United States were 179 times as likely to marry endogamously than all Asian exogamous marriages. Additionally, the effect of educational attainment on intermarriage that has been observed in Asian intermarriage (e.g., Chen & Takeuchi, 2011; S. Lee & Yamanaka, 1990; Tsunokai et al., 2014) does not seem to hold for the Indian population—that is, increased educational attainment in Indians does not see an increase in the likelihood to intermarry (Fu & Hatfield, 2008; Qian & Shah, 2015).

Existing research disagrees about the effects of gender on Indian intermarriage. Some statistical research proposes that Indian women are more likely to marry exogamously (Bhattacharyya, 2006; Fu & Hatfield, 2008; D. Gupta, 2000), while other quantitative data indicate that Indian men have a greater propensity for intermarriage (Jacobs & Labov, 2002; S. Lee & Fernandez, 1998; Liang & Ito, 1999; Min & Kim, 2009). Given that more recent statistical analyses have not been conducted, it remains unclear whether gender differences exist in Indian marriage and if they have changed over time in the American population.

Moreover, some findings have suggested that the Indian population represents a unique exception in Asian intermarriage patterns, which has prompted some researchers to conduct qualitative research to investigate this phenomenon further. For instance, Bhattacharyya (2006) looked at marital assimilation of Indians who were raised in the United States, by using a quantitative sample from 2000 census data of 2409 Indians between the

ages of 15 and 40 years old. In contrast to other research that proposes that Indian men are more likely to intermarry than Indian women (e.g., Jacobs & Labov, 2002), a statistical analysis showed that intermarriage rates were similar between women and men. However, the degree of educational attainment affected the propensity to intermarry. Indian women with only a high school diploma and Indian men with a higher degree were the *least* likely to intermarry. On the other hand, Indian women's propensity to intermarry increased in direct proportion to their educational attainment. In fact, education increased men's likelihood of getting married at all, while it decreased women's likelihood of marriage. It is possible that education increases a man's marriageability while women experience the opposite effect.

The researcher additionally interviewed 46 Indian students at elite North-eastern universities to explore why these differences occurred. Most of the interviewees reported wanting to maintain Indian culture, although women expressed concerns about marrying Indian men. These women perceived themselves as being too autonomous for traditionally-raised Indian men. Therefore, it is probable that education enables women to become independent, which may be an unattractive prospect for families seeking to marry off their sons in traditional Indian society. Moreover, some women perceived Indian men to be chauvinistic, in line with other research demonstrating Asian women's perceptions of Asian men in the same light (C. Morgan, 2013; Pyke, 2010). These concerns were more likely to be expressed by women who had childhood experiences of their fathers being controlling and of their mothers being submissive to that control (Bhattacharyya, 2006).

Other research examines the lived experiences of Indian adults in interethnic marriages. Jethwani (2001) interviewed 30 (mostly-Hindu) Indian women who were born or raised in the United States, and who were all married to White American men. The purpose of this study was to investigate how Indian women maintained cultural transmission in their marriages, given that in Indian culture, the onus of cultural transmission is on women (Rastogi, 2009). Notable amongst the findings were the ideas that growing up, most of the women had expected to marry Indian men, due to familial and societal pressures about endogamy and the significance of marriage. Although these pressures were frequently imposed on participants throughout their lives, oftentimes they were loosened through meeting other people in different environments, and indeed, many met their White husbands in work/educational settings. Some women reported that they were the first in their communities to marry interracially. One particularly vital finding related to disclosure of the relationship—typically, participants disclosed their relationships to their closest friends immediately, but often delayed telling their parents (the longest delay was four years into the relationship). Women disclosed to their parents only when they were certain of the permanency of the relationship—that is, that the relationship was heading towards

marriage—due to the importance of commitment and cultural stigma around dating. In contrast, their male partners disclosed the relationship to their own families much earlier.

The initial meeting between the woman's family and her partner was viewed as critical because they highlighted, usually for the first time, the stark reality of the cultural and religious differences between the relevant parties. Additionally, parents responded with concern about community reactions; to counteract, women would invariably present their partners' high educational backgrounds to diminish the racial background. There was also a mix of reactions regarding the announcement of marriage—half the participants reported that their parents were happy and excited, while the other half responded negatively, due to: 1) concern that their daughters would lose their culture, 2) worries about how children from such a union would be raised, and 3) stereotypes about White men/people as unfaithful, dishonest, lacking commitment, and prone to divorcing. However, women's experiences of their interethnic marriages indicated that they did not experience a loss of culture as they shared their culture with their husbands on a daily basis. In fact, these women reported that marrying non-Indian men led them to discover more about their culture that they had not previously known. Although negotiating cultural differences could be stressful for these couples, other conflicts seemed much less significant due to the cultural hurdles that they had overcome (Jethwani, 2001).

Similarly, Inman, Altman, Kaduvettoor-Davidson, Carr, and Walker (2011) used a qualitative interview approach to explore the experiences of 10 Indian-White couples aged 31-45 years old (five Indian male-White female couples and five Indian female-White male couples). Participants described receiving more positive reactions to their relationships from their friends and their communities than from their immediate families, but also experienced more discrimination in ethnically homogenous and conservative towns. Like Jethwani (2001), participants lacked familial support during the initial stages of the relationship because of concerns about cultural dilution and the loss of cultural/religious identity. This was difficult particularly for the Indian women participants. However, increased familiarity with the White partner over time usually diminished those fears.

Cultural integration was especially important for both partners in the interethnic relationship. Participants commented that being involved with each other's culture led to greater appreciation, more marital engagement, and increased cultural competence. Integrating cultural customs and promoting each other's culture was importance, and most felt that they had an enriched relationship due to their cultural diversity. However, many participants discussed their challenges around family and community, and had either anticipated or experienced conflicts with them. For example, racial differences only became salient when the public identified the couple as interethnic. Actual or anticipated children

were viewed as particularly important because they symbolised the continuity of both familial and cultural lineages (Inman et al., 2011).

Lande (2007) compared gender role ideology, culture, and relationship satisfaction between 115 individuals from co-ethnic Indian couples, co-ethnic White American couples, and interethnic Indian-White couples. Participants were either dating or married, and were all aged between 21 and 62 years old. They were asked to complete a survey that measured the target concepts. Within-gender differences emerged: Indian men and Indian women both reported more traditional gender attitudes than their White counterparts. There were also no differences in gender role attitudes between Indian men and women, and no differences in gender role attitudes between Indian participants in co-ethnic and interethnic relationships. Interestingly, White co-ethnic couples had the greatest relationship satisfaction, followed by the interethnic couples, and finally the Indian co-ethnic couples, although no correlation was found between gender role ideology and relationship satisfaction.

The matter of family acceptance also seems to be a vital one that weighs on the minds of Indian interethnic couples. Wickramasinghe (2008) issued questionnaires to 16 South Asian-White American heterosexual married couples. It is unclear what proportion of the South Asian partners were Indian, although the researcher states that the sample includes Indian, Sri Lankan, and Pakistani individuals. The objective was to measure participants' marital satisfaction and assess aspects of their lives as interethnic couples. Although the majority of participants were satisfied with their marriages, many felt that their families had not initially accepted their spousal choices and that their subsequent marriages had impacted their family relationships. A small percentage (15.6%) had felt disowned due to their marriages and had moved away from their families because of their reactions. A few felt they also communicated with their families less. However, the majority (90.6%) had never considered not marrying their spouse due to a lack of familial acceptance, and the same percentage felt that their families were supportive of their interethnic marriages. Family acceptance also affected marital satisfaction, particularly for the female and the South Asian participants. Generalisations cannot be made due to the small sample; however, it does indicate that the issue of family acceptance in Indian intermarriage is a significant one that is worth exploring in future research.

From the handful of studies that have been conducted involving Indian interethnic relationships, there are several recurring themes: the impact of culture within and outside of the relationship; the challenge of familial approval; coping with discrimination; and parenting biracial children and ensuring the continuity of Indian culture. However, there are some crucial limitations in the literature that are worth addressing, and which are used as the basis for the present study.

3.5 Part Five: Rationale for the Present Inquiry

The literature indicates that interethnic marriages are on the rise globally, including in New Zealand (Callister et al., 2007; Didham & Callister, 2014). New Zealand census data shows that a great number of people record multiple ethnicities, indicating that there is a high proportion of intermarriage in the population (Callister et al., 2007). However, this chapter demonstrates that what little research there is on the dynamics of interethnic romantic relationships in New Zealand is dominated by Māori-Pakeha relationships (Grimshaw, 2002; Harré, 1966). This is insufficient to describe the changing cultural landscape of New Zealand, especially given that other populations—particularly Asian populations—are constantly increasing (Statistics New Zealand, n.d.).

As we have observed, studies have demonstrated that Indians are the least likely out of Asian ethnic groups to intermarry (Fu & Hatfield, 2008; Qian et al., 2001). This is largely to do with traditional Indian values, which discourage interethnic intimacy due to ingrained notions of pollution, which are primarily based in the caste system. Arranged marriages, therefore, have long been a mechanism by which Indian families/communities can regulate intimacy and prevent pollution of the bloodline (Jethwani, 2001) (please see Chapter One for further information on the Indian context of interethnic intimacy).

However, a recent report compiled by Statistics New Zealand shows that significant proportions of Indian individuals in New Zealand are either married to or cohabiting with non-Indian individuals—8.2% of Indian women and 8.5% of Indian men (A. McLaren, 2015). This is especially significant when considering that Indians make up approximately 4% of the New Zealand population (Statistics New Zealand, 2013a). Almost 17% of Indians in romantic relationships in New Zealand are, therefore, choosing to have long-term relationships with those who are not Indian. This raises questions around the experiences and challenges that they face, given the resistance that they have traditionally faced from Indian communities, as demonstrated by the research on this topic.

It is, therefore, vital to conduct research into this area where very little is known. While a number of studies have examined the experiences of Indian adults in interethnic relationships and provided some insight into this complex relational phenomenon, many have limited the scopes of their research. Accordingly, there are several limitations in the literature, due to the academic focus on:

1) Married couples: Today, couples are increasingly looking to long-term cohabitation as an alternative to marriage. The current emphasis on married

couples may be missing couples who have an equally long-term and serious commitment, but who have chosen not to marry.

2) Highly-educated individuals: Indians in the North American context are more likely to come from highly-educated backgrounds. However, Indian populations in New Zealand come from a diverse range of educational and socioeconomic backgrounds.

3) Limited migration patterns: Indians in North America are more likely to be direct migrants from India. In New Zealand, however, a substantially higher proportion of the Indian population is made up of Fijian Indians and South African Indians.

4) The North American context: Findings from North America on interethnic couples may not be applicable to the New Zealand context, where the latter is more ethnically diverse and the former has a more troubled history of race relations.

5) Indian-White relationships: Previous studies have tended to look only at Indian-White relationships. Due to New Zealand's ethnically diverse context, it is likely that we will see other ethnic pairings in Indian intercultural relationships, and, therefore, other cultural variables at play.

6) Objectivist and constructionist methodologies: No research to date has examined interethnic relationships from a feminist-poststructuralist stance, with particular attention to how hegemonic discourses constitute interethnic relationships.

7) The local context: Indian communities in New Zealand may well have different societal attitudes, perspectives, and expectations of Indian adults than do Indian communities in North America or in India. These differing expectations may mean that Indian adults in New Zealand experience interethnic relationships differently to Indian adults in India or in North America.

8) Problem-focused perspective of the interethnic intimacy literature: Much of the literature described in this chapter focuses predominantly on the negative outcomes, experiences, challenges, and perceptions of interethnic romantic relationships. Little attention has been paid to the strengths and benefits of interethnic relationships.

Therefore, in order to address these limitations, the present study proposes to answer the following research questions:

1) What are the discourses evident in the attitudes and perceptions of Indian adults in New Zealand regarding love, romantic relationships, interethnic intimacy, and partner selection?

2) What discourses do Indian adults in heterosexual, interethnic romantic relationships draw on in their narratives of their experiences of their romantic relationships?

3) How do hegemonic discursive practices limit and/or enable the possibilities for action for Indian adults in heterosexual, interethnic romantic relationships?

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has located and articulated the discourses prevalent in the academic literature on interethnic intimacy. These discourses include those of romanticism, homogamy, and racial purity, and the degree to which each has been dominant has changed over time. In line with this change, the ways in which interethnic couples have been discursively positioned in the literature have varied over time as well. Where those who engaged in interethnic intimacy were once viewed as dysfunctional and psychopathological, the literature now positions these individuals as well-adjusted, well-educated young professionals. Despite the changes in this positioning, continuing opposition towards interethnic intimacy means that such couples must still endure both internal and external obstacles in their relationships. This chapter has provided a thorough exploration of these challenges.

Having also described the nature of interethnic intimacy in the New Zealand context, this chapter has sought to specify the reasons for conducting further research into this area. The following chapter, therefore, explains the approaches that were taken to design a research project in this area. As such, Chapter Four describes the methods used to recruit participants and collect and analyse data for this inquiry. It also includes reflections and considerations regarding ethical concerns and the role of the researcher in this inquiry.

Chapter Four: Methods

After having elucidated the literature and background pertinent to this inquiry, it is now appropriate to explain the methods that have been used in this research project. This feminist-poststructuralist inquiry is divided into two components: Study 1 and Study 2, and this chapter will describe the process of participant recruitment; the methods of data collection and analysis; the role of the researcher; and ethical considerations. Importantly, Study 1 collected data through focus groups and interviews, while Study 2 used reflexive photography and photo-interviews to collect data. Because this is a feminist-poststructuralist project, it is important to reflect on the constant yet shifting tensions of doing research where the researcher also inhabits the field of inquiry; that is, where the researcher comes from the population of interest and attempts to conduct an extensive investigation of topics that are considered sensitive by this population. Therefore, unlike a traditional, positivist Methods chapter that aims to separate the researcher from the research process, I have provided a more personal and self-reflexive account of the research protocol and the challenges that arose.

4.1 Study 1

Two phases were designed to answer this inquiry. The first examined existing attitudes towards love, relationships, and partner selection in New Zealand. Study 1 was developed to provide valuable information on Indian attitudes towards love, dating, marriage, partner selection, and sexuality in a Western context, and also to explore the context of interethnic intimacy for Indian immigrants outside of an often distant—physically, mentally, and sometimes spiritually—ancestral homeland. Therefore, this exploratory study was designed the answer the question:

- What are the discourses evident in the attitudes and perceptions of Indian adults in New Zealand regarding love, romantic relationships, interethnic intimacy, and partner selection?

In order to answer this question, I conducted focus groups and interviews with Indian adults between the ages of 21 and 65, asking them a series of questions about how they believed Indian adults in New Zealand approached these topics.

4.1.1 Participant Information

Participants were required to fulfil several criteria to be considered for participation. These criteria included being a person who was 1) an individual of Indian ethnicity, 2) either a New Zealand citizen or resident, 3) able to speak English fluently, and 4) at least 21 years of age. These criteria were selected to target individuals in the general Indian adult population of New Zealand, particularly those who had been either born in New Zealand or who had lived here long enough to be accustomed to both Indian and 'Kiwi' (or Western) understandings of love, intimacy, and mate selection. There was also an exclusion criterion for prospective participants. Potential participants who were either currently or had previously been in an interethnic romantic relationship were not considered for inclusion, as the objective was to examine attitudes towards interethnic intimacy in the general Indian adult population. Indian adults who are or who have been in interethnic relationships are likely to hold vastly different attitudes towards interethnic intimacy and may not, therefore, be representative of such a general population. As such, it was deemed necessary to apply this exclusion criterion.

Recruitment Process

Snowball sampling was the main method used to recruit participants for this study. This involved distributing information about this research through social networks, with the aim of asking people to continue spreading the word through their own social networks. Facebook was a valuable resource in advertisement. I posted a recruitment flyer (Appendix A) to my own Facebook page, as well as to pertinent Facebook groups (e.g., "Indians living in Auckland"), and pages belonging to Indian radio stations and community organisations (e.g., Radio Tarana, Auckland Indian Association). Most participants for this study were recruited via social media and through mutual acquaintances and friends, although a physical version of the recruitment flyer was also circulated in supermarkets, Indian grocery shops, and university campuses across Auckland. It was decided to remain in Auckland for participant recruitment due to the large and rapidly increasing Indian population in this city. Although many Indians live in other urban centres in New Zealand, like Wellington, the majority of Indian people live in Auckland (Statistics New Zealand, 2011, 2014, n.d.).

Initial contact was made through email and Facebook's messaging function. In recent years, social media has become a valuable tool in participant recruitment because it allows researchers to reach out to populations that might be difficult to otherwise access (Buckingham et al., 2017; Bull, Levine, Schmiege, & Santelli, 2013; Gelinas et al., 2017; Gu, Skierkowski, Florin, Friend, & Ye, 2016; King, O'Rourke, & DeLongis, 2014). A growing number of empirical studies have documented the success of using social media sites (e.g.,

Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, etc.) to recruit participants (e.g., Buckingham et al., 2017; Gu et al., 2016; King et al., 2014); however, there has been little consideration of the methodological and ethical challenges that may arise as a result of this type of recruitment (Gelinas et al., 2017). For example, privacy and confidentiality remain key ethical issues of social media recruitment, especially because users of social media tend to share sensitive personal information on their private pages. Additionally, some recruitment advances may be viewed as unwanted or offensive; it is, therefore, important to maintain transparency regarding one's aims, methods, and the anticipated outcome of research (Gelinas et al., 2017).

I decided to use Facebook to advertise for participants, as it is one of the most widely-used social media platforms and research suggests that recruiting via Facebook is highly effective (Bull et al., 2013; Gu et al., 2016; King et al., 2014). I attempted to handle prospective participants' personal information as sensitively as possible. Instead of contacting potential participants directly, I simply distributed my online flyers and asked those in my network to share it and to tell others about it—the same way that physical flyer distribution would have worked. As such, potential participants contacted me, mitigating breaches of personal privacy that could have occurred had I contacted them first.

My own privacy was also a concern. I was initially apprehensive about the types of information that I would be releasing to potential participants (e.g., my profile photo showed my face as well as that of my partner), who would be able to access my Facebook page and possibly 'stalk' me. These concerns were alleviated by restricting access to my personal information through Facebook's privacy settings. Other participants were recruited through those who had already taken part in the study. The Participant Information Sheet (Appendix B) and the Consent Form (Appendix C) were sent via email to participants. Appropriate times and venues were scheduled for all focus groups and interviews, and participants were reminded that Consent Forms would be provided for signing prior to the interview/focus group.

Participants

Although 24 participants were sought for this study, ultimately, only 13 were recruited. This reduced number was due to the difficulties that I experienced in recruitment. Although recruitment mediums were circulated widely and they garnered a great deal of interest, this did not translate to recruitment. Overall, Indian women between the ages of 21 and 35 were more forthcoming in contacting me regarding participation. In contrast, it was more difficult to find Indian men who were willing to participate, as well as Indian adults between the ages of 50 and 65. It should be noted that data saturation was achieved, in spite

of the reduced sample size for this study. This means that new themes and findings stopped emerging, in this case around the ninth or tenth participant.

I have wondered if these recruitment difficulties might be attributed to several sources. Firstly, the subject matter of the study is not something that is typically discussed openly in Indian society. Topics like love, dating, romantic relationships, and sex, are very rarely talked about in Indian households—something which participants themselves brought up. Secondly, the patriarchal structure of Indian society means that there are firm gender and age boundaries and power imbalances in Indian culture (Chandra, Arora, Mehta, Asnaani, & Radhakrishnan, 2016), which made it unlikely that men and older people would have wanted to talk to me—a young woman—about these uncomfortable topics. Thirdly, it became apparent that time constraints were an issue of scheduling focus groups that were convenient for all participants. As a result, I decided to include one-on-one interviews to resolve this final issue. Scheduling interview times was more convenient, but recruitment became only slightly less difficult. This leads me to believe that the first two issues—those of the sensitivity of the topics and the cultural boundaries—were the true causes behind the difficulty in recruitment.

As mentioned, 13 participants were recruited for Study 1. Pseudonyms were selected for each participant. Seven participants were female and six were male. Eight took part in same-gender focus groups while the remaining four participated in one-on-one interviews. All participants lived in Auckland and their ages ranged from 23 to 50. Participants came from a range of socioeconomic and occupational backgrounds. They had arrived in New Zealand through a variety of migration pathways, but were predominantly from India and Fiji. They had all been born overseas and the time living in New Zealand ranged between 10 to 26 years. Eight participants were married; of this number, two participants were married to each other but participated in separate focus groups. Two of the 13 participants had been separated or divorced; of these two, one had since remarried. Two participants were sisters-in-law and agreed to be interviewed together. Five participants had children, whose ages ranged from childhood to early adulthood.

4.1.2 Data Collection: Focus Groups and Interviews

The use of focus group discussions is an ideal technique to seek a deeper understanding of the attitudes of a group of people (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008; Kitzinger, 1995), given that it relies on the nature of the interpersonal communication that takes place between participants in such a setting. With any focus group, participants are gathered in order to discuss a specified topic, with a moderator present to guide—but not participate—in the discussion (Gill et al., 2008; J. Jones, 2015; Kitzinger, 1995). The number

of participants in a focus group does not matter as much as the composition, although studies have suggested that three to fourteen participants can generate successful group discussions (Gill et al., 2008; J. Jones, 2015; Smithson, Holmes, & Gillies, 2015). Without participant communication, a focus group cannot be successful—participants are encouraged to voice their opinions regardless of whether there is disagreement amongst the rest of the group and to question each other (D. Morgan, 1996), and to share anecdotes, personal experiences, and humour (J. Jones, 2015; Kitzinger, 1995). Because of its focus on interpersonal communication, focus group discussions are a useful way of gauging cultural or societal attitudes on a given subject, and indeed, how this subject is constructed within such a sociocultural context (Kitzinger, 1995). A list of questions was prepared for the focus groups, and was fine-tuned after the first few groups. The same list of questions was used for the interviews. The final list of questions can be found in Appendix D.

Some potential participants expressed that it would be difficult to attend a focus group for several reasons. Firstly, some were uncomfortable with talking about subjects like love and romantic relationships in a situation where there would be other people (besides the researcher) present. Secondly, as most participants had jobs, scheduling a focus group to suit everyone became problematic. Ultimately, it became necessary to offer one-on-one semi-structured interviews as an option for data collection, and indeed, more potential participants were willing to be interviewed individually, in the privacy of their own homes.

Semi-structured interviews offered a balance between spontaneity and structure (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). It allowed the researcher to explore a number of areas of interest with the interviewees, but also permitted scope to investigate other avenues that arose spontaneously within the interview situation. Ultimately, this method of data collection was more structured and driven by the researcher compared to the focus groups. The dynamic was also different to the focus groups; where the interviews involved questions asked by the researcher and answered by the interviewee, the focus groups tended to contain more questioning and answering between participants, and also tended to explore avenues that had not occurred to the researcher. It became apparent that using a mixture of focus groups and interviews had been beneficial as the two approaches complemented one another and made up for each other's pitfalls.

4.1.3 Procedure

A combination of focus groups and interviews was conducted in order to collect data from the participants. Three focus groups were conducted; two took place in private study rooms at AUT's South Campus. The other focus group took place in a private home. Five interviews were also conducted in various locations; four participants were interviewed in

their own homes, while the final participant was interviewed at AUT's South Campus. Focus groups lasted approximately 1-2 hours, while interviews were of shorter duration: 30-60 minutes. Consent Forms were used to seek and obtain consent for digital recording of focus groups and interviews. Recordings of these interviews and focus groups were transcribed verbatim by the researcher and double-checked for accuracy. All participants also received a copy of their respective transcripts for review. Data analysis commenced upon completion of transcription. The method of data analysis used in this inquiry, discourse analysis, will be explained upon concluding a description of the methods used in Study 2.

4.2 Study 2

The second phase of this research inquiry involved examining the experiences of Indian adults in New Zealand in heterosexual, interethnic romantic relationships. The use of the word 'experiences' suggests taking a phenomenological or critical stance, which is at odds with the previously declared feminist-poststructuralist approach. It should be clarified that I have used participants' experiences here as a starting point to identify and locate discourses. Therefore, these experiences are meaningful to this research insofar as they allow us to determine how hegemonic discourses constitute participants' social lives, and are not treated here as authentic and authoritative narratives by which the meaning of participants' subjective realities can be deduced. In line with this view, this study was designed to explore the following questions:

- What discourses do Indian adults in heterosexual, interethnic romantic relationships draw on in their narratives of their experiences of their romantic relationships?
- How do hegemonic discursive practices limit and/or enable the possibilities for action for Indian adults in heterosexual, interethnic romantic relationships?

4.2.1 Participant Information

The participation criteria for this study required potential participants to be a person who was 1) of Indian ethnicity, 2) a New Zealand citizen or resident, 3) able to speak English fluently, 4) at least 21 years of age, and 5) in a heterosexual romantic relationship with an individual not of Indian ethnicity. Additionally, this romantic relationship had to be at least one year in duration. These criteria were specified to target Indian adults in long-term interethnic romantic commitments. This enabled me to include long-term dating relationships (where the partners lived separately), as well as marital and cohabiting relationships. Moreover, based on the literature it was more likely that prospective

participants would be at least second-generation immigrants to New Zealand (AhnAllen & Suyemoto, 2011; Chen & Takeuchi, 2011; S. Lee & Fernandez, 1998). As such, New Zealand citizenship or residency was a stipulated characteristic for would-be participants.

Individuals in homosexual interethnic relationships were not considered for inclusion in this study. Research from the United States suggests that homosexual interethnic couples experience challenges that are unique to them, which are commonly not shared by heterosexual interethnic couples (Steinbugler, 2005). Furthermore, homosexual interethnic couples in which one partner is Indian constitute a very small percentage of the New Zealand population (A. McLaren, 2015). As such, a conscious decision was made not to include Indian adults in homosexual interethnic relationships for this study.

Recruitment Process

Study 1 demonstrated that participant recruitment via social media was more lucrative than posting flyers in physical locations. Therefore, snowball sampling through social media was the primary form of recruitment for Study 2. Facebook was used to alert potential participants to this study; as in Study 1, I posted the recruitment flyer (Appendix E) to my own Facebook page, as well as to other public groups and pages where it could be viewed. Additionally, family members, friends, acquaintances, and previously recruited participants helped by contacting prospective participants within their own social networks.

Initial contact with participants was made through email, cell phone, and Facebook's private messaging function. The Participant Information Sheet (Appendix F) and the Consent and Release Form (Appendix G) were sent via email to participants.

Participants

During the planning stages of this project, I had intended to recruit 20 participants for Study 2. However, during data collection for Study 1, I found that I had obtained rich data and achieved data saturation despite the small sample size, and that my original estimates of the number of participants that were required for Study 2 were higher than necessary. Therefore, due to the amount and quality of the data obtained from Study 1, I subsequently adjusted recruitment numbers for Study 2. Accordingly, 12 participants were sought and obtained for this study. Pseudonyms were selected for each participant and partner.

As with Study 1, women seemed more enthusiastic to take part, and in fact, the final sample contained twice as many women as men (eight women and four men). Even though New Zealand census data suggests that there are roughly proportionate numbers of Indian women and Indian men in interethnic relationships (A. McLaren, 2015), it certainly did not seem to be the case during recruitment, as recruiting Indian men in interethnic relationships

was considerably more difficult. Through asking friends, family members, and acquaintances for their help in seeking male participants, a gender disparity in interethnic intimacy became apparent. Everyone I asked would frequently report knowing of at least one or two potential female participants in their social and work lives; in contrast, they usually could not think of any potential male participants that they knew of. Even when potential male participants were identified and contacted, these men frequently turned down the invitation to participate. These gender differences in participation will be explored further in the below section on the data collection method for this study, reflexive photography, given that I believe it is likely that refusals to participate may have been partly associated with the method.

In the end, eight women and four men between the ages of 22 and 48 were recruited for this study. All but one participant had lived in New Zealand since early childhood (only two had been born in New Zealand), and came from a range of migration pathways but, like Study 1, were predominantly from Fiji and India. A range of relationship statuses were represented: half the participants were in dating relationships, one was in a de facto/cohabitating relationship, three were engaged, and three were married. Three participants had children, who were all under the age of ten.

4.2.2 The Role of the Researcher

Research suggests that positioning oneself as an 'insider' when recruiting from the target population or community can be beneficial for several reasons (Blythe, Wikles, Jackson, & Halcomb, 2013; Kirpitchenko & Voloder, 2014; Nakata, 2015; Wiser, 2016), although for many decades, it was argued by some researchers that being an insider compromised the integrity and the robustness of the research. Instead, outsider researchers are thought to be more objective throughout the data collection and analysis process (Nakata, 2015). However, debates about objectivity and subjectivity in the social sciences have developed over the years to acknowledge that insider researchers may have certain advantages over outsider researchers, such as having better understanding of the targeted population (Kirpitchenko & Voloder, 2014). Equally, there may exist just as many benefits as challenges for insiders (Blythe et al., 2013; Wiser, 2016). In qualitative research, these shared experiences, values, and understandings may allow the insider researcher to form rapport more easily with participants. However, this is not always the case, and in some situations, participants may prefer to be interviewed by outsider researchers if they believe that the latter will be less judgemental (Blythe et al., 2013).

Notwithstanding the theoretical debates on the benefits and detractions of being an insider, throughout this research, I found it difficult to consistently position myself as an

insider. Upon further reflection, I would argue that reducing the insider/outsider subject positions to a dichotomous opposition misses an opportunity to analyse the shifting effects of power embedded in these positionings (see also Nakata, 2015; Palmer du Preez, 2016). Such a dichotomy lacks the understanding that one's position (and the degree of power afforded by the position) is always unfixed and shifting and is, therefore, not in line with feminist-poststructuralist understandings of the role of the researcher.

Additionally, while there are Indian communities all over Auckland, the existence of a community or a group of Indian adults in interethnic relationships was non-existent. Such a community does not exist in the same way as ethnic communities (e.g., Māori, Chinese, Indian, etc.) or social communities (e.g., LGBTQ community), where groups of individuals interact and depend on one another socially. Many Indian adults in interethnic relationships appear to be isolated socially and geographically from one another—most participants reported not knowing other Indian people in interethnic relationships. One participant had even created an online social networking group on Facebook many years ago for Indians in interethnic relationships, in order to develop a community for those that she felt were isolated, but because it gained little traction, she deleted the group. Due to the isolating nature of being in an Indian interethnic relationship, it was difficult to position myself on the insider-outsider spectrum, simply because there was no community in which to position myself.

However, there were certainly times where I felt that my insider positioning was more pronounced than other times. I did not disclose my interethnic relationship to participants straight away, but they would usually ask what had led me to study this topic. Disclosing my relationship oftentimes deepened the rapport that I had already established. Additionally, the shared ethnic heritage between myself and my participants allowed me to understand the more nuanced and obscure cultural references that they made, and became obvious when they said things like, "You understand what that's like", or "You know what I mean when I say this". When such statements were uttered, I consciously made the decision to ask participants to elaborate further, even when I knew what they were referring to. My methodological lens has taught me to become increasingly aware of the importance of teasing apart assumptions that seem common-sense and are taken for granted. In this way, I attempted to mitigate the potential challenges that can arise with insider researchers having an assumed understanding of their research populations.

At other times, however, I felt my position shifting to that of an outsider, particularly due to the variability of Indian culture and of participants' experiences. Because Indian culture is so diverse and heterogeneous, there were many times when participants' comments regarding their cultural backgrounds or their experiences of interethnic intimacy left me in a

position where I was not an expert, and I could then, in my position of naivety, pose further questions.

The shifting nature of my position as an insider-outsider required me to navigate the accompanying challenges carefully. Blythe et al. (2013) propose several strategies for managing the challenges that come with insider research that I found pertinent and helpful, especially where they concerned ensuring objectivity during the data analysis process. According to Creswell (2012), a researcher's first task, where it concerns the data, is to ensure the credibility of the findings so that they can form a valid contribution to existing knowledge. To this end, I kept several researcher journals documenting and reflecting on my doctoral journey, which Blaise (2005) and Blythe et al. (2013) suggest is a key method of maintaining reflexivity in poststructural research. This allowed me to remain aware that I was situated within the field of inquiry as participants were, and that I was embedded in continuously shifting discourses that I also had a role in producing and reproducing (Cheek, 2008). Moreover, I wrote notes to supplement my interviews and focus groups. As analysis proceeded, I discussed my emerging findings with my supervisory team and continually reflected on the analytical process.

Blythe et al. (2013) also suggest that insider researchers may have to manage difficult emotions, given that they may be sensitive to the similarity of participants' experiences. My first participant interview for Study 2 brought up some difficult emotions on my part, as my participant talked about sensitive issues that I had also experienced. While I had expected to empathise with participants' experiences, I—perhaps naively—had not expected to experience such strong emotions. I discussed the emotional impact of the interview with my partner—maintaining participant privacy and confidentiality—and later debriefed with my supervisor, which allowed me to prepare myself emotionally for further interviews and develop effective strategies to manage such emotional recurrences. As a type of formal reflection, I also found it helpful to take photos as part of the reflexive photography process and a trusted colleague interviewed me. I would like to clarify that my photos and transcript are not included here for analysis, but it has informed my self-reflexive process immensely.

Researcher Journals

My doctoral journey has not merely been a professional endeavour. Along the way, I have experienced profound personal developments that have been intertwined with the professional to the extent that, at times, I have struggled to distinguish clear boundaries between the personal and the professional. I strongly believe that this challenge is a result of constantly living in my field of inquiry. In the interest of further creating transparency and clarifying my position as a feminist-poststructuralist researcher who is also part of the

research population, I have decided to include two extracts from my researcher journals. It is also my wish to demonstrate the usefulness of reflexive journaling and how it can impact the research process. Please note that these extracts may not be grammatically correct at times, given that I initially intended that these journals would only be for my own eyes, and, therefore, used a shorthand that would make sense to myself.

Reflecting on Conceptual and Methodological Concerns

I'm finding it hard to figure out discourse analysis. I've done all the reading, I know the theory, but what is a discourse?? I've been referring to Willig's (2015) process of discourse analysis and while I get it in theory, the execution is proving far more challenging … I talked to D [my methodology adviser] today and he suggested that I need to think about governmentality more. How do states/governments get people to do what they want/follow the rules without punishment or discipline? E.g., how do rules about driving become common-sense? Breaches/violations of rules are reported on and that encourages people to self-enforce… so applying that here, what are the mechanisms/machinery that allow Indian women to self-enforce about sexual chastity? Maybe gossip is a mechanism. But what makes this possible? Good example to use is Parvati and Shankar's wedding kiss in the context of traditional wedding rituals – what about the kiss breaches these norms about Indian weddings? (Analytic journal, 10/10/2016)

One of the most important uses of my researcher journals was that of deepening my understanding of how to conduct an adequate discourse analysis. In section 4.3 below, I have mentioned the challenges I faced in conducting discourse analysis and how these issues were resolved through a self-reflexive analytical process. Writing reflexively helped me clarify my thought process and to pose further queries that I could ponder. Richardson and Adams St. Pierre (2005, p. 959) refer to this process as "writing as a method of inquiry". Being able to visualise my thoughts permitted me to solidify them and I could often trigger revelations—where they concerned the methodology, the data, or even where they concerned locating discourse in the academic literature—which could then be followed up and developed into coherent arguments. This process aided me enormously in advancing my understanding of not only discourse analysis, but other methodological and philosophical concerns.

Reflecting on Personal Experiences

I think being a 2nd-gen Indian immigrant woman who was born and raised in New Zealand has really affected my sense of who I am and where I fit in. It's odd, but I've never felt entirely comfortable in places where there's a high-density of either Indian people—like poojas [prayer meetings], temples, Indian weddings and other events—or Pakeha people. I've always felt most at home where there's a diverse mix of ethnicities, like school or university. My identity as a woman of colour feels strong, safe, and stable to me, but identifying as an Indian woman feels problematic to me because I don't feel a strong attachment to the culture or my family's religion. I know I'm probably not what an Indian girl should be. I want to identify as a Kiwi or a New Zealander, and most of the time I feel like I can. But sometimes when I interact with Pakeha individuals, my identification as a Kiwi seems to be problematic. There's a particular incident that recalls this issue to mind. I attended M's cousin's birthday party a few months ago and I'm only reflecting on it now. At this party I met more of his extended family. There was one woman present not directly related to M, but to his cousin. I walked in with M, his mother, and his grandmother, and this woman was sitting there and greeted us. She turned to me and asked, 'oh are you the new homestay?' I remember freezing in disbelief. At the time I couldn't figure out why I was stunned into speechlessness, it all happened so fast. But I remember asking myself afterwards, 'Did she assume that because I wasn't white? If I had been white, would she have correctly assumed that I'm M's girlfriend? Does being a person of colour mean I'm not seen as a Kiwi—I could only be a homestay, someone foreign?' (Reflective journal, 03/04/2016)

Looking back on what I have written in my reflective journals, I notice that most of the entries reflect on ethnicity, my ethnic identity, and my experiences of racism and struggling to come to terms with what it means to be a person of colour in New Zealand, and what it means to be in an interethnic relationship. I have found that my ethnic identity—and that of my partner—has been one of the most salient aspects of introspection as I have progressed in both my romantic relationship and my PhD. Prior to being in an interethnic relationship, my understandings and experiences of racism were limited. I had not noticed much racism directed towards me in adolescence and adulthood. However, being with my partner has made me realise just how visible we are to other people compared to co-ethnic couples, and I have increasingly become aware of subtle forms of racism directed towards

me, such as the incident described in the above extract. This may be a naïve statement, but I had not realised prior to that incident that racism need not involve blatant physical attacks or cries of 'go back to your country'.

These emerging reflections have been equally significant as my methodological and analytical concerns to me because they have had an important role in shaping my approach to this research inquiry. I have attempted to treat the subjects of ethnicity and race with the sensitivity it requires. I have also been wary of seeking confirmation bias from participants. Most participants from Study 2 described experiences of racism or racial microaggressions and I have tried to ensure that what was often a validation of my own experiences did not cause me to narrow my view and downplay inconsistent evidence. Some participants did not have such experiences and I have attempted to account for that during data analysis.

Having described my self-reflexive process with reference to my researcher journals, I will now turn to the task of explaining the method of data collection used in this study.

4.2.3 Data Collection: Reflexive Photography

Photo-interviewing methods are a recent innovation in psychological research, whereby the visual and the verbal are synthesised in order to produce data that are rich and evocative (Amerson & Livingston, 2014; Kolb, 2008; Williams Carawan & Nalavany, 2010). The photo-interviewing method chosen for this study, reflexive photography, is a method that places cameras in the hands of the participants and asks them to take photographs that represent or tell stories about their experiences of a particular phenomenon. Once participants have taken their photographs, each participant meets with the researcher for a photo-interview, during which they discuss the images that the participant has selected for the interview. This means that participants have more control over the process compared to a conventional interview, which lessens researcher bias. Although photographs act as the focus of the interview, the subsequent interview forms the basis of the data to be analysed (Amerson & Livingston, 2014; Hurworth, 2004; Kolb, 2008). Participants are often asked to provide a caption and/or detailed written descriptions of each photograph before the interview (Harrington & Lindy, 1999; S. Tucker & Dempsey, 1994).

This method of data collection was chosen due to the greater richness of data that it offered. Unlike the conventional interview method, reflexive photography engages participants in an intimate way that promotes self-reflection during the taking of photographic images. Participants are encouraged to reflect on and share their experiences in an abstract and creative manner (Amerson & Livingston, 2014) that can offer rich visual data (Williams Carawan & Nalavany, 2010). Previous studies have demonstrated that participants report feeling greater engagement and investment in the research project, and

that taking photos and talking about them can also be a therapeutic process for them (Hurworth, 2004; Schulze, 2007). Furthermore, these photographs serve as triggers for memories, and can lead to the exploration of unexpected but nuanced and fruitful avenues of knowledge during the accompanying interview (Kolb, 2008; Zambon, 2004). These interviews often end up being longer and more detailed, due to the breadth and depth of the data that arises from them (Hurworth, 2004). Photographs are variably used in data analysis and final reports; while some scholars analyse the photographs along with the verbal data, others merely use them as interview stimuli. Moreover, researchers can choose whether to include examples of participants' photos in publication. For the purposes of this research, I asked participants to take photographs for priming purposes and did not analyse them with the interview transcripts. I have included some of these photos in the findings chapters for Study 2 (Chapters Seven and Eight), but only to illustrate quotes where necessary.

Previous research has also documented some risks and issues of reflexive photography, which are important to consider here. Ethical issues around privacy and confidentiality require negotiation (Hurworth, 2004; S. Tucker & Dempsey, 1994), as participants may choose to take photographs of themselves, their partners, or of other individuals. These issues were discussed extensively with participants before they commenced taking their photos, and I have addressed these concerns in section 4.4 below, titled 'Ethical Considerations'. There are also technical and financial risks to consider. Typically, cameras need to be obtained, which involves financial costs and risks around loss or damage to property (Cahyanto, Pennington-Gray, & Thapa, 2013; Schulze, 2007). However, given the widespread nature of smartphones with photographic capabilities, I decided that participants could take photographs using their phones. This also eliminated the need to train participants to appropriately use cameras. Research also suggests that participants should be provided with clear instructions that enable them to take photographs of the experiences the researcher is concerned with, without inhibiting their creativity (Amerson & Livingston, 2014; Holm, 2008). To this end, I created a photographic protocol (Appendix H) and provided it to participants, and we would discuss it if there were any questions. The process of data collection can also be a time-intensive one, as participants would need time to take their photos, followed by interviews (Schulze, 2007). Therefore, participants were given one month to take their photographs.

Although I have discussed what the research suggests are the advantages and disadvantages of using reflexive photography to collect data, it is worth evaluating my own experience of using it with this particular population. I was initially attracted to the prospect of photo-interviewing because the research suggested that the type of data that could be gathered with it had the potential to be profound and unexpected. Indeed, I found that most

participants were inclined to think creatively and that their photos would often trigger unforeseen findings. I also noted that the process seemed to be of benefit to the participants. Many of them would tell me after the end of the interview that they had found the task of photography to be an enjoyable and therapeutic one.

Despite its stated value and potential for eliciting rich data, however, I have wondered how useful and effective reflexive photography has been, relative to a conventional interview approach. Due to the time-consuming nature of the method, I am almost certain that I would have had greater participant recruitment and retention success had participants been asked to only give up an hour of their time for the interview, rather than an extended period of time to take photos—especially with the male participants. For instance, I had recruited a male participant who agreed to take photos and do the interview, and after following up with him over the course of two months—during which time he continuously reassured me of his ongoing participation—he withdrew suddenly. As I had given him an additional month (because at that stage I had only collected data from two other male participants and was urgently motivated to give him the time that he said he needed), this was a very disappointing outcome.

While this is an extreme example, there did seem to be a certain reticence amongst my male participants that I noticed regarding the photography aspect of participation that was not evident in my female participants. In fact, the majority of female participants took their photos in a timely fashion and seemed to be more enthusiastic about the process. I do not believe that this gender difference reflected a difference in commitments to other responsibilities, as both female and male participants seemed to lead busy lives. It is possible that the women engaged with the task of capturing their experiences photographically more than the men did, although there is no evidence to support that men and women engage differently with photo-elicitation methods of collecting data.

Perhaps it is also possible that the women felt a greater sense of obligation to complete the task that they had signed up for compared to the men. Research proposes that there are gender differences in socialisation behaviours, where women are traditionally socialised towards performing behaviours that promote interpersonal intimacy and relationships, whereas men are usually socialised in ways that do not focus so heavily on maintaining social relationships; this may contribute to differences in research participation between women and men (Burleson, 2003; Slauson-Blevins & Johnson, 2016). Additionally, Agadjanian (2002) suggested that some topics may be avoided by men in conversations because they are traditionally viewed as the purview of women; thus, discussing one's personal relationships may be viewed as a feminine, rather than a masculine, thing to do. This may deter eligible men from participation. Therefore, the nature of the research may

have motivated women to complete the assigned photography task in ways that the male participants did not respond to.

Even with the small sample size (*n*=12), I noticed signs of data saturation occurring with the female participants early on, and so I was confident of the quality of the data that had been collected from them even though only eight women had been recruited. However, the small numbers of men in this study meant that data saturation did not occur with that group. This point will be raised again in the 'Limitations' section of the Discussion chapter (Chapter Nine).

Data Collection Methods in Feminist-Poststructuralist Research

It is worth spending some time to justify the methods used to collect data in this research, given that some scholars have suggested that interviewing participants may not be an appropriate method in Foucauldian research (Bastalich, 2009; Fadyl & Nicholls, 2013; O'Rourke & Pitt, 2007). Fadyl and Nicholls (2013) argued that the research interview taps into phenomenological/critical understandings of the world, given that its focus is on the meaning of experiences. On the other hand, Foucauldian research typically dismisses experiences and their constructed meanings, choosing instead to analyse the discourses that make such construction of meaning possible (Gavey, 1989). I acknowledge that it may be problematic to privilege data gathered from (photo-)interviews and focus groups over other sources of historical data that have been produced by other authors. Interviews and focus groups establish boundaries over the discourses that may be articulated, as there are set questions and prompts that are used by researchers to elicit the types of information that they are seeking.

However, the philosophical stance of this research is feminist-poststructuralist. While it draws on key Foucauldian concepts of discourse, power, and subjectivity, this research does not employ a traditionalist Foucauldian methodology. According to feminist-poststructuralist understandings, experience should be used as a starting point in any transformative project, where the goal is to identify dominant discourses and their points of resistance (Gavey, 1989, 2011; Weedon, 1987). To the feminist-poststructuralist, the way that people construct meaning from their experiences provides important insights into the discourses that are currently available to them (Baxter, 2003; Davies & Banks, 1992). Therefore, in order to gain access into currently circulating discourses, it was considered appropriate (from a feminist-poststructuralist standpoint) to interview participants about their experiences of being Indian adults in heterosexual, interethnic romantic relationships— even though setting boundaries on the interview topics may limit other discourses that can be articulated. However, given that these are likely to be discourses that are infrequently

articulated, interviews and focus groups may actually create the necessary space for such discourses to be conveyed.

On the other hand, Foucauldian theorists also argue that the confessional nature of the interview implies the presence of power relations between the interviewer and the interviewee (Fadyl & Nicholls, 2013; O'Rourke & Pitt, 2007). Foucault argued that the 'confession' involves individuals revealing their own experiences with a mind to gaining insight into themselves, but in doing so, make themselves vulnerable to the control of others (Bastalich, 2009). In this way, a production of truth occurs, and thus the confession was central to how Foucault understood power (Foucault, 1978; S. Mills, 2003). In an interview scenario, therefore, the interviewer sets the limits of the conversation, entailing a conversation that does not occur naturally. The interviewees are obliged to discuss their experiences within those parameters and are assumed to have less power than the interviewer.

However, the assumption that the interviewer automatically wields more power than the interviewee may not necessarily be the case. Power is always in flux, and due to external variables (such as the age, gender, and other socioeconomic characteristics of both the interviewer and the interviewee), power may shift between the interviewer and interviewee (Payne, 2002). The same notion may also apply to the focus groups that were used in Study 1, where power may shift constantly not just between the participants and the facilitator, but also between the participants themselves. Additionally, a reversal of power may take place between the interviewer and the interviewee. The nature of the interview positions the interviewer as a naïve entity seeking the knowledge of the interviewee, meaning that power shifts towards the interviewee. Social psychology theorists refer to this phenomenon as *informational power*, where having possession of information that other people need can put an individual in a position of relative power (Forsyth, 2010). Therefore, the idea that researchers automatically wield power over participants is not always accurate.

In order to account for these issues, these shifting power relations must also be analysed (Bastalich, 2009). Moreover, the wielding of power by the researcher over the participant can be mitigated by using strategies to allow the participant to become more active (Aston et al., 2011). In line with this, Study 2 uses reflexive photography, a method where the participant has a greater degree of control over the interview situation compared to a conventional interview.

When conducting research that draws on Foucault's toolkit, relying exclusively on data that has been produced by the researcher and the participants may be difficult where it concerns writing a "history of the present". As such, it is important to also select historical data for genealogical analysis, such as public records and documents, letters, diaries, media

(like magazines or newspapers), and so on. I found this to be a challenging task given that such sources as they relate to my research topic were non-existent. Where I was concerned with discourses of love, sexuality, partner selection, and interethnic intimacy as they related to the Indian context, the most pertinent texts were ancient texts written in the Vedic period (over 3000 years ago), such as the *Vedas* and the *Manusmriti*. I am not fluent in Vedic Sanskrit (the language these texts were originally written in), and although there are existing English translations, I am aware that many of these have been contested, are not always precise, and often lack the proper context. Not being a Vedic scholar, the conclusions that I have made in my analyses regarding the discourses circulating in these texts are tentative and should not be regarded as definitive, and where I have identified certain discourses or made other conclusions, it is because there is other, more recent literature (e.g., Kakar, 1990; Kumari, 1988; I. Trivedi, 2014) that supports such conclusions.

In light of the lack of historical data that may be used in genealogical analysis, I have turned to the academic literature to locate discourses. Although it is not typical to mainly use scholarly literature for a genealogical inquiry, academic sources can be an appropriate place to search for circulating discourses, and there are established precedents for doing so in Foucauldian-inspired research (e.g., Van Ness Sheppard, 2013). The introduction and the literature review (Chapters One and Three) comprise, therefore, the genealogical inquiry that is important for a research project that draws on Foucault's theoretical work.

4.2.4 Procedure

Initial contact was made with potential participants through email and Facebook's private messaging function. Originally, I met with the first few participants individually in brief 15-minute meetings in order to clarify the process for participants and to answer their questions about participation. It became clear early on that these face-to-face meetings were not necessary, and instead participants and I would either call each other to discuss the photographic protocol or simply email back and forth. Participants were asked to take photos that represented or told a story about their experiences of being an Indian adult in an interethnic relationship in New Zealand. Of these photos, they were asked to select around five to talk about in the interview. This was not a fixed number; ultimately, they had control over how many photos they took. Their selected photos were emailed to me prior to each interview and I displayed them on PowerPoint slides on my laptop so that each participant could flick through their photos during the interview.

Interviews were conducted in a range of locations. Henriksen, Watts, and Bustamante's (2007) Multiple Heritage Couple Questionnaire, which can be used for therapeutic and research purposes, was adapted for use in the interview schedule (Appendix

I). Five interviews were conducted in private homes, three interviews were conducted at AUT (at different campuses), another two took place at participants' workplaces, and one interview took place over Skype. Consent and Release Forms (Appendix G) were used to seek and obtain consent for digital recording of the interviews, as well as for the ability to use the produced photos for academic publication. Recordings of the interviews were transcribed verbatim, which were double-checked for accuracy. All participants received copies of their transcripts for review, and confirmed with the researcher which of their photos could be used for publication. Data analysis commenced upon completion of transcription.

4.3 Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is the primary methodological approach utilised in poststructuralist research (Barrington, 2008; Francis, 1999; Leavy, 2007), and is founded in the notion that language plays a significant role in constituting social reality (Willig, 2015). The aim of such an analysis, therefore, is to examine the discourses, power relations, and hegemonic social rules and practices that emerge from analysing spoken and written texts (Barrington, 2008; Cheek, 2008; Irving & English, 2008). Although there are many forms of discourse analysis (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008; Barrington, 2008; Cheek, 2008; Francis, 1999; Gavey, 1989; Payne, 2002; Willig, 2015), the version presented here draws strongly on feminist-poststructuralist understandings of reality and applies some elements of Foucauldian thinking about power, knowledge, and discourse. However, it is not strictly aligned with any traditionalist Foucauldian viewpoint.

Conducting a discourse analysis can be challenging as there is no formalised way of doing such analysis. Foucault was not interested in concretising a formalised approach to discourse analysis and was insistent that his techniques should be used like a toolkit. As such, he laid down no methodology that subsequent researchers could follow. This poses a few challenges for the (Foucauldian) poststructuralist researcher. Firstly, if there is no systematic approach of doing discourse analysis, how is it possible to identify a discourse? Foucault's definition is not entirely explicable, and even though many scholars have attempted to clarify his concept, the beginner poststructuralist researcher may still run into difficulties in identifying precisely what discourses emerge in her/his data. This brings up the possibility of identifying everything as discourse (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008). Secondly, without a clear, step-by-step method of carrying out discourse analysis, how does the researcher establish qualitative rigour and trustworthiness in research?

Scholars have attempted to provide guidelines on what a Foucauldian-influenced discourse analysis should entail (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008; Powers, 2013; Willig, 2015). Arribas-Ayllon and Walkerdine (2008) outline three objectives of such an analysis: 1) historical inquiry of discourse (genealogy), 2) attendance to mechanisms of power and how it operates, and 3) the constitution of subjects and subject positions. Initially, I drew on Willig's (2015) six-step process of discourse analysis, which focuses on power and its functions, as well as the constitution of subjects (Table 1).

Table 1

Willig's (2015) Six Stages of Discourse Analysis

Stage	Focus
1. Discursive constructions	Identification of how speakers construct discursive objects
2. Discourses	Using the identified discursive constructions to identify wider discourses
3. Action orientation	Examination of discourses to question their function—what does the speaker gain from constructing the object in this way?
4. Positionings	Identification of the subject positions taken up in the text
5. Practice	Examination of the relationship between discourse and practice—looking at how the identified discourses and subject positions enable/limit opportunities for action
6. Subjectivity	Examination of how taking up certain subject positions affects speakers and their experiences

As I commenced data analysis, I found myself grappling with the problem of how to *do* an adequate discourse analysis, especially given that I had no prior experience. The process of discourse analysis was initially frustratingly unclear. I relied on the resources provided by poststructuralist scholars during this time, using the key questions that they posed to reflect on my data. This was a matter of ensuring that I focused on the conditions of possibility that allowed participants to speak as they had, and to investigate ruptures/struggles where discourses could be accessed and articulated. As this was a feminist-poststructuralist approach, I also attended to gender, ethnicity, race, and other potential axes where power struggles might manifest. I read transcripts multiple times and annotated them to clarify my thoughts, and used NVivo 11 to code my transcripts and annotations into manageable categories. At this stage, I found that nothing concrete was emerging, and that there was nothing else to do but write. Indeed, Willig (2015) suggests that the analytical process is often the same thing as writing up the report itself—a process which allows the writer to clarify analysis as it proceeds. Through writing, I finally became more attuned to the process of doing discourse analysis. I became more competent at detecting when my own social and

cultural context inhibited my ability to deconstruct certain cultural meanings that I took for granted, and to question why speakers had chosen to speak in certain ways.

Therefore, the findings chapters of this thesis (Chapters Five through Eight) provide an indirect account of how analysis proceeded. During the process of writing up the findings, I could identify inconsistencies which led me to reflect further and come up with new insights. Analysis was primarily a fluid process of writing and rewriting, as well as consulting with my supervisory team.

4.4 Ethical Considerations

The Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee granted ethical approval for both studies on the 16th March 2016 (see Appendix J). Chief among the ethical issues that required careful consideration for this project were: privacy and confidentiality, informed consent, the use of photographic material, the minimisation of risk, and intellectual property rights. Each of these risks is explored below.

4.4.1 Privacy and Confidentiality

Given the face-to-face nature of data collection, it was not possible to ensure the anonymity of the researcher and the participants in this research. By agreeing to participate in research where their identities are known to the researcher, participants place themselves in a vulnerable position. Therefore, regardless of what kind of research is being conducted, the privacy and confidentiality of participants must be of utmost importance to the researcher (Fisher, 2012). In order to achieve this goal, I undertook a number of measures to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of participants, where possible. Firstly, any information concerning the identities of participants was restricted to only myself and my supervisors and all demographic details were aggregated so that no detail could (even remotely) identify a participant. A Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form were provided to all participants, which outlined how their privacy and confidentiality would be managed. Where participants took part in a focus group, they agreed to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of the other participants (via the Consent Form, and which I reinforced through a reminder at the beginning of each focus group). Interviews and focus groups were all conducted in private and secure settings. Recordings, transcriptions, and photos were again only accessible to myself and my supervisors, and all data was stored securely on my personal computer. Pseudonyms were allocated to participants and their partners in all transcripts and the final report, to prevent them from being identified. Nonetheless, due to

the use of photographic material in this research, the issue of privacy and confidentiality became a more complex issue to manage.

4.4.2 Informed Consent

Another key method of protecting participants in psychological research is informed and voluntary consent. This was ensured through sending potential participants in both studies the Participant Information Sheets and Consent Forms once they had made first contact with me (and in the case of Study 2, the photographic protocol as well). These forms allowed the participants to read exactly what the project was about, and what participation would involve. This information also detailed the conditions under which participation would take place, allowing participants to decide whether or not they would proceed. Participants were also encouraged to ask questions to clarify their understanding. I also brought Consent Forms and a copy of the Participant Information Sheet to each focus group/interview, allowing participants to read them again and ask any questions before the session began. Consent Forms were signed prior to the beginning of each session. In the case of the one Skype interview that took place in Study 2, the participant emailed me his signed Consent Form prior to the interview. All of the participants were over the age of 21, spoke English, and had no disability that prevented them from understanding the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form. Thus, they were all able to give informed consent on their own behalf.

4.4.3 Photographic Methods of Data Collection

As a method of data collection, reflexive photography asks participants to take photos that represent their experiences of the phenomenon of interest. In this case, participants were asked to take photographs that represented their experiences of being Indian adults in interethnic relationships in New Zealand. The issue with photographing such personal experiences is that participants may decide to photograph themselves or other people. In such cases, publishing these photographs for research purposes can potentially entail a breach of privacy and confidentiality, and can render participants (and any persons they photographed) vulnerable.

As such, it was especially important that I protect participants by managing privacy and confidentiality where it concerned the use of photographic material. A clear photographic protocol was established (Appendix H). Participants were reminded that if they chose to take photos of themselves or of other people, it would not be possible for me to protect their confidentiality. Therefore, they were encouraged to try to take photos of objects and places instead. However, if they felt that taking a photo of themselves or of others was

appropriate, then they were asked to take the photo in such a way that no one in the photo would be identifiable. If this was not possible, written consent from each of the people in the photo was required.

I also discussed with participants whether they wished to be identified in the final report and in any other academic publications resulting from this project. They were reminded that this was a completely voluntary choice, and the advantages and disadvantages of being identified were discussed in detail. Participants were also told that if they did not wish to be identified, it might still be possible for them to be identified through their photographic material and any other information provided in the interview. In such a scenario, I worked collaboratively with each participant to change/remove identifying information and to negotiate which photographs could be used for publication. Finally, participants were asked not to share the photos they had taken on social media, as this would increase the possibility of being identified. None of the participants wished to be identified, although all participants agreed to allow some or all of their photos to be used in future publications. Because consent should be treated as an ongoing ethical process (Pick, Berry, Gilbert, & McCaul, 2013) in order to promote participant autonomy (Seedhouse, 2009), I intend to reconfirm with participants that I may use their photos should I wish to publish them in future academic work.

4.4.4 Minimisation of Risk

It is important to consider whether the participants are part of a vulnerable population. While it was decided that they are not, it was necessary to keep in mind that when discussing one's personal experiences, there is always the possibility of feeling discomfort, embarrassment, or pain. Therefore, there was a degree of emotional risk in this research. In order to minimise this risk, participants were all interviewed in private and secure settings. Where focus groups were conducted, participants were reminded that, while they could disagree with another participant or with me, the discussion was meant to be respectful on all sides. All participants were reminded that they could pause or stop the discussion at any time if they felt the topics were too personal or sensitive. They were also advised that free counselling services would be available at Auckland University of Technology from the Health, Counselling, and Wellbeing team (Appendix K). None of the participants asked for access to these counselling services.

4.4.5 Intellectual Property

The final ethical consideration that was central to this research was that of the intellectual property rights of the photographs produced. This was managed through the

Consent Form and the Participant Information Sheet, which stated that the photographs produced for this study would be jointly owned by the participants and the researcher. Participants agreed to permit me to use these photographs solely for academic purposes, and I promised to consult participants first before deciding to use any of their photographs. In addition, participants were asked not to publish any of the photos they had taken on social media—however, this last point was due to the possibility of being identified, as opposed to intellectual property.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the methods used to conduct this research inquiry. Specifically, a closer look was taken at the methods that might be used in feminist-poststructuralist research and the importance of acknowledging methodological tensions in using certain types of data collection methods. The methods of participant recruitment for this inquiry, as well as the general procedures, were also explored. Additionally, this chapter highlighted the role of the researcher in this project, and the dynamics of being both an insider and outsider to the study. The following four chapters (Chapters Five through Eight) report the findings from this research, where Chapters Five and Six explore the findings that emerged from Study 1, and Chapters Seven and Eight examine the findings of Study 2.

Chapter Five: The Physical Geography of Romance and Sex in the Private and Public Spheres

Thus far, the preceding four chapters have established the background, philosophical underpinnings, and the methods used to undertake this research. The subsequent four chapters report on the findings that emerged from both studies, where Chapters Five and Six describe and explain the findings from Study 1, and Chapters Seven and Eight explore the findings from Study 2. The findings from these four chapters are synthesised in the final chapter (Chapter Nine), accompanied by a discussion of the implications and limitations of this research.

It may be helpful to the reader to reiterate the goal of Study 1, which was to examine Indian attitudes towards love, marriage, sexuality, and partner selection in New Zealand. Participants were from the general Indian adult population over 21 years of age and were not, nor had they ever been, in interethnic romantic relationships, and took part in focus groups and one-on-one interviews. It is necessary to clarify that discourses from the focus groups and interviews were similar, although I have noted in the below quotes whether participants were part of a focus group or an interview.

5.1 Introduction: The Problematisation of Space in Indian Romantic Relationships

"Sex is so visible over here. In every like form, like the intimacy part of sex, like physicality of it is so visible over here. Whereas in India, you wouldn't see that around, we wouldn't even see them holding hands or you know, kissing somebody or hugging. Like I don't think I've seen like couples even hug goodbye."

(Alex, female, 23, focus group)

This extract, taken from one of the focus group transcripts comprising Study 1, is reflective of a theme that heavily permeates all the texts produced from this study. It is a message that accomplishes several purposes. First, it hints at hegemonic practices concerning how romantic relationships can be conducted, both in India and in New Zealand; second, it shows how certain behaviours are discursively constructed; and third, it demonstrates an important delineation between private and public spaces, and what behaviours are possible—and not possible—in each of those spaces. Overall, this quote suggests the importance of physical geography and space in *Indian* romantic relationships.

On a descriptive level, the above extract insinuates that there are cultural norms that prohibit certain behaviours that can be conducted between two people in public spaces in India. These behaviours—such as kissing, hugging, and holding hands—are constructed as overtly sexual in nature. It seems that these behaviours are viewed as sexual specifically because they involve placing two individuals (and not just any two individuals, but a man and a woman) in highly close proximity to one another. This proximity between two people of the opposite sex to each other implies that they are romantically, and, therefore, sexually linked to each other. Thus, it is the shared physical space of the *heterosexual* couple that appears to innately sexualise physically intimate behaviours. These behaviours seem to be constructed by participants as sexual in both Indian and New Zealand public spaces; however, what differs is the acceptability, and, therefore, the resulting *visibility*, of these behaviours between the two discursive environments.

It is this problematisation of the issue of physical geography in romantic relationships and sex conducted in both private and public spaces that will be analysed throughout this chapter, with reference to the conditions of possibility that enable and limit what is possible for subjects in each of these differing discursive environments to do, think, and feel.

5.2 Public Displays of Affection

The term 'public displays of affection', in the common vernacular, is usually taken to refer to behaviours that are performed in public spaces between two individuals that are perceived as romantic (or sexual) in nature. This tends to include behaviours that involve touching, such as hand-holding, hugging, kissing, and caressing or fondling (Gulledge, Gulledge, & Stahmann, 2003). Such behaviours often evoke a variety of responses from others in the public, ranging from disgust and annoyance (sometimes, outright hostility and harassment) to acceptance or indifference. This section deals with cultural norms about public displays of affection for Indian people, and responses and reactions to these norms.

> "Showing affection in public, just not done in India, you can't… My parents never kissed in public. Unless it was like their anniversary or something and we were cutting a cake and they gave each other a peck on the lips. That was different, whereas like now you just walk, my husband and I kiss on the street, like if we're walking down, because it's pretty much done, like you can do it."
>
> *(Parvati, female, 29, focus group)*

In India, there are strong taboos regarding physical intimacy in public spaces (Twamley, 2013). These cultural stigmatisations are reflected in the enforcement of legal codes. Legislation in India indirectly prohibits kissing and hugging in public, through Section 294 of the Indian Penal Code, which criminalises "obscene acts". This section of the Code has been used by law enforcement in India to crack down on public displays of affection, where kissing and hugging have been interpreted as behaviours that are obscene. One of the most famous cases of public "obscene acts" involved Bollywood actress Shilpa Shetty and Hollywood actor Richard Gere. The latter kissed the former (on the cheek) publicly at an AIDS awareness event in New Delhi in 2007. This incident provoked immense censure from the public, with many burning effigies of both actors for an act that was deemed "sexually provocative" and "vulgar", while Indian courts issued a warrant for Gere's arrest (BBC News, 2007; Holt, 2007). It is also unsafe for couples to celebrate Valentine's Day in public, as they often attract physical violence and harassment from vigilante groups (Iyengar, 2015; I. Trivedi, 2014; Varghese, 2014). Valentine's Day in India is fraught with condemnations of the holiday by a number of right-wing groups who have associated it with immorality, and who criticise it for being one of the West's unwelcome influences on India (Iyengar, 2015; Varghese, 2014). In opposition to this, there have been counter-protests to support couples on Valentine's Day (I. Trivedi, 2014).

This discomfort with physical intimacy in public spaces permeates Indian society at the level of media as well. Until recently, Hindi cinema—in particular, Bollywood, the giant of Indian media—has been censored whenever filmmakers have attempted to depict a man and a woman sharing a kiss onscreen (I. Trivedi, 2014). Although it has become slightly more common to see kissing scenes in Bollywood movies in recent years (Rosenbaum, 2007; I. Trivedi, 2014), it is more difficult to depict other scenes of sexual intimacy without being censored.

As such, when the quote at the start of this section discusses how one "can't" express physical intimacy in public spaces in India, it refers to participants' perceptions of the behaviours that couples can safely engage in whilst in public. Participants believe that couples in India can show affection publicly, but this impinges on their safety in enormous ways, rendering the individuals involved open to hostility and harassment. Few exceptions seem to exist to this rule; the danger of public affection seems to be mitigated by special occasions, like anniversaries. However, this may be because anniversaries are commemorations of the long-term and permanent commitment of two people who are married to one another. It is specifically the married status of the two people who are demonstrating physical intimacy in public which diminishes the danger of bringing sex into a public space. Furthermore, the act of affection itself is merely a "peck on the lips"—brief, chaste, and safe for the public.

Discourses of sex and physical intimacy are strongly associated by participants with danger and immorality. It is possible that these discourses have been deployed in order to regulate the behaviour of young, unmarried people in public spaces. Certainly, that is one potential reading, but it does not fully explain what has made the deployment of these discourses possible, and how such deeply embedded discomfort with romantic physical intimacy has come to be amongst participants. In the context of these texts, this unease with sex is something that is unique to India and which cannot be found in New Zealand. Public spaces in New Zealand allow for the expression of physical intimacy between couples in ways that are described by participants as "modern", "visible", and "free", in line with literature casting the West as liberal about sex (Medora et al., 2002). In contrast, India is constituted as the extreme opposite: "traditional", "invisible", and "limited" (Medora et al., 2002). The excerpt from Parvati shows further contrasts and oppositions being drawn: New Zealand/public/open/freedom/eroticism are all associated with one another in the space of a few sentences, and are placed in direct opposition to India/private/closed/restraint/celibacy. Thus, New Zealand is constructed as a very different public space for the expression of physical intimacy compared to India. Indian participants find themselves open to a broader range of possible actions in New Zealand while romantically engaging in public; while displays of public affection may be met with distaste from members of the public, aggression and harassment are not in the likely spectrum of potential reactions that they will encounter, as they are in India.

Even so, it seems that discourses about private and public spaces, and the ways that they are used to define the behaviours appropriate in each space, influence how participants in New Zealand think, feel, and behave about public affection. Although the discursive environment in New Zealand facilitates engagement in physical intimacy in public, it appears that India, as it exists discursively with regards to the appropriate physical geography of romantic and sexual relationships, is carried with these Indian participants wherever they go—in this case, to New Zealand.

5.3 Private vs. Public Spaces

"I've never heard my dad or my mum talk about you know, ah, things like this. I mean, love or anything or they, even have never expressed towards each other in front of us. So I think that is something which has to be, even expressing love, doesn't matter if it's physical or verbal, or if it's in any other form, being so conservative in India, it has to be done between four walls. Doesn't matter where

you are but you can't, like I've never seen people expressing it so openly and I mean that's what I've experienced, I've never seen anyone in my house express openly."

(Anand, male, 33, focus group)

It is clear that for participants, space remains an important factor in New Zealand in demarcating the appropriateness of physically intimate behaviours that place two individuals geographically close to one another. Sex and physical intimacy, therefore, are seen as appropriate behaviours only in *private spaces*. Since it may be unclear what denotes a private space, it is worth examining what is considered one. This quote from another focus group text illustrates that the ways in which love and/or sexual desire can be expressed are rigidly structured. Private spaces—in particular, one's own home—are the only boundaries in which such expression may occur. However, even within that private space, there are some areas of the family home which are bound up in silence—silence of both physical and verbal expression. Hence, when the idea that physical intimacy may only occur "between four walls" arises, it is not actually the family home that is being referred to, given that the home is not a fully private space. In fact, it is only a small area of the family home where physical/verbal affection may safely happen: the marital bedroom.

As a private space, the bedroom is the only space in which a couple is able to move in closer proximity to one another, and freely express their feelings for one another physically, verbally, and emotionally, without receiving disapproval from others. It is the only space which belongs entirely to the couple and in which others do not trespass. Therefore, it is the only space that can be safely associated with sex. The rest of the home is where the family dwells, and to bring sex into this family space seems to endanger the safety of the family space, just as bringing physical intimacy into public spaces seem to threaten the public. It is uncertain why sex threatens the sanctity of the family and endangers public spaces. In order to examine this, we need to focus on further discursive constructions of sex, as produced in the texts.

5.4 Talking about Sex

"We don't want to do that before we get married. Just knowing myself and knowing how I talk to my parents and being an Indian girl… I think the discussion between my mum and me would go OK, like you know, you should understand that we have, you know, we're not just like animals and we're not just gonna go at it, but also I, as

an individual person, regardless of like, whoever's in my life, would say I value myself more than, you know, just hooking up with anybody."

(Alex, female, 23, focus group, discussing her [lack of] premarital sexual activity)

There is a common thread running throughout the texts produced for this study that associates sex with danger should it be encountered in spaces relegated to the public, and that sex is safe only when it can be confined to one space, and one space specifically: the marital bedroom. It is, therefore, essential to place heavy restrictions around sexual activity: physically and geographically, to the bedroom; relationally, to the marital relationship. It is possible to infer from this that discourses of sex as being wild, spontaneous, and primitive are being deployed. The above extract uses the word "animal" to suggest that sex is that which is untamed, bestial, earthly, and sensual. It may also be used to refer to urges that are without restraint; in much the same way animals have no consciousness that may allow them to regulate baser instincts and desires, sex is conceived of as a primal instinct that is the purview of lesser animals. Due to the primitiveness of sexual urges, engaging in sexual activity prior to marriage is considered to devalue oneself and, therefore, is regarded as unseemly and improper.

In line with this view, an underlying current can be detected whereby sex outside of the marital context (whether that is premarital or extramarital sex) is viewed with disapproval in Indian society (Allendorf, 2013; Patel, 2013). Casual sex is thought to be a rare activity for Indian adults, as is having multiple sexual partners. Participants said that even though premarital sex does occur amongst Indian adults, this typically takes place in longer-term relationships that are expected to result in marriage. The expectation of marriage frequently mitigates the dangers of engaging in sexual activity in that context, as it is implied that the two individuals in such a relationship will continue to be sexually active exclusively with each other for the remainder of their lives. Even so, the speakers in these texts spoke of how casual sexual arrangements are still relatively uncommon, and most people have the expectation of remaining sexually chaste until marriage. However, it is also possible that participants were either unwilling to disclose their own casual relationships or were unaware of how widespread casual sex is amongst Indian young people in New Zealand.

While chastity is highly valued for unmarried Indian adults, it is worth noting that such expectations are gendered. It was widely acknowledged in the texts that it was more socially acceptable for men to engage in premarital sex, while women were more likely to receive condemnation for the same behaviours. In addition, participants alleged that not only could men "get away with" having sex before marriage, they were also able to breach the norm of exclusivity; that is, they were able to have multiple sexual partners (Kumari, 1988;

N. Manohar, 2008; Medora et al., 2002). Women, on the other hand, are unable to have sex with more than one person without being seen as having loose morals. A family's honour also depends on the sexual conduct of its women; a woman known to have relationships with men, regardless of whether they are explicitly known to be sexual or non-sexual, brings shame to her family's reputation in society (Das Gupta, 1997; Gilbertson, 2010; Kumari, 1988; N. Manohar, 2008).

Based on participants' claims, it is curious that sex is viewed as dangerous and that sexual chastity is valued so highly in a society whose ancestral heritage includes the *Kamasutra*, as well as numerous temples, artwork, and literature depicting erotica, hinting at the harmonious coexistence of the sacred and the erotic in ancient India (I. Trivedi, 2014). To illuminate this contradiction, we need to revisit the pervasive power of the four *purusartha*, or goals of Hindu religious life that was first introduced in Chapter One, here depicted in Figure 1. These four goals have varying importance in the developmental life cycle. When individuals are young and in the early stages of their married and domestic lives, then the goals of *artha* (the accumulation of material wealth in order to ensure prosperity for one's family) and *kama* (aesthetic pleasure, often referring to sexual pleasure) take precedence. In later life, one should start living towards achieving *moksha* (asceticism and liberation from earthly life), a goal which is regarded as far superior to those of *kama* and *artha*. Regardless
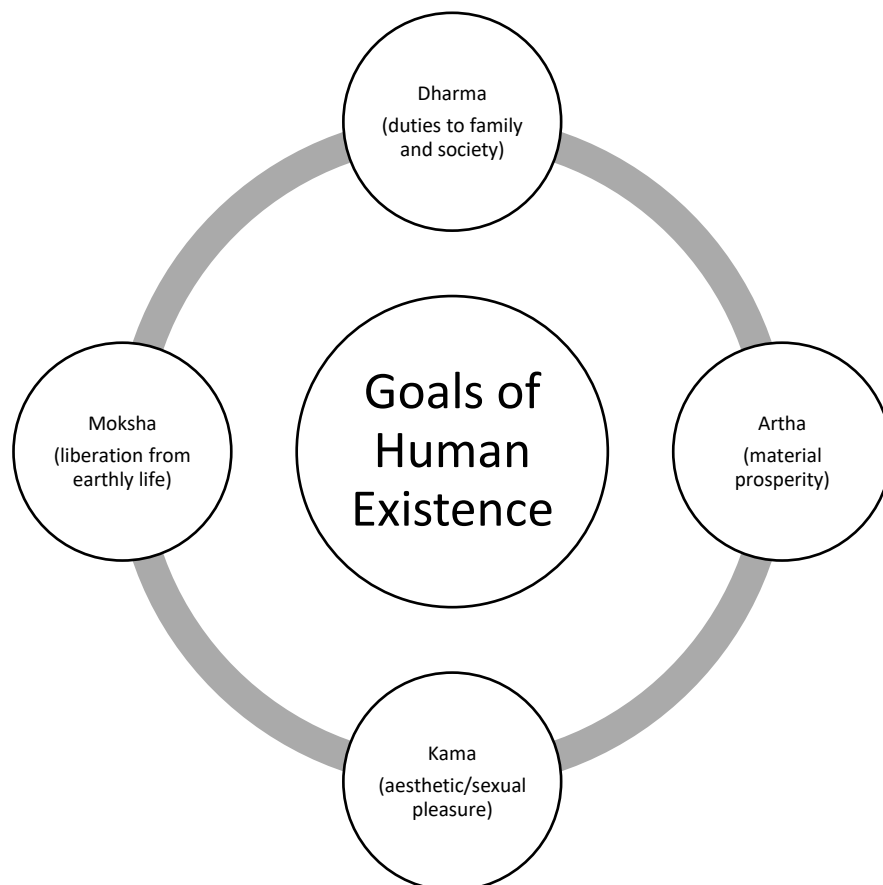

Figure 1. Diagram of the *purusartha* (goals of human existence) in Hindu philosophy.

of one's current position in life, all activities must be pursued with the aim of *dharma* (ethical responsibilities or duties towards society) (Hodge, 2004; Wilson, 1980) in mind.

It is important to understand this fourfold path in order to realise the prevalence of *dharma* over the other goals. With this in mind, we can understand Vatsyayana's opening argument in the *Kamasutra*: pleasure (*kama*) is important, but it must be pursued with the aim of *dharma* (McConnachie, 2007; I. Trivedi, 2014; Vatsyayana, c. 300AD/2002). Excessive indulgence in pleasure of any kind impedes the fulfilment of other, more important aims in life, specifically that of *moksha*—a crucial concern in Hindu life (Kapadia, 1966). It is in struggling to balance these two concerns—eroticism and asceticism—and ultimately tipping over into asceticism that Indian culture derives its current norms about sex and sexuality (I. Trivedi, 2014).

Scholars have documented the impact of invading influences in India as having affected ancient India's once liberal views on sex (O'Connor & Earnest, 2011), where the sacred and the erotic were once able to co-exist throughout India. British colonisation is often pointed to as a source of the current mode of sexual suppression in India, whereby it has been suggested that Victorian values of sexual constraint and prudishness have been responsible for quashing freer attitudes towards sexuality in the Indian psyche (Chakraborty & Thakurata, 2013; Das Gupta, 1997; I. Trivedi, 2014). However, it is possible to argue that discourses of eroticism and asceticism have been vying for dominance in the Indian psyche long before the British arrived (O'Connor & Earnest, 2011)—or, indeed, before the arrival of any of the empires or dynasties that invaded India (I. Trivedi, 2014). In order to examine this idea further, it is necessary to turn to the ancient religious texts of Hinduism, which vary in their stances on sex.

If the *Kamasutra* represents the erotic tradition of Hinduism, then it can be argued that the *Manusmriti* ("The Laws of Manu", a text which outlines the law codes of ancient Indian culture) puts forth the ascetic counterpart (I. Trivedi, 2014). The *Manusmriti* provides strict guidelines on *heterosexual* conduct, whereby sexual activity should only occur within marital boundaries for reproductive purposes (Bühler, 1886; Kakar, 1990; McConnachie, 2007). Even then, further restrictions are imposed upon the ideal frequency of intercourse; sex must not occur during a woman's menstrual period, and only in her *ritu* (a period of 16 days where she is thought to be fertile). Within a woman's *ritu*, the first four nights, along with the eleventh and thirteenth, are forbidden for sexual intercourse, as are festival nights, nights with a full moon or no moon, and odd-numbered nights (for boys can only be conceived on even nights) (Bühler, 1886; Kakar, 1990). It is necessary to point out that we have only spoken of nights, for sex during the day was another prohibition (Kakar, 1990).

Such limitations around sexual conduct seem to point to a general uneasiness where sex is concerned. Even in the *Kamasutra* (translated as 'a treatise on *kama*'), its author, Vatsyayana, argues as to why his treatise is necessary, for the method/art of sex is a dying one that is gradually being suppressed by those who argue that it hinders the pursuit of spirituality—a superior ideal in ancient India (McConnachie, 2007; Vatsyayana, c. 300AD/2002). His work represents the culmination of other writers who sought to document the art of sex, as Vatsyayana's *Kamasutra* is a body of work that allegedly pulls together the work of other scholars who have investigated the proper methods of enacting sexual activity: before, during, and after the act (McConnachie, 2007; Vatsyayana, c. 300AD/2002). For example, Vatsyayana not only has a chapter devoted to 'doing' sex itself, but also writes about virgins (how to woo a bride), wives, courtesans, and extramarital sex (McConnachie, 2007; Vatsyayana, c. 300AD/2002).

However, possibly the most significant chapter of his work is the first one, which expounds on the philosophical foundations of *kama*, and the proper expression of it. What he seems to argue—and what appears to be the dominant discourse of the time—is that *kama* must always be secondary to *dharma*. Where sexual indulgence is excessive, it distracts the individual from one's higher duties and responsibilities to society (McConnachie, 2007; Vatsyayana, c. 300AD/2002). Sex, then, might be dangerous because it could represent the dominance of individual desires over collective wellbeing. In this way, it may threaten the sanctity of the family by causing one to ignore one's duties to one's parents, elders, siblings, and extended family members. It is implied that sex could have the potential to divert attention to lesser, baser desires, which may have grave consequences for the wellbeing of family. However, it is acknowledged that sexual satiation is necessary for individuals to function (Kapadia, 1966); therefore, the marital relationship becomes the only appropriate containment field in which such needs can be fulfilled.

5.5 Gendered Sexual Chastity

Although the erotic/ascetic discursive dichotomy has been explained, it is insufficient to describe why participants thought that men possess greater sexual liberty than women do—especially in light of the ideal of sexual chastity for *both* women and men (Kumari, 1988). Referring back to ancient India's texts, there are clear patterns in how women are described, according to the subject positions they are able to take up. Kakar (1990, p. 17) refers to these patterns as the "mother-whore-partner in ritual trichotomy", a variation on the Freudian mother-whore dichotomy. In the roles where woman serves her husband and her family, she is praised and revered beyond measure. As a mother, her ability to produce children ensures

the continuity and stability of the family, and as a wife, her primary sacrament is to participate with her husband in holy rituals that will honour the gods and achieve her husband's *dharma*. It is in these selfless and serving aspects that woman is venerated, for a good woman is one who is utterly devoted to her husband and treats him as her lord and god (Kumari, 1988). This is explicitly stated in the epic poem, the *Mahabharata*, in which the goddess Uma appears and makes a declaration to her god-husband regarding the role of women:

"Devotion to her lord is a woman's merit; it is her penance; it is her eternal haven. Merit, penances, and Heaven become hers who looks upon her husband as her all in all, her lord in all things. The husband is the god which women have. The husband is their friend. The husband is their high refuge. Women have no refuge that can compare with their husband, and no god can compare with him. The husband's grace and Heaven, are equal in the estimation of a woman; or, if unequal, the inequality is very trivial. O Maheshwara, I do not desire Heaven itself if thou are not satisfied with me. If the husband that is poor or diseased or distressed were to command the wife to accomplish anything that is improper or unrighteous or that may lead to destruction of life itself, the wife should without any hesitation accomplish it." (Kakar, 1990, p. 67)

This quote is significant because it uses an authoritative female voice (the goddess Uma is another name for Parvati, one of the pre-eminent goddesses of Hindu mythology, and the consort of Lord Shiva) to speak to all women about the ideals to which they should aspire—the role of the *pativrata*. These roles impose chastity prior to marriage, and thereafter, complete fidelity and obedience to one's husband; but more than that, it states that a woman's husband takes precedence over everything and everyone else—including herself and even the gods (Kumari, 1988). A woman must even do things that are immoral or illegal, if that is what her husband has directed her to do. A woman who venerates her husband as her lord, master, and god can achieve Heaven, and only thus is she praised (Kumari, 1988).

A woman who puts her own desires first, on the other hand, is scorned, particularly when they are her sexual desires. As sexual beings, women consistently receive denigration and condemnation by the authors of these texts, who are, notably, by and large male (Kumari, 1988). Numerous proverbs suggest that women are vain, fickle, and dangerous seductresses that men must protect themselves from (Kumari, 1988), as evidenced by this quotation from the *Rig Veda*: "There exist no partnerships with women: they have hyenas' hearts" (Jamison & Brereton, 2014, p. 1550) Women's sexual proclivities are vast and prone to over-indulging, and, therefore, women are inclined to engage in sexual activity with any man that catches her

eye. Therefore, according to the *Manusmriti*, women must be restrained—by men, who are responsible for protecting women from their own sensuality (Kumari, 1988). Women's excessive sexuality is used as a justification for the way in which their behaviour and conduct are regulated by men, through a variety of social relationships (Kumari, 1988). As a young girl, she lives in the house of her father and is monitored and controlled by him. During this period of time, she must remain completely chaste in anticipation of her future husband (Das Gupta, 1997; O'Connor & Earnest, 2011). This control over her body transfers to her husband via marriage, who is the only man who may engage with her sexually. Participants think that this standard of female sexual chastity might be reproduced for Indian adults in New Zealand today as well.

> "I think there is a bit of difference because I think men, I've seen that men can go around date people, date, have a relationship and then they can move on whereas if you look at the female side, if they get into a relationship and then if that relationship is not working and then they come back and try to find another one, it will be difficult for them. It becomes difficult for them probably, people might see that, especially the male would see, oh this sort of person was involved with someone else, they don't look at themselves that they were involved with someone else and then that relationship did not work. Then they don't wanna give the opportunity to the female as well, the same opportunity. So they, they basically see the female as, if they have, their relationship did not work, they've tried to find fault in them."
>
> *(Sahil, male, 45, interview)*

This quotation indicates that men might not be subject to sexual regulation in the way that women are. As husbands and fathers, they experience control over the women that are subordinated to them, and as a result of their power in this situation, are able to both dictate and bend the rules. Thus, participants think that men are able to experience multiple sexual and romantic relationships without fear of condemnation. Women, on the other hand, should they violate norms about female sexual chastity, particularly with more than one man, are often denounced—by men *and* other women. It is common for young women to hide their relationships from their parents (Ahluwalia, 2002; Gingrich, 2004; Inman et al., 1999). Therefore, a great deal more emphasis is placed on fidelity and sexual chastity for women rather than for men (Das Gupta, 1997).

Here, then, is one possibility for the current milieu of discomfort when it comes to erotic discourse in the Indian culture. Through a number of processes put in place and reproduced over several thousands of years, tensions between competing discourses of

eroticism and asceticism and apprehension about (and regulation of) women as sexual beings may have systematically interacted with each other in order to produce an entrenched cultural discomfort with sex and sexuality, especially in spaces where it is overly visible. This may be, in part, due to apprehension around women as potentially dangerous sexual beings that men must protect themselves from, which is accomplished through the regulation of the female body.

It is unclear how much of these ancient texts reflected the everyday lives of present-day Indians' Vedic ancestors, and whether the strictures and guidelines described there translated to daily practice. However, it can be argued that regardless of whether they informed the everyday lives of the ancients, they certainly still inform contemporary Indian culture (Kumari, 1988). Although ancient texts date back to more than three millennia ago, they remain highly pertinent. Religious texts in particular, such as the *Rig Veda*, the *Manusmriti*, the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, and the *Bhagvad Gita*, remain relevant texts for Indians today (Kumari, 1988). This is especially true with the televised dramatization of some of these texts, such as the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, making these texts increasingly accessible for contemporary Indians (Pauwels, 2008). In this way, discourses promoting asceticism and subverting eroticism are circulated, as well as enabling and limiting the available subject positions possible for individuals to take up—primarily those that are safely non-sexual, such as the woman-as-mother or the spiritual and family-minded man. Subject positions that entail inherent sexuality are more difficult to access within this hegemony. Throughout these texts, a number of subject positions emerged that both conform to and resist hegemonic discourses about asceticism and chastity. A key subject position for young Indian women was that of the good Indian girl, which will be explored in depth below.

5.6 Subject Positions: The Good Indian Girl vs. The Fast Girl

"I feel like even if I were in a relationship, I would want to hide it, especially at first, because I wouldn't want to be someone who, you know, dates someone for a short amount of time, introduces them to the family and then if it ended, then, it'll seem like I'm dating a lot of people as well."

(Mindy, female, 23, focus group)

As we have discussed above, the ancient religious texts of India portray women in several different lights, and accord them varying degrees of respect depending on their role. Women in their roles as mothers are venerated above all, while women who focus on their sexual

desires are condemned (Kumari, 1988). We have briefly mentioned women in their roles as wives, specifically in their capacity as partners to their husbands in the fulfilment of sacred rituals. Wives are necessary for men to complete these rituals; if a man's wife passes away before him, he is encouraged and even expected to remarry so that he may continue to fulfil his *dharma*. On the other hand, a number of religious texts like the *Manusmriti* impose prohibitions on widow remarriage. A woman who was once married has already been touched by another man; this renders her unmarriageable to other men (Kumari, 1988). This will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter (Chapter Six). However, it is the portrayal of the ideal Indian woman that we are concerned with here, a subject position that is informed by discourses of female sexual chastity and the husband-as-god, which in turn has a role in informing how young Indian women in the modern world conduct their romantic relationships.

I briefly mentioned above that ancient myths like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* propagate dominant discourses and available subject positions that remain pertinent for contemporary Indian society. The *Ramayana* is particularly important because it is from this text that we can detect the roots of how good Indian women should behave. The *Ramayana* recounts the story of Prince Rama (the seventh incarnation of Lord Vishnu, one of the three members of Hinduism's divine trinity), the heir of Ayodhya, and his unjust banishment from his kingdom and his subsequent trials and tribulations (including his battle with the demon king, Ravana of Lanka), before his triumphant return to Ayodhya to be crowned as king. This tale is well-known to Hindus as one of good conquering evil and is commemorated yearly during Diwali, the Festival of Lights. This tale has become more accessible to everyday Indians through the advent of television, as it has been adapted in a number of television series. Thus, its messages and moralities continue to circulate widely and deeply influence Indians today—even those living outside of India.

This text is, therefore, significant for a range of reasons, but relevant to this section of the thesis is its portrayal of women. A crucial character in this epic is the character of Sita: Rama's wife and the embodiment of the ideal Indian woman. Sita is the perfect woman, the perfect wife, the perfect mother, and the perfect daughter (Kumari, 1988). When Rama is banished from his kingdom unjustly and exiled to the forest, Sita goes with him, and suffers deeply but silently. During their exile, Sita is kidnapped by Ravana, who takes her back to Lanka and imprisons her, developing lust towards her. In spite of this, Sita resists his advances and maintains her chastity, remaining faithful to her husband. After some time passes, Rama finally succeeds in rescuing her, but prompts her to prove that she was faithful during their separation. Without complaint, Sita undergoes trial by fire to prove her fidelity— she walks through fire and emerges on the other side, unburned. When Rama returns,

victorious, to Ayodhya, he and Sita are crowned as the king and queen; but their happiness does not last. Rumours abound amongst their subjects about Sita's fidelity, and Rama is pressured into exiling his wife for a second time. Although she is pregnant with Rama's sons, she endures this without complaint and seeks refuge in a hermitage, where she gives birth to Rama's twin sons and raises them as a single parent. Once her sons are reunited with their father in adulthood, Sita pleads with the earth for release from what had been an unhappy and unjust life, which then splits open to take her away.

The character of Sita embodies the *pativrata*—she never complains about her lot in life and is deeply and utterly devoted to her husband (Kumari, 1988). Moreover, she never looks at another man sexually, and remains chaste to Rama for her whole life. She is self-sacrificing and always puts the needs of her husband before her own, and despite the suffering she endures, she remains stoic, noble, and dignified (Kumari, 1988). While the concept of *pativrata* is not widely practiced today, this notion of the ideal woman remains embedded in Indian culture, especially where it concerns the sexual conduct of women.

This section of the chapter began with a quote from a young woman who discussed her dating practices in terms of not wishing to be seen as a woman who engages in multiple relationships with men. Her wish is for a relationship that will be "serious" and exclusive, rather than embarking on dating as a casual, fun venture. Although the texts do explicitly endorse the idea that women can have multiple relationships, the young women speaking in these texts do not believe in "dating around" and having multiple partners (one after the other) in one's on-going romantic life. In many ways, this desire is informed by discourses about ideal womanly virtue. The idea of having multiple partners for short periods of time is constructed negatively, which appears to be associated with concern about public image. In the above quotation from Mindy, the use of the word "seem" is significant, in that it implies that there may be a disconnection between the speaker's personal reality and public perceptions of her behaviour; like Sita, who remained chaste to her husband but was perceived to have been unfaithful, and ultimately had to pay the price for such misconceptions. Public perceptions, then, can influence young Indian women's dating behaviours, to the extent of wanting to conceal their relationships initially in order to ensure that it can progress to something stable and secure (Ahluwalia, 2002).

In this way, participants showed that young Indian women can take up the subject position of the good Indian girl to safely navigate their romantic relationships. It may allow them to engage in dating behaviour by meeting new people and getting to know them (often in an implicitly non-sexual sense), in a way that conforms to behaviours expected of 'good' women—that is, not "dating around", but having only serious relationships (one at a time) that are hoped to be permanent. Therefore, this position acts like a safety net, where women

are able to engage in dating behaviour without receiving the criticism commonly given to women who are visibly seen (or perceived) to engage in promiscuity. Again, it is the visibility of women's perceived sexual conduct that either enables or restricts their access to the good Indian girl position. Women who do not conform to ideals about femininity can be constituted as "fast" women.

> "I know somebody who, it was just that she got engaged and then they had their legal marriage and then, first there was the engagement. Second day was legal marriage… after getting legally married they went for a get-together or, you know? Walk around in the town and something like that. Third day the girl comes to know that the boy is married…. they had a very big engagement in front of so many people, and she was married, like legally married. And then that particular day she was roaming around in the town but thinking that, you know, she's gonna get married with this guy. But then on the third day she comes to know that this guy has got a family…. This girl couldn't get married again to a single [one who had never been married] guy because in her, you know how the marriage certificate, for her it will always be divorcée. Although she might not have slept with that guy but that divorcée word is written there. So because of that particular incident she was not able to get married to a single guy ever again, and at last she got married with a divorcé. So see, she was purely clean…. good three four years she couldn't get married again because all the neighbours have seen her at the engagement, all the gossips were going on."
>
> *(Anita, female, 39, focus group)*

Public perceptions again seem to play a vastly significant role in how women can be constituted. This particular extract constitutes the subject position of a "fast girl", one who is seen or thought to be engaging in sexual behaviour. Participants highlighted this as a negative subject position, seemingly because it restricts the possibilities for action for those in this position. A fast girl is a woman who has been touched by a man, which renders her permanently untouchable to other men, because she is viewed as not "pure" and, therefore, "used goods". This position has the ability to act as a cautionary tale to other women and to remind them of the consequences of violating norms of sexual chastity.

It is clear that women's reputations (and the subject positions which are available to them) are profoundly influenced by public perceptions. It is, therefore, worth examining how community surveillance acts as a form of disciplinary power, particularly with regards to how gossip is used to enforce social rules about chastity and promiscuity.

5.7 Community Surveillance: The Function of Gossip

> "There were judgements, there were! Like you know, my dad would actually ring me when I used to date people in India. And like he would ring me and be like um, a neighbour actually saw you holding hands, where were you going? I was like oh man, how does this stuff reach you?"

> *(Parvati, female, 29, focus group)*

Indian culture, with its collectivist orientation, is composed of a web of embedded social networks that are far-reaching and widely-felt, and for those contained within these networks, the consequences of behaving in ways that do not conform to standards of propriety can be damaging. One of the most significant social networks for young Indian adults is the community or the neighbourhood, particularly in relation to how the community offers and limits opportunities for engaging in romantic relationships. Specifically, the neighbourhood plays an important role in monitoring how young people conduct their romantic affairs, as illustrated by the quote at the beginning of this section. The speaker in this excerpt had previously spoken of her relationship with her parents, and how it facilitated her ability to date people. For her, there was no sense of fear or apprehension regarding whether her parents would discover her romantic relationships. However, she speaks of "judgements" from her community. These judgements are unsurprising; given that we already know from an earlier discussion that conducting romantic relationships in public spaces is a social violation. However, the consequences of such violations may result in members of the community contacting the parents of the individual to inform them of the violation—or even informing other members in the community of the violation, through gossip. Another speaker (Mindy) mentions how "if this person sees you with this person, and then they'll tell this aunty, this uncle, this cousin."

It is worth reflecting on the function of this type of gossip. For most speakers in these texts, there is no sense of fear of their parents or families, but as we have discussed, some young adults do hide their relationships from their families. One possible function of gossip, then, is that it might instil apprehension in young adults about the secrecy of their private affairs. While this is one possible reading, it is likely that this is just the surface function of gossip. It may be that gossip serves two additional disciplinary functions that go hand in hand: 1) to punish the behaviours of younger members in the community who are committing social violations, and 2) to regulate the behaviours of other younger community members by pre-empting social violations. If one does not comply with societal expectations, gossip often has the effect of tarnishing one's reputation, which then has a punitive purpose.

Therefore, being talked about in a negative light may have repercussions for the way that the individual is perceived in the community. In order to pre-empt gossip, one might decide to behave in ways that do conform; or existing gossip may cause an individual to fall back in line with social norms, out of a desire to belong and to be perceived in a positive light. As such, the function of gossip is also a regulatory one—it monitors the behaviours of members in the community to ensure that they conform to what is expected of them. In doing so, it sets out the rules for proper social behaviour specifically by seizing on the examples of those who deviate from social propriety. This function of rule-setting is concisely demonstrated in the excerpt below.

> "People talk, like I can think of one person who moved in with her boyfriend, I don't even know her that well… We barely know her family and my mum was talking about it the other day. And then she actually ended up breaking up with her boyfriend and dropping out of med school and it was very messy, and Indian parents were using that as a see, you shouldn't be moving in with people because you're going to drop out of med school and things are going to end badly and you're going to be heartbroken."
>
> *(Jane, female, 24, interview)*

In this instance, gossip is used to enforce expected social behaviour by providing an admonitory tale of how diverging from social norms can go horribly wrong. The social repercussions of deviating are hinted at in this quote: not only is the individual in the text spoken about, but there is also a sense of shame that hangs over her and her actions, which are unlikely to be forgotten by the community anytime soon. So, although there may be an individual desire to reject the impositions and restrictions placed by others, one's standing in society is invariably affected by communal perceptions of the individual.

However, the texts produced for this study suggest that participants are increasingly choosing to resist hegemonic Indian discourses about sex, and are bringing sexuality and physical intimacy out into the open. Additional extracts from the texts will be presented in order to provide an illustration of this resistance, which will describe instances of physical intimacy brought into the public space. However, these excerpts differ in substantial ways, which will be explored in depth below.

5.8 Acts of Resistance

Although Indian discourses regarding ascetic sexuality and physical intimacy continue to prevail for participants, there are increasing possibilities for resistance against these discourses, especially due to the comparative openness towards sexuality that is prominent in New Zealand discursive environments. Two examples of resistance from the texts will be described and explored here.

5.8.1 The Kiss as Resistance

"Like even kissing at our wedding was really funny, it was! 'Cause his mum is really conservative and she was the only one from their family who came, and we had to prepare her like months in advance and go, OK you know, they're gonna say, you may kiss the bride and we are going to do that. So we kinda had to make sure we had some conversations around that, just that, you know, if you don't wanna look, it's OK, you can look, look away! …. Just saying that we are going to kiss though. Um because we both wanted to. It was like our moment that we didn't want to miss out on that, so we kinda had to do it in a strategic way to make sure that they get it, they get that we're not gonna be lewd about it, we're not going to start like grinding up against each other. You know, you may kiss the bride! … And she was just like, thank god that there's no other family here… And then she was like oh my gosh thank god that like, you know, uncles and aunties and all these people aren't here and I was like, well I guess? I do miss them here but like I guess that's a good thing, considering that both of us were not going to not do it."

(Parvati, female, 29, focus group)

In Indian weddings, it is typical for the bride and groom to *not* exchange a kiss to seal their newly-formed marital bond, unlike weddings in the West. This is unsurprising, given what we know about hegemonic practices about the expression of physical intimacy in Indian public spaces. Instead of kissing, the bond between the bride and groom is validated through other rituals. While the various rituals completed in wedding ceremonies differ according to the regions and ethnic groupings that the bride and groom come from, there are a number of rituals that are common across all Hindu wedding ceremonies. Typically, ceremonies are conducted in the presence of *agni,* the sacred fire (which the bride and groom light together), under the *mandap*, a temporary structure that is covered and has four pillars. Common rituals include: the exchanging of flower garlands to indicate the bride and groom's approval and acceptance of one another as spouses; the *mangal pheras*, in which the bride and groom circle

the fire four times to represent the transition into their new lives together; and *saptapadi*, in which the bride and groom take seven steps together, which represent the goals of their married life (this is also the legally binding ritual of the ceremony).

Movement and spatial arrangements are of significance in Hindu wedding ceremonies. Traditionally, the bride, the groom, their parents, and the officiating priest sit underneath the *mandap* in order to conduct the rituals, while guests are geographically separated from the *mandap*. Figure 2 depicts a traditional seating arrangement, while Figure 3 illustrates the usual seating arrangements for modern wedding ceremonies conducted in venue halls. Note that in Figure 3, the parents of the bride and groom may be seated on the *mandap* for the ceremony, but may equally prefer to sit with the other guests, and enter the *mandap* when they are required for specific rituals.
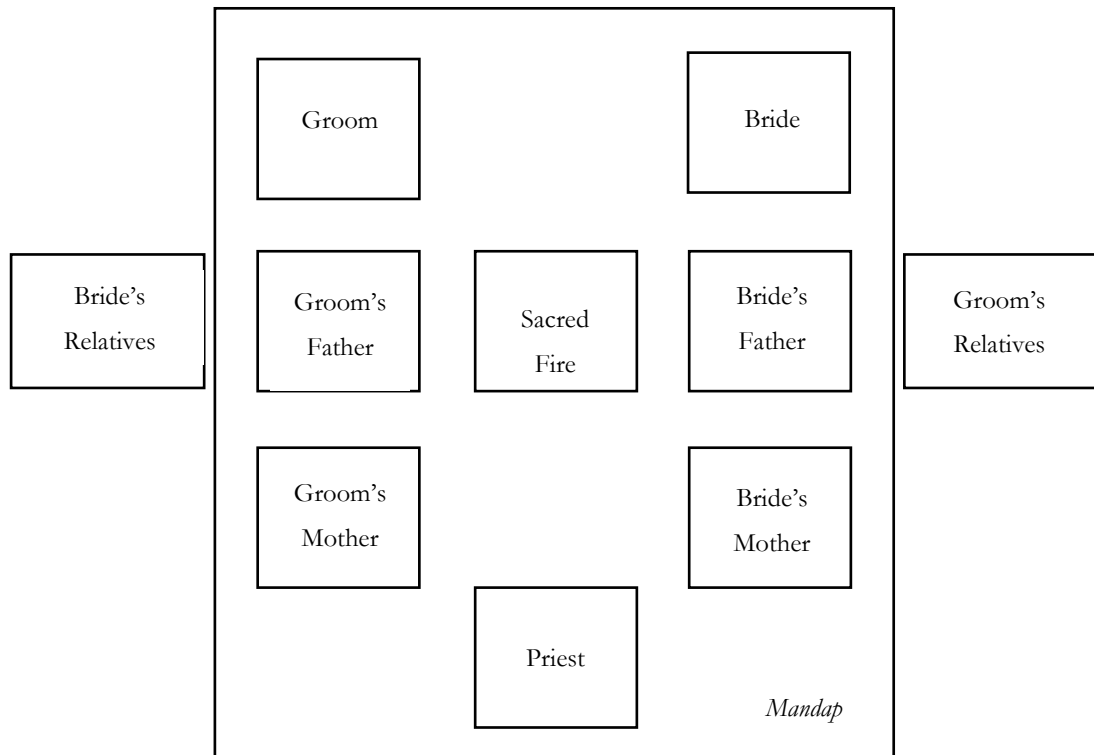
Figure 2. Seating arrangements at a traditional Hindu wedding ceremony.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                              Mandap           │
│   ┌───────────────┐        ┌───────────────┐                  │
│   │               │        │               │                  │
│   │     Bride     │        │     Groom     │                  │
│   │               │        │               │                  │
│   └───────────────┘        └───────────────┘                  │
│          ┌───────────────┐        ┌───────────────┐           │
│          │    Sacred     │        │               │           │
│          │               │        │     Priest    │           │
│          │     Fire      │        │               │           │
│          └───────────────┘        └───────────────┘           │
│                                                               │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘

   ┌──────────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────────┐
   │                      │      │                      │
   │        Guests        │      │        Guests        │
   │                      │      │                      │
   └──────────────────────┘      └──────────────────────┘
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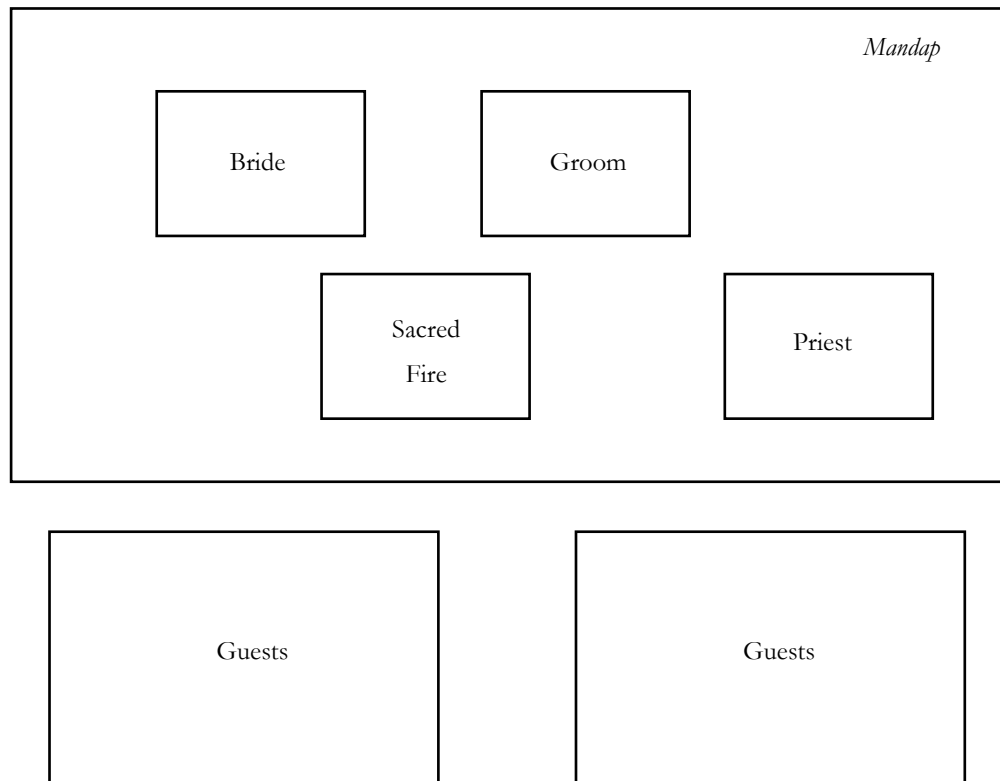
Figure 3. Seating arrangements at a modern Hindu wedding ceremony.

Guests are typically separated from the *mandap*, imposing distance between them and the couple. Their role is merely to witness and to bless the couple as they transition into married life. Because of the length of the ceremony (two to three hours), it is usual for guests to come and go while the wedding rituals are being completed (I. Trivedi, 2014). Furthermore, the only permanent fixtures on the *mandap* are the bride, the groom, the priest, and the fire. Parents of the bride and groom may be seated on the *mandap* throughout the ceremony if they wish, but in modern ceremonies, they frequently sit with the other guests in the front row, and only enter the *mandap* when they are required to perform certain rituals. As such, there is a clear demarcation of spaces in the ceremony, where the bride and groom hold dominion over the *mandap* and can allow certain others into that space.

It is in this context of the modern Hindu wedding ceremony (see Figure 3 above) that the quotation at the beginning of this section must be considered. On a basic descriptive level, the extract discusses an act of resistance against norms prohibiting physical intimacy in Indian public spaces, and about preparing family members for this act. The behaviour of choosing to kiss at one's Indian wedding breaches the rules on the proper expression of sexuality and places the couple's needs and desires before those of the guests. Indians view weddings and marriage itself as the uniting of two families, rather than two individuals

(Hodge, 2004; Medora et al., 2002; Rao & Rao, 1980; Regan, Lakhanpal, & Anguiano, 2012; G. Williams, 2010), but in placing their wants before those of others, the couple discussed in the excerpt have the opportunity to reclaim the wedding as an occasion to celebrate and prioritise their relationship before the newly-formed alliance between their two families—an alliance which has now become secondary to the couple themselves. That is, this alliance is no longer the aim of the marriage; the legitimisation of the couple's relationship is.

This reclamation of a normally traditional Indian public space allows the couple to fully claim the *mandap* as a space in which they hold dominion. Despite the presence of family members, it is a space that has been created for them to resist, to some extent, the impropriety of kissing one's partner in public. This resistance is limited in some respects, due to the nature of the *mandap* as an Indian discursive space; the quote discusses how the couple determines not to be "lewd" about it; the kiss itself will be chaste and brief. The couple attempts to diminish the danger of the kiss by trying to make it as inexplicit as possible. Even so, despite the limitations around the act, the act itself still occurs in a space where it ought not to occur. For the couple, it represents a commemoration of their relationship in a context which is viewed as the exception to the rule—rather like the extract near the beginning of this chapter which discussed a speaker's parents kissing in public for their anniversary.

It is important to note that because the wedding is a special occasion which may represent a deviation from normative rules, it is unlikely that the couple mentioned in the passage would be able to express physical intimacy in other situations—particularly in spaces which they cannot claim as their own. A further quote from the same speaker is used to illustrate this.

"It was really hard for us, for my husband and I, we, for the first year of our marriage, we actually lived with my parents because that whole idea of like joint families and stuff… Shankar and I, we felt really limited in our um, 'cause we always have been quite respectful about showing affection in front of our parents and we're very, we are people who are very expressive. Like we show affection a lot to each other and not showing it when we were living with our parents was really hard because we'd been dating for like eight years before that and we hadn't lived together but we were always used to showing each other affection and kissing each other and like just hugging and doing those things, whereas with Mum and Dad around, we used to be really like, stiff."

(Parvati, female, 29, focus group)

Due to the special status accorded to the wedding, in which the couple is able to claim their space as their own and resist normative rules about physical intimacy, such violations are not possible in other contexts where space does not belong to them. The family home, as we have discussed, is a space that does not belong to the couple—regardless of whether they are a young, newly-married couple or an older couple with more status. They must still navigate the space with other people. Moreover, the other people in this space are in close proximity—unlike at the wedding, where others are physically separated by substantial distance from the couple. This undermines the possibility for resistance in such a context, and is reinforced by ideas of respect to others—especially one's elders—being shown through restraint of physical intimacy.

Respect, here, is a loaded word that needs to be carefully unpacked. The idea of respect is one that pervades Indian culture, and plays a major role in social interactions. There are clear distinctions between those who receive respect and those who give it. For example, younger people are expected to display respect to their elders, and those who are seen as socially inferior or in less powerful positions (e.g., women, employees, children, etc.) are also expected to give respect to those who are in more powerful or superior social positions than them. Respect is closely associated with obedience and observing formalities; those who disagree with one's elders or behave in informal ways around them, for instance, are seen as showing disrespect. This idea of respect indicates how individuals within the wider Indian society self-discipline and govern their own behaviours. Elders do not explicitly lay down rules about how younger people ought to behave in front of them. Instead, younger Indian adults self-govern through discerning what they believe will be appropriate behaviours to perform in front of their elders, and what will not. It is possible that the married couple in these two extracts viewed their wedding as an occasion at which they were not acting disrespectfully, in contrast to the more routine, everyday location of the family home, which in turn means that resistance for this couple is more possible in the first scenario than in the second one.

5.8.2 Interracial Intimacy as Resistance

Another form of resistance constituted in the texts produced for this study is interracial intimacy. Here, the term interracial intimacy is used to refer specifically to interracial relationships where one of the partners is of Indian ethnicity. Due to the nature of interracial couples, wherein each person is obviously of a different racial group, interracial relationships are acutely visible in the public sphere, in ways that same-race couples are not. Therefore, the expression of physical intimacy in public spaces renders interracial couples more visible than same-race couples, and can leave them vulnerable to varying degrees of

discrimination from the public. Interracial couples who persist in their relationships are constituted as resisting normative discourses, not only those concerning physical intimacy in private and public spaces, but also hegemonic discourses about endogamy.

> "I know a lot of couples that, you know, they get looks all the time and it's like, you overcome a lot because it's, in a way, you're sacrificing something but you're not, you're putting yourself first and you're putting your relationship first and that is a big thing… they're not so worried about other things. They're worried about themselves, not in a selfish way but I think, you know, they have overcome a lot. They overcome people's judgements and all that, and that's a big thing."
>
> *(Mindy, female, 23, focus group)*

> "The weak point that comes is that many times they're [interracial couples] cut off from their immediate family as well. My cousin who got married, her father was very very unhappy. Later on accepted, took seven eight years for him to accept it."
>
> *(Ranveer, male, 50, interview)*

It is not only the visibility of interracial couples that constitutes inherent resistance to dominant discourses, but also the significance of interracial couples as prioritising their individual desires over those of their wider community. Chapters One and Three discussed the importance of ethnic and cultural endogamy in marital relationships, in that society benefits from individuals engaging in endogamous relationships, which will ensure cultural continuity and prevent cultural dilution (N. Manohar, 2008; Rao & Rao, 1980). As a result, those individuals who persist in interracial partnerships resist hegemonic discourses about endogamy and ethnic dilution, and put their own needs before the good of society.

However, participants noted that some couples receive backlash for this overt form of resistance (which acts as a form of punishment for deviating from the normative rules of mate selection), such as being ostracised (Gilbertson, 2007, 2010). It is interesting that instead of yielding to these pressures, some couples choose to persist in their resistance, suggesting that the punishment of being ostracised by their families and communities does not outweigh the rewards of resistance. It may be that a counter-discourse about romanticism—which prioritises the individual couple over society and creates an "us against the rest of the world" mentality—is at play here, which encourages interracial couples in such a position to experience the rewards of their persisting relationship as outweighing the costs of social isolation. In psychology, this is known as the Romeo and Juliet effect, whereby parental

opposition to the relationship may result in intensified romantic feelings and commitment between the couple (Driscoll et al., 1972).

It is worth noting that much of the research on the Romeo and Juliet effect has not garnered a great deal of scholarly support, given that contemporary research suggests that parental support (as well as other familial and social support) tends to improve relationship outcomes, and that disapproval from friends and family tends to produce negative outcomes for relationship longevity (Felmlee, 2001; Sinclair et al., 2014; Sprecher, 1988). It is unclear, then, how some interracial couples thrive in the face of disapproval from their families, friends, and communities. It is possible that sources of support from other allies in their social networks (such as some friends or family members) may compensate for disapproval (Sinclair et al., 2014). This concern will be addressed more fully in Chapters Seven and Eight of this thesis, which will examine the findings of Study 2 of this research.

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter has examined how physical geography determines the appropriate boundaries of physical intimacy and romantic relationships in private and public spaces for these Indian participants in New Zealand. This problematisation has been discussed with reference to tensions between discourses of eroticism and asceticism in Indian society, coupled with apprehensions about sexuality. The sexuality of women is of distinct concern, as it is perceived to be innately uninhibited and dangerous and which, therefore, must be monitored closely by various external authorities.

The following chapter of this thesis, Chapter Six, continues to analyse the texts produced for Study 1 from a different angle. A key finding that emerged from the analysis presented in the current chapter was that discourses of monogamy and commitment are crucial in constituting romantic relationships for Indian adults. The discussion in the next chapter develops this idea in greater depth.

Chapter Six: The Hegemony of Monogamy and Commitment in Indian Romantic Relationships

This chapter of the thesis continues to analyse the texts produced from Study 1 of this research, which aimed to explore the attitudes of Indian adults in New Zealand towards love, romantic relationships, and partner selection. We have already examined the significance of physical geography and space in mediating the appropriate boundaries of romantic relationships. However, this interpretation of the findings is incomplete without an investigation of the hegemony of discourses surrounding monogamy and commitment. The below quote is illustrative of these discourses, which strongly inform the ways in which the speakers in these texts are able to constitute romantic relationships and partner selection. Discourses of monogamy and commitment are so dominant in these texts to the point of excluding counter-discourses.

> "Like for Indian, Indian families if you look back like, if you are married to someone, then that's it. You are supposed to maintain that relationship until you die. But in the Western culture, you can just say OK that relationship did not work so I'm going my way, you go your way and then you can have another partner and then live a life for one or two years. If you are not happy then you can leave again, you can get into another partnership. But whereas in Indian culture, once you are married, that's it. That's your partner for life, if there's anything which is not working out you need to sit down, unless, I'm not saying that you should not get a divorce or anything like that but if the situation is such that you cannot reconcile, you think that definitely the relationship is not working at all, it's not going anywhere, then that's it. But whereas in Western culture I've seen that, like there's so many relationship breakdowns. Because maybe they see love as something else… Whereas in Indian culture we see love, if you have, if you love someone that's it, that's your love, you're gonna maintain that relationship all your life."
>
> *(Sahil, male, 45, interview)*

The above quote makes several distinctions that are necessary to take note of. Firstly, it endorses monogamous and permanent relationships—permanent in the sense that they endure for the rest of one's life. Secondly, this sense of permanency and exclusivity is explicitly linked to Indian culture; that is, it is assumed and stated that 'Indianness' entails

being monogamous. Thirdly, as a subsequent result of that, Indian/monogamy/commitment/permanency is cast in opposition to Western/polygamy/fickleness/transience; that is, to grow up in Western culture entails conducting one's romantic relationships with the notion that they are, if not temporary, at least impermanent, and suited to that particular moment of an individual's life. Engagement in one's relationships are fickle at best, and can be terminated without a second thought—sometimes in pursuit of the next relationship, sometimes due to alleged irreconcilabilities between the two people in the relationship. This is attributed to cultural differences in how love is constructed; it is suggested that while Indians constitute love as permanent and enduring, this may not be the case for Westerners. Finally, the above extract hints at the idealisation of Indian romantic relationships; to be monogamous and committed is the perfect state of being and this is the condition that all should aspire to. This is contrasted with the devaluation of Western romantic relationships: the perception that Westerners have no commitment to monogamy and that they think nothing of divorcing their spouses.

From this, it is possible to conjecture that marital relationships hold key significance to Indian participants and their sense of Indian culture, and that discourses that idealise marriage are crucial to examine further. However, there is evidence of slight disruptions occurring in these discourses. While speakers in these texts conformed to discourses of marital monogamy and commitment, non-traditional values were also advocated to some extent, such as premarital sex and cohabitation. Therefore, the subsequent sections of this chapter will examine instances of monogamy discourses in the texts, and will place this into the context of marital relationships and dissolution thereof in Indian society, as well as discourses surrounding premarital sex and cohabitation, and casual (sexual) relationships.

6.1 Looking Ahead to Marriage in Dating Relationships

"I would think Indian teenagers or Indian men who try to fall in relationships they're looking to, much more futuristic view with their relationship. Very quickly, like when they get into a relationship, they won't just think about that moment. They would start thinking way further ahead, like can I be her husband, can she be my wife? How, are we compatible with each other? They start thinking on those lines, very quickly, like once you're in a relationship, once you propose to someone, after that, then they start quickly thinking in those terms, you know, so. Whereas over here, I've seen it's different, like whenever you're in a relationship, you don't really think about getting married or having children or doing, you know? It's like, yeah, we are together at the

moment, we don't know how this whole thing is gonna go, and what are we gonna decide? So that's what I think, Indian men really think in a futuristic way very quickly, rather than um, giving some time."

(Anand, male, 33, focus group)

Given the distinctions that we have seen produced at the beginning of this chapter, it is worth dwelling on how such productions occur, especially within the context of dating relationships. In Western scholarly literature, dating is commonly constructed as a casual venture in which it is possible (and acceptable) to date many people in order to test their suitability and compatibility. It is an event that can be fun and is frequently used to experiment and figure out what one prefers in a partner, at that particular point in time (N. Manohar, 2008). Individuals do not typically attempt to determine, right from the beginning of a romantic relationship, whether their potential partners will be compatible in terms of marriage, permanent cohabitation, child-bearing, and child-rearing. Such concerns tend to arise much later on in romantic relationship development when the couple has been together for a significant amount of time. The lack of such concerns may be because, in the West, romantic relationships often form during adolescence (Li, Connolly, Jiang, Pepler, & Craig, 2010). Adolescent couples tend to have casual, short-term relationships compared to the more enduring commitments of much older adults (Lantagne & Furman, 2017).

While some aspects of this apply to Indian dating culture, there are several important differences that emerged from the texts concerning common and acceptable dating practices. Literature documents the rejection of Western dating practices by Indian immigrants, particularly by first-generation immigrants, due to associations between dating and premarital sexual activity (Das Gupta, 1997; Dasgupta, 1998; Gingrich, 2004). Dating for young Indian people, then, has been re-moulded in a way that aligns with Indian values. Although dating is also used to determine the compatibility of a partner, this sort of test typically attempts to determine the long-term compatibility of the two individuals involved, in terms of potential marital compatibility (N. Manohar, 2008). The texts suggest that it is rare for Indian individuals to date for fun and to find a partner with whom they are compatible with *at that stage* in their lives; rather, the texts describe numerous instances where speakers vastly prefer to date with the intention of finding a long-term partner with whom they will eventually progress to marriage and have children. Once such a partner is discovered, there is no need to continue casually dating other people; the relationship becomes exclusive and has a sense of permanency, despite the lack of marital legitimacy. An instance of this between two Indian people from Study 1 is provided below to illustrate what this looks like.

"I met Parvati a couple years after [moving to New Zealand] and then once I met her, that was the end of that. Like we didn't get married until two years ago but that was the whole point of the relationship. We met and we felt that yeah, you know, this is, you know, I'd like to spend the rest of my life with you. And that was the end of that, after that there was no real sort of formal, you know, sort of thing that OK we have to get married or anything. I knew I was going to get married to her, she knew I was going to get married to her and that was the end of that."

(Shankar, male, 34, focus group)

The above quote demonstrates the sense of finality in this relationship even though it had just begun, and a suggestion that this finality was the preferred outcome in terms of partner selection. There was little suggestion that either subject mentioned in the text had any doubts or concerns about the viability of the relationship, despite the newness of the relationship. Instead, there is a sense that once they had met and understood the other person, there was no reason that either of them should look elsewhere for a partner. Furthermore, despite the fact that the two dated for approximately eight years prior to getting married, there was no sense that the relationship would not continue. A sense of inevitability concerning the relationship's outcome is conveyed—that outcome being marriage, which is illustrated to be the goal that the relationship aspires to achieve. This extract is, therefore, important, given that it demonstrates several hegemonic discourses at play. Perhaps the most fundamental are those discourses concerning the prizing of marriage as the ideal outcome of romantic relationships and the supremacy of marriage over other forms of romantic statuses. Thus, it is essential to trace how discourses of marriage have become hegemonic in Indian society over the ages.

6.2 Marriage: A Sacrament

"Let mutual fidelity continue until death, this may be considered as the summary of the highest law for husband and wife. Let man and woman, united in marriage, constantly exert themselves, that (they may not be) disunited (and) may not violate their mutual fidelity."

(*Manusmriti*, trans. G. Buhler, verses 9.101-9.102)

In order to understand the fundamentality of the concept of marriage in Indian culture, it is necessary to examine the earliest Hindu religious texts. To revisit the context outlined in

Chapter One, the reason Hinduism is the main religious framework considered here is because it is the predominant religious faith for Indian people, to the extent that Hindu culture and Indian culture are frequently considered to be the same thing (Hodge, 2004). That is not to say that other religions in India, such as Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, etc., do not have any relevance in discourses of marriage and monogamy. However, because of the predominance of Hinduism in Indian culture, these other faiths, as they are practiced in India, are informed by Hindu values regarding marriage and monogamy. For example, many of these faiths also promote the sanctity and righteousness of marriage (Mahajan et al., 2013).

According to the *Vedas*, an enormous corpus of texts containing the oldest surviving Hindu literature, philosophy, scriptures, and knowledge, marriage between two people is a union of two souls in order to fulfil the four *purusarthas*, or goals of human life: *dharma, artha, kama,* and *moksha.* Marriage is thus a necessary rite of passage that is essential to complete in order to live righteously and properly; but more than that, marriage is a sacred duty, without which important rituals and sacrifices cannot be made (Dhar, 2013; Kapadia, 1966; Kasanji, 1980; Kumari, 1988; Medora, 2003).

A brief recap of marriage in Vedic times (previously explained in Chapter One of this thesis) is required in order to conceive of marriage as a sacred duty. Eight classical types of marriage are described in the *smritis* (texts based on human memory with unknown authors). The *Manusmriti* expounds on these eight types of marriage in greater depth. The propriety of each type of marriage is dependent on caste. For example, for a Brahmin (the highest caste), four of these types of marriage are proclaimed to be religiously sanctioned, and the other four are improper. The four types of marriage that are sanctioned are those which involve a daughter being adorned for her bridegroom and being given away properly by her father; those that are not sanctioned often involve a woman enjoying sexual intercourse with her lover, or being abducted forcibly by a man (Bühler, 1886).

A man must be married in order to begin the householder stage of life, in which he aims to fulfil the two lesser goals of *artha* and *kama*; that is, satisfying the human desire for the accumulation of material wealth and to satiate one's sexual needs within the safe and legitimate boundaries of marriage (Kapadia, 1966). However, the goal of *dharma* takes precedence over these two lesser goals. In order to fulfil *dharma* in the householder stage of life, it is necessary to have a female partner with whom to perform the daily rituals and sacrifices to the gods, and with whom to produce children in order to continue the family lineage. Progeny are essential for cultural continuity, as without them, not only is the family at risk of dying out, but also one's society and one's way of life is threatened by obscurity. These two purposes are enshrined as sacred duties to the greater good of society; thus, marriage, too, is a sacrament (Kapadia, 1966).

If marriage is a sacrament, it is essential to fulfil it correctly by ensuring that unions between two individuals will ensure continuity of both the family and society in the most effective way possible. Spousal selection, then, must be engineered as carefully as possible to produce offshoots on the family tree that will flourish into strong and healthy branches, that will continue to produce its own promising offshoots. With this in mind, it is clear enough that the four types of marriage sanctioned in the *Manusmriti* are those that involve the family of the individual selecting a partner carefully, based on criteria such as caste, familial reputation, status, and so on—criteria which remain important in Indian partner selection today (Sprecher & Chandak, 1992).

Following on from this tradition of family control in spousal selection, the modern form of partner selection in India today draws heavily from the tradition of these four sanctioned types of marriage and has culminated in the dominant tradition of arranged marriage, as discussed previously in Chapter One. When an individual reaches a marriageable age, the parents (and oftentimes, various extended family members, such as aunts, uncles, and grandparents) of the individual will begin seeking appropriate potential partners for the individual. This is based on the notion that individuals are only able to form decisions based on passion and lust, and ultimately do not have the experience or the wisdom to know how to determine whether a potential spouse is the right fit for both them and the family (Davis, 1941; Pasupati, 2002; Rastogi, 2009). On top of the criteria described in the above paragraph, high educational attainment, financial affluence, and family background are considered as desirable traits (Wali, 2001), primarily because they have the potential to promote the stability of the couple and the subsequent family that will coalesce from them.

The purpose of briefly explaining the mechanism of arranged marriage here is to demonstrate the normative high degree of familial control over spousal selection in Indian society. Most importantly, this control indicates how seriously marriage is regarded in Indian culture, as it promotes the notion that it is crucial to pick the ideal marital partner in order to ensure that: 1) the married couple will best be able to fulfil *dharma* and ensure cultural continuity of society at large, 2) that the selected spouse will fit into the values and culture of the family, and 3) that the married couple will produce children that will carry forward the family heritage in the best way possible. Every single one of these goals are enshrined as sacred duties to society and to one's family in the ancient religious texts and thus, wedded life is religiously validated as a superior state to which to aspire. These beliefs and values allow for the idealisation and promulgation of discourses that reproduce the idea of marriage as fundamental, ethical, and revered.

It is worth pointing out that, from a feminist-poststructuralist perspective, one could argue that the enshrinement of marriage as a religious ideal serves an important purpose as

a powerful tool for social control. By handing over the responsibility of spousal selection to the family unit, the family may appear to have completely altruistic objectives in mate selection, since they theoretically have only *dharma* in mind. However, it is usual for families to have their own motives as well, like status advancement, financial gain, and so on. For instance, Abraham (2002) and Naratadam (2005) suggest that there may exist differences between higher and lower castes in their motives for mate selection. Higher-caste families are more likely to use arranged marriage in mate selection because they are more motivated to protect their bloodlines and statuses. Lower-caste families, on the other hand, have no privilege to lose. Therefore, they would be more interested in intermarriage for the purposes of gaining status (Abraham, 2002; Naratadam, 2005). However, discourses of marriage as sacred are useful because they use religious justifications (for higher-caste families in particular) to protect their status and privileges.

Given the dominance of discourses regarding the sacrosanctity of marriage, it is necessary to dwell on the kinds of behaviours, thoughts, and emotions that are both permitted and restricted. In this paradigm, commitment to one's marital relationship is idealised, given that the marital relationship is the vehicle through which society endures and flourishes. The dominance of such discourses is apparent even in the texts produced for this study, as the below extract demonstrates.

> "Indians have got this idea that we need to stick in there and we really need to give it a go. I think that's part of our values almost like and sometimes it's protective to have that value so that you can stick in there and you don't call it quits over laundry or something, but at the same time, like sometimes it's not such a good thing, 'cause like, I know that there are some Indian women who stay in marriages that are really abusive."
>
> *(Parvati, female, 29, focus group)*

The speaker in this excerpt suggests that commitment to one's marital relationship is a shared cultural value that is embedded in every level of Indian society. While this cultural prizing of commitment is constructed in positive terms—one is far less likely to terminate the relationship on trivial grounds—a dark side is evident; the speaker references Indian women who are encouraged to remain committed to relationships where they are being mistreated. It is worth noting that the speaker deliberately mentions Indian *women*, implying that it is far more normative to see Indian women who stay in abusive marriages, rather than Indian men. From the previous chapter and the discussion of the *pativrata*, it already seems that women may be discursively influenced to remain devoted to their husbands, regardless

of whatever treatment they receive from them. There seems to be little onus on men to do likewise, although there are various passages in the *Manusmriti* that assert that women ought to be treated with honour and dignity, for the good of the household (Bühler, 1886). Notwithstanding these gendered differences, participants state that commitment is a value that the vast majority of Indians are raised with in mind.

On the other hand, terminating one's marital relationship may demonstrate a rejection of the hegemonic prizing of the marital relationship. In light of the idea that marriage represents a union of not just two individuals, but two families—and, going further, is a microcosm of the solidity of society—divorce has repercussions that are felt well beyond the two divorcées.

6.3 Divorce

"Marriage before, there was no such thing as divorce. So if you are married you're married for life…. Nowadays it's like, you're married, doesn't work out, you get divorced. You have that choice. Before you didn't."

(Madhu, female, 47, focus group)

If marriage is a sacred duty necessary for the continual burgeoning of society, then divorce represents a shirking of that duty. More to the point, because it is typically instigated by the individuals in the marriage, divorce acts as a rejection of the family/society that has nurtured them thus far in their lives, and breaks the proper reciprocal relationship underpinning social exchanges between individuals and communities. There appears to be the understanding that because of what the family/greater community has provided for the individual, the individual is obligated to carry out duties regarding marriage, which will benefit the communal force. Hence, to deny one's obligations to society may have negative implications for individuals, who may find themselves receiving criticism from society for having done so. The speaker in the above extract discusses the 'choice' of having a divorce. What she appears to mean is that divorce is more viable in the present than it was in the past, because the societal repercussions of terminating a marital relationship are fewer and less prohibitive than they once were. This suggests that it is *safer* to initiate divorce than it once was; disciplinary behaviours from the community, such as ostracism or condemnation, are less common in the present climate.

"If a woman has divorced they are considered as untouchable... they think that, I'm not saying that all Indian men, it's all families, attitudes like that, even a mother for her son, when they are looking for a match, they want untouched female, their family, even divorced."

(Ranveer, male, 50, interview)

"He had absolutely no qualms about the fact that I was a divorcée, which was quite a big thing for me, um, especially being Indian and you know, um, there's a lot of judgement on, particularly women who are divorced, not so much on men."

(Isha, female, 36, interview, talking about her second Indian husband)

It is worth noting that the texts discussed how the impact of divorce differed for men and women. Although it is not completely acceptable for men to divorce or to be unfaithful to their spouses, the participants in these texts suggest that the consequences for doing so seem to be far more lenient for men than they are for women. Again, it appears that discourses of female sexual chastity are operating in this context. An in-depth discussion of the importance of female sexual chastity has been provided in Chapter Five, with regards to how the construction of women as sexual beings has been condemned in Hindu religious texts and may have been used as a justification for men to take up positions of authority in order to regulate the female body. From an economic perspective, women's sexuality is viewed as a more valuable commodity than men's sexuality, which is socially constructed as worthless (Baumeister & Vohs, 2004; Rudman & Fetterolf, 2014). It logically follows that there may be greater ramifications for an Indian woman's choice of sexual partner, and it is harder for her—in the eyes of Indian society—to regain the value of her sexuality as a commodity once she has already spent it. The higher standards of chastity for women thus may have more negative implications for women who divorce, compared to men. This is because a divorced woman has already had sexual relations with another man; if she seeks to remarry, it is harder for her to do so because she is positioned as "used goods" (a phrase explained by some participants) within the framework of female sexuality discourses.

However, it is essential to keep in mind that while the texts speak about the greater burden on women concerning chastity, men do not seem to be immune to the pressures of finding a partner with whom they will have a permanent and exclusive relationship. Participants reported that both men and women are subject to discourses of chastity and monogamy in their romantic relationships. Furthermore, the texts produced for this study suggest that younger participants are increasingly trying to resist, to some extent, dominant discourses about monogamy, marriage, and chastity, primarily within the form of premarital

sex and cohabitation. The subsequent section will investigate to what degree it is possible for young participants to resist these discourses, and in what contexts such resistance occurs.

6.4 Premarital Sex & Cohabitation: Reframing the Marriage Ideal

> "I guess they're probably more conservative in Indian culture, like much less likely to live with someone before marriage and even if you're dating um, I guess people do have premarital sex but I guess people often require a longer-term commitment if they're Indian before actually doing that… They're usually in relationships before they have sex, rather than like, just kind of casual sex, I think that's still frowned upon by lots of Indian people. I think also you're often raised with values including like, you know, actually premarital sex shouldn't really happen and I think you internalise those values whether you realise it or not, to a certain extent."
>
> *(Jane, female, 24, interview)*

Thus far, it seems that for Indian participants discourses of monogamy and commitment are highly prevalent in the ways that they choose to approach romantic relationships and partner selection. Given what we know about the significance of marriage and taboos around sex, it logically follows that sexual activity prior to marriage, and living with one's partner before marriage (which implies sexual conduct between the two individuals) are activities that are less accessible within such paradigms. Indeed, the quotation at the beginning of this section suggests that behaviours like premarital sex and cohabitation are incompatible with the dominant discourses regarding proper partner selection in Indian culture.

However, the speaker in the text thinks that premarital sex *does* occur, still very occasionally but certainly more frequently than in the past. This may be puzzling, given what is already known about the dangers of sex outside of the boundaries of marital relationships (see Chapter Five). Traditional discourses of marriage in Indian culture dictate that sex is acceptable *only* within the marital relationship (Hodge, 2004). Therefore, it is important to question what has now made it possible for individuals to engage in the context of premarital sex and cohabitation, and to what extent this constitutes resistance to discourses of monogamy and premarital chastity. The key to answering this question may be found in the specific circumstances mentioned by the speaker: premarital sex within the context of long-term relationships. These circumstances may suggest some change occurring within young Indians regarding the enmeshment of marriage, love, and sex. More likely, however, these

changes could indicate a reframing of the marriage ideal that accepts other alternatives, provided that they conform to monogamy discourses.

> "He was my first love, I was actually a virgin. And so I lost my virginity to him. I'd not um, gone through, even though I've lived here, I've not gone through having boyfriends and sleeping around and whatnot. I've not actually ever done that, even though I've had girlfriends that've been like that, I always held the belief, and a quite strong belief that… the first person that you're intimate with should be a long-term partner."
>
> *(Isha, female, 36, interview, discussing her first husband)*

Across all the texts, there are only a handful of instances in which casual sexual relationships are discussed. The speakers in these texts all chose to focus their discussion almost exclusively on the subject of 'serious' relationships. The above quotation is an example of these rare mentions of casual sex and is indicative of the ways in which casual sex was generally spoken about. The speaker even frames the sexual encounter of losing her virginity in terms of monogamy discourses: that is, she loved this person and intended to be with him for her whole life. She explicitly rejects the idea of having sex with a person with whom she had no emotional and long-term connection. Indeed, across all the texts produced for this study, casual sex is constructed as something that has the potential to devalue an individual, given that it occurs outside of the boundaries of marital/long-term relationships. The ideal, then, is that sex should occur with someone that an individual is deeply in love with and wants to be with on a long-term (and hopefully permanent) basis. Furthermore, the overall absence of casual sex in these discussions is suggestive of the fact that it is of little significance to these participants, who largely conform to discourses of monogamy and commitment. Casual sexual relationships have no place in their lives, given that paradigms of monogamy and commitment are overlapping with discourses of romanticism, in which love and sex are deeply enmeshed together. A sexual relationship without mutual love is, therefore, unthinkable for these subjects in this paradigm, and suggests that resistance to norms about premarital chastity is limited in the forms that it takes. However, it is also possible that these participants were unwilling to disclose their casual sexual relationships due to silence around sexuality in Indian culture. This interpretation is based solely on what participants disclosed (and how) and the discourses to emerge from that.

It is also apparent that the quality of the relationship makes a significant difference in terms of the acceptability of premarital sex and cohabitation, in that if a relationship is perceived to be a long-term commitment where the two individuals have been exclusively

together for a number of years, premarital sex and premarital cohabitation become acceptable. So, while sex has ventured forth from the boundaries of the marital relationship for participants, it has not strayed very far—or, one could argue, it has not strayed at all. It appears that the monogamous, long-term romantic relationship is being reconstructed by participants as an acceptable alternative to marriage that may not actually have many differences to marriage. Sex and cohabitation within this context, therefore, appears not to be viewed as different to sex and cohabitation within the marital context, because all the key ingredients of marital sex are present: monogamy, exclusivity, commitment, and a sense of permanency to the relationship. The only difference is the lack of a legally binding agreement tying the two individuals together. However, it follows that premarital sex and cohabitation without any of these ingredients—and what is subsequently expected from their interaction: the impending outcome of marriage—is undermined, as demonstrated in the following quote.

> "I don't have any objection towards dating and living together before marriage, if you know that you're gonna get married with the same person…. If you are not intending to go towards the marriage then it's like, not good to stay together and uh, live together."
>
> *(Sahil, male, 45, interview)*

Again, we can see discourses of monogamy and commitment operating here. It is clear that these are protective factors which undermine potential negativity around premarital sex and cohabitation, but if marriage is not the eventual outcome of premarital cohabitation, then the relationship becomes suspect and unsavoury. It was expected that older participants and younger participants might have differing views of premarital sex and cohabitation; however, even when discussed by younger participants, premarital cohabitation is constructed as a necessary precursor for marriage.

> "I think we think of living together as the next step in a relationship as a trial, like can we live together. If we can do this, we can get married and live together. That's what I see it as, 'cause like, we're also thinking that living together means we're financially ready to be together."
>
> *(Logan, male, 23, focus group)*

> "The mindset, and I feel like for me as well like, or for my generation, I've noticed that like we talk a lot about, like my friends and I talk a lot, a lot of our friends have

had kids just recently. Like one of our friends has a one-and-a-half-year-old boy and another couple has an eleven-month-old girl. And we always talk about like you know, how we would let our kids go and live with their spouses or whatever, their partners before they got married and actually encourage that. It's like no go live with him first or live with her first… when you're living on your own if that's what you wanna do, then you need to know what that person's like as a flatmate almost. 'Cause you know, this is a flatmate you can't leave!"

(Parvati, female, 29, focus group)

Premarital cohabitation, then, is regarded by participants as a trial of what married life will be like with one's partner, with the purpose of determining both domestic and financial compatibility—a purpose which is not as possible to determine when the two partners are living separately. It is undertaken when the relationship is 'serious' enough to progress towards marriage, and provides an opportunity for the couple to work out any kinks in their relationship before making it legally binding. Therefore, for the younger speakers in these texts, premarital cohabitation is a practical experiment designed to test the success of the desired outcome: marriage. This is considered to be a change for the better—compared to older generations' puritanical approaches to premarital cohabitation—and which younger speakers, like Parvati, wish had been an option for them.

In this light, I argue that premarital cohabitation does not represent an *alternative* to marriage as much as it is a necessary *precursor* to marriage. It is an additional step that has been introduced—and is increasingly embraced—by younger participants over the course of romantic relationship development. In this way, hegemonic discourses about marriage and monogamy are not, in fact, being completely disrupted and reconstructed in a Western light; rather, they are merely shifting to accommodate the challenges of romance in the modern age. The spirit of (and commitment to) discourses of monogamy remain very much alive. Young participants continue to value the underlying ideals about the permanency of marital bonds that their parents, grandparents, and further previous generations upheld. However, they also recognise the stresses and challenges of reality: divorce is much more prevalent in today's world. Marriage can no longer be treated as an infallible bond where—no matter how much marital relations deteriorate—neither spouse will seek to terminate the relationship. The relative ease of divorce in New Zealand is a contributing factor in giving dissatisfied spouses the agency to leave unhappy marriages. In this context, I argue that premarital cohabitation is a compromise for participants: it is a way to keep the spirit of Indian culture alive by creating (through a trial run of living together before marriage) the conditions to

make a long-term relationship as strong and durable as possible to prevent divorce/separation later down the track.

If premarital cohabitation represents a reframing of Indian marriage discourses, then it is vital to question how much discourses of premarital sexual chastity are actually being disrupted. On the one hand, we have seen that discourses of monogamy and premarital chastity prevail, where ideally, sex before marriage ought not to occur. On the other hand, we have equally seen that there is evidence of resistance to these norms, with some younger Indian couples choosing to have sex and live together prior to marriage. At first glance, this would seem to be a blatant violation and resistance towards norms of monogamy and premarital chastity. However, this resistance is weakened by the fact that most of these (reported) instances of premarital sex are *not* casual sex encounters or short-term flings that are for fun and instant sexual gratification. Instead, most of the individuals resisting sexual norms are doing so in long-term relationships that are inevitably progressing towards marriage—the supreme ideal and containment field for sex—anyway. Such resistance ultimately becomes less threatening because the importance of marriage and monogamy is still being upheld. Therefore, although there may be the sense of drastically changing norms about sexual chastity, the way in which discourses of marriage, monogamy, and commitment are being reframed by younger participants suggests that there could be a greater undercurrent of cultural continuity here—not change.

6.5 Cultural Continuity or Change?

As a result of the above analysis, one of the most significant observations that can be made about these texts is that discourses of continuity and change are operating in counterpoint. Speakers show adherence to traditional Indian values about what romantic relationships ought to entail: exclusivity, monogamy, commitment, and permanency. At the same time, it is believed that norms around how relationships can be conducted are slowly changing, and this change is conceived of as a linear progression; moving from traditional ideas of complete permanency of (marital) relationships towards a more flexible stance, whereby it is possible to have multiple dating relationships, in order to determine if the current partner is an appropriate future marriage partner, and whereby relationships can be terminated if they are not working out. This idea of change is evident as participants discuss their own relationships and how they have experienced differences in how they conduct them, compared to their parents and grandparents. For example, one speaker discussed how her in-laws did not push her and her husband to have children as quickly as possible, depicting a change from conventional Indian values that do encourage married couples to reproduce soon after

marriage. These values are repeatedly endorsed throughout the texts as 'conservative' or 'traditional'; a product of times gone by, and which are decreasingly salient for Indian society as time progresses. Participants implied that Indian society in New Zealand is moving towards a way of being that is more 'modern', 'liberal' or 'Western', or at least learning to accommodate other goals in life that are not marriage and children.

Despite the emergence of a theme of change in these texts, it is unclear how much change is actually occurring. Although most of the speakers explicitly advocate that change is occurring in how Indian adults approach love and romantic relationships, an emerging counter-discourse of cultural continuity suggests that this is not entirely the case. Participants clearly rejected serial monogamy in favour of committing to one's current relationship and determining whether it can progress to something more stable and serious, in order to ensure its permanency. It is acceptable to terminate the relationship if matters truly are irreconcilable; however, it is difficult for these speakers to envisage a relationship in which so much time and effort is put in that one could allow it to fall apart without trying to "work through" the challenges that are encountered. Commitment remains a central element of love and romantic relationships.

Subsequently, although we can observe change on the surface of things, (cultural) continuity travels alongside change and moderates it to a significant extent. That is, the change that occurs may be influenced by societal compulsions for participants to remain closely aligned to cultural values. What this means is that while the superficial content of norms has changed—for example, greater acceptance of divorce, premarital sex, premarital cohabitation/de facto relationships, and dating—the underlying essence of these norms remains underpinned by discourses of monogamy and commitment. It is merely that norms are changing to accommodate the new discursive environment of New Zealand—with its greater sexual liberties and approaches to romantic conduct—while being moderated by traditional Indian discourses of monogamy in order to ensure that cultural continuity is not threatened. By reframing traditional discourses of monogamy, these Indian participants are able to sample the best of both worlds—they may engage in 'Western' concepts of partner selection, such as dating, premarital sex, and living together before marriage, while also remaining keenly aware of upholding traditional values regarding marriage and commitment to one's romantic relationship. More importantly, however, they are able to retain their traditional cultural values by adapting them to accommodate a world where marriage is fallible, unlike in the Hindu worldview (Kapadia, 1966), and where the realities and challenges of conducting romantic relationships are different to those experienced by their parents and grandparents.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an in-depth analysis of the dominance of marriage and monogamy discourses for Indian participants. This analysis has attempted to deconstruct the mechanisms that established the hegemony of such discourses, with reference to ancient Indian texts and society, and has further outlined the implications of this analysis for participants.

The next two chapters of this thesis, Chapters Seven and Eight, will take a different focus, in that they will offer an analysis of the texts produced from Study 2 of this research. Study 2 investigated the discourses and counter-discourses that emerged from the discussions of Indian adults in New Zealand speaking about their heterosexual, interethnic romantic relationships.

Chapter Seven: Constructing Cultural Challenges and Navigating Family Dynamics

So far, the findings of this research inquiry have indicated the prevalence of several competing discourses influencing the ways in which Indian participants approach love, sexuality, marriage, and partner selection. In Chapter Five, the data collected for Study 1 of this project demonstrated that underlying discourses of sexuality regulated how young participants could safely conduct romantic relationships in both private and public spaces, while both enabling and limiting the ways that they could position themselves when talking about romance and sex. Chapter Six further clarified the dominant discourses of monogamy and commitment that have traditionally set parameters around mate selection in Indian society, and showed how participants both conform and disrupt the practices enabled by these discourses.

These findings from Study 1 are crucial because they provide a necessary preface to understanding the discourses that Indian adults in interethnic relationships draw on when talking about these relationships. Subsequently, we may also gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which participants position themselves in relation to their interethnic relationships and the possibilities for action that they may enact. As such, the current chapter focuses on the findings of Study 2 and begins by exploring the discursive background of participants and their interethnic relationships and examining the subject positions that participants commonly drew on.

To remind the reader, Study 2 used reflexive photography to understand the experiences of Indian adults in interethnic romantic relationships. As such, some of the photographs taken by participants will be included in this chapter. As mentioned in the Methods chapter (Chapter Four), photos are only used to illustrate particular quotes where pertinent and to demonstrate examples of the types of photos taken by participants. However, they have not comprised analysis in and of themselves, although the reader is welcome to reflect on them.

7.1 Introduction: Questioning Notions of Homogamy and Difference

> "[Being in an interethnic relationship] definitely challenged what my understanding, my um, what I grew up to understand, and what is reality, so it's definitely challenged that, which is really cool, which is why you, why I potentially went for a person who

wasn't of my culture 'cause I wanted to be challenged. Um, 'cause I could've, you know met someone and followed the norm and it could've actually been really easy, like we would've just slotted in to how we were raised and we would've understood each other really quite instantly, like where she stood, where I stood, what her role was, what my role was. Um, but this has definitely challenged all of that, um, and only the best parts survive and the worst just fall away… you challenge each other, and only the best part of each, each culture actually gets to progress."

(Yohaan, male, 29)

In accordance with previous literature on interethnic intimacy, the participants in Study 2 generally agreed that being in an interethnic relationship offered an opportunity to celebrate the intersection of different cultures and lifestyles. Exposure to different cultural backgrounds was viewed as an invaluable learning experience and also a pathway for enriching and insightful personal growth (AhnAllen & Suyemoto, 2011; Chen & Takeuchi, 2011; Heller & Wood, 2000; Negy & Snyder, 2000). Additionally, in line with previous research, participants also suggested that interethnic relationships revealed complex family dynamics that had to be navigated in order to ensure the survival and development of their relationships (Bystydzienski, 2011; Castle Bell & Hastings, 2015; Hibbler & Shinew, 2002; Poulsen, 2003a, 2003b). Participants' parents experienced varied reactions to the disclosure of their children's interethnic relationships, from joyous acceptance to disownment (MacNeil & Adamsons, 2014; McNamara et al., 1999; Rosenblatt, 2009; M. Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1995). The complexities of culture and family compelled participants to reflect on their personal and cultural identities (AhnAllen & Suyemoto, 2011; Foeman & Nance, 2002; Heller & Wood, 2000), and further caused them to consider the potential impact of culture on their (real or anticipated) children (Negy & Snyder, 2000; Seshadri & Knudson-Martin, 2013). Indeed, in many ways, this research inquiry supports and confirms much of the previous literature on what happens to familial relationships when an interethnic relationship is revealed, as detailed in Chapter Three.

However, the methodological lens of this project facilitates an investigation of why and how these findings emerged by situating participants' experiences of their relationships in discourse. In this regard, the quote at the beginning of this section is significant for several reasons. Descriptively, the participant constructs his relationship as being rewarding specifically because of the various challenges that arise, many of which are cultural in nature, and which he views as conducive to personal growth. In contrast, he suggests that being in a co-ethnic relationship might not provide the same opportunities for personal learning that are offered by being in an interethnic relationship. The assumption here is that a shared

cultural background would involve similar lifestyles and, therefore, result in instant mutual understanding. Thus, being in a co-ethnic relationship offers comfort and familiarity, but also results in stagnation and a lack of dynamism. According to this participant, being in an interethnic relationship allows the couple to subvert traditional practices and to explore new ways of living.

Although this participant focuses on the benefits of difference and the limitations of similarity in this quote, later in the interview he discusses his relationship in terms of the benefits of similarity. This was a pattern observed across almost all participants—in one moment, they would draw on normative understandings of similarity to discuss their romantic relationships, particularly where they pertained to culture, and in the next few sentences shift to constructing the same aspect (again, usually that of culture) of their relationship in terms of difference or complementarity. Remarkably, this did not seem to be confusing or contradictory for participants. As such, these fluid shifts beg several important questions: in what situations do participants employ discourses of homogamy? In what situations do they employ those of difference? What possibilities for speech and action are permitted in articulating each of these discourses and what possibilities are limited?

In order to answer these questions, it is participants' understandings of homogamy and difference that will be analysed throughout this chapter, with reference to how they navigate cultural and family dynamics. This chapter will, therefore, begin by describing surface observations made from the data, and will consequently offer an in-depth analysis of the discursive frameworks that these patterns are situated in. The first major observation from the data concerns disclosing interethnic relationships to one's family and friends.

7.2 Starting (and Disclosing) an Interethnic Relationship

Both anecdotally and in the academic literature, New Zealand is known for being a multicultural society (Ward & Masgoret, 2008) where individuals of different ethnicities regularly mingle in a variety of relationship contexts—as acquaintances, friends, colleagues, romantic partners, and as family members—and in a range of social spaces—in schools, workplaces, public facilities, in private homes, and in cyberspaces. It is in these contexts that romantic relationships typically develop.

Indeed, almost all participants relied on ideas of such normative relationship development to describe the beginnings of their romantic relationships. They met their partners through school, through the workplace, through mutual friends, in public spaces, and over online mediums. For the most part, they described forming solid, long-term friendships with their partners prior to any romantic involvement. Drawing on romantic

discourses, attraction was framed in terms of a deepening realisation that they wished for a more intimate relationship with a particular friend. This desire did not initially consider the potential ramifications of ethnicity, culture, or race—rather, participants defined it as a mutual human connection, devoid of societal concerns about what a romantic couple ought to look like. It was only after the formation of the relationship that participants began to think about the implications of their new relationships for those around them—particularly their families. This section will deal with the process of disclosure of the interethnic relationship (or more appropriately, the lack thereof) and how this is problematised.

> "I was always really worried about, what are my parents gonna say if they find out, but also like I don't wanna disappoint my parents 'cause I hate lying to them and I'm, I don't wanna lie to them about it, you know. Now I don't care but it was really really hard because I didn't want to disappoint my parents or do anything that would upset them or like, bring, or like be, I didn't wanna feel guilty and bring them like shame, you know?"
>
> *(Anna, female, 22)*

> "We [Vijay and his Pakeha girlfriend] kind of had to at first obviously just like, lie, like a bit to my parents, you know? 'Cause like her parents were fine, because I get European culture is like so different compared to Indian culture, it's like so open and stuff."
>
> *(Vijay, male, 24)*

It is not a new finding that there exists, among young Indian adults, a tendency to be secretive of their romantic relationships. Literature from North America and New Zealand indicate that young second-generation Indian individuals frequently hide their romantic involvements from their parents (Bacon, 1996; Gilbertson, 2007, 2010; Gingrich, 2004; Inman et al., 1999; N. Manohar, 2008; C. Sinha, 2005). This behaviour is generally attributed to the traditional mindset regarding dating relationships that is prevalent in Indian culture, as indicated by the second quote above. Young Indian adults living in Western nations seem to construct Indian culture and Western culture as completely opposed on their respective stances towards love, romance, and sexuality. As we have seen previously, in Chapter Five, it appears that different discourses of sexuality affect how participants can conduct romantic relationships in Indian and Western/New Zealand public spaces. Indian culture is constructed as conservative and silent around sexuality, which limits the possibilities for dating openly. In contrast, Western culture is viewed as liberal and communicative, and

individuals embedded in that context have freer possibilities for romance and sexuality. This may not factually be the case, yet participants repeatedly constructed sexuality in Western society in these terms—as being more "open" and not "conservative".

On the other hand, Indian culture, where it regards sexuality, seems to be predominantly governed by a discourse of asceticism, which suppresses expression and freedom of sexuality (I. Trivedi, 2014). Data analysis from Study 1 of this inquiry suggested that this might be due to implicit beliefs that such expression endangers the wider family and collective society. It is believed that individuals' expressions of sexual behaviour demonstrate a lack of consideration of the needs of the family. More importantly, sexual indulgence suggests that the individual has chosen to abandon her/his duties and responsibilities to the family and the community. As such, the function of this asceticism discourse is to reinforce the insignificance of individual (sexual) needs in light of the overwhelming importance of collective responsibility (refer to Chapter Five for a detailed analysis of sexuality discourses).

Therefore, when the participant in the first quote above talks about being concerned about her parents' reactions to her interethnic relationship and about how she experiences guilt for potentially bringing shame to her parents, her speech is strongly regulated by her understandings of normative ascetic discourses of sexuality in Indian culture. Over the progression of her relationship, as she becomes more deeply immersed in Western discursive understandings of sexuality, she shifts towards a form of sexuality that is enabled by erotic discourse, as indicated by her cavalier declaration: "Now I don't care [about what her family thinks]". This statement indicates that she has since moved towards prioritising her sexual/individual needs—not necessarily over her family, but more as a recognition that both are equally important to her personal wellbeing, rather than silencing her individual needs in favour of her family's needs. As we have seen in previous chapters, romantic relationships are an area of silence within Indian families, even for Indian adults who are in co-ethnic relationships. This may be because romantic relationships imply premarital sexual relationships between the two individuals in such a relationship, which we know are discouraged in Indian culture (Das Gupta, 1997; Dasgupta, 1998; Gingrich, 2004).

In any case, the mere existence of silence on topics of romantic and sexual desire in Indian families is suggestive of the inappropriateness of such topics, again hinting at the hegemony of ascetic discourse. In this discursive framework, young Indian adults should ideally not cross these implicit boundaries concerning premarital relationships, regardless of whether that relationship is within or outside of the culture. However, when they do enter romantic relationships, disclosure breaches these unspoken rules and can have deep emotional and social consequences for individuals and for their families. The sense of shame articulated in the first quote implies profound social consequences for the participant's

family: shame, in terms of the embarrassment that might be felt when others discover the premarital relationship, but also in terms of the guilt and sadness felt when one's daughter has violated cultural norms and the Indian lifestyle. Additionally, the second quote at the beginning of this section indicates the speaker's need to lie to his parents about his interethnic relationship, emphasising the sense of potential wrongdoing that he knows that he has 'obviously' committed according to the rules of the hegemonic ascetic discourse.

It may be wondered whether participants' worries about disclosing their relationships are exacerbated by the interethnic nature of the relationship. There is no clear pattern, but for at least half of the participants, this does seem to have been the case. These fears again appear to have been informed by understandings of the normativity of endogamy in Indian culture. There seems to be an implicit, shared cultural understanding amongst participants that Indian people should only ever select other Indian people as marital partners; a spouse from any other culture would lack the ability to fully integrate into an Indian family, and ultimately into Indian culture. Relationships with non-Indian people are, therefore, constructed as highly unusual in the eyes of family members and the community, because it is believed that the cultural difference between the couple is too insurmountable. Such a relationship is subsequently looked down on, not only for the poor choice made by the Indian partner, but also for the perceived eventual failure of the relationship. However, such disapproval seems to lessen as these relationships progress and continue to survive, perhaps because they appear to defy the community's understandings of interethnic relationships. Thus, interethnic couples do seem to eventually receive, at the very least, some degree of acceptance, but this tends to occur much later on in their relationships. At the time of disclosure to their families, participants' worries were often framed by their anticipation of community perceptions.

> "My biggest thing was that I wasn't willing to go home and tell Mum and Dad that I have a boyfriend, I don't know what's happening with it long-term, um, and that they would know that I was seeing someone… I wanted to know that it was, that it was like a commitment by him [Priya's Pakeha then-boyfriend, now-husband] and me because we don't have boyfriends and things, you know, we didn't at the time that I was growing up with my mum and dad, I was the oldest child so there was none, and they didn't have boyfriends and girlfriends, we never talked about boyfriends and girlfriends. Everyone in my family, my cousins and that all just came to an age and they just got married by, by someone that the family had chosen and that's just the way it was."
>
> *(Priya, female, 36)*

Some participants, like Priya, drew on other normative understandings of mate selection in Indian culture, where marriage was viewed as the only viable form of partner selection, which ideally would be monogamous and permanent for the rest of one's life. Regardless of whether they were worried about how their families would react to their interethnic partners, participants avoided immediate disclosure specifically because they wanted to ensure their relationships would be long-term and stable commitments that would ideally culminate in marriage. In this way, they complied with dominant discourses of monogamy and commitment in Indian society (see Chapter Six for a detailed analysis of monogamy and commitment in Indian romantic relationships).

Many participants waited for a certain period of time (ranging from several months to two years) before formally sitting down with their parents and disclosing the relationship. Prior to disclosure, some participants would go to great lengths to conceal their relationships from family members, which would often be a source of anxiety. For instance, one female participant described feeling anxious whenever she and her partner would go out in public, due to her fears of being seen together by relatives, who might then spread the news around to other relatives. At times, this led her to avoid going out with her partner in public spaces, and when they did go out, she reported feeling hyper-vigilant and nervous. Another female participant, who also concealed her relationship from her father, took this picture of her driveway to represent her anxiety about the possibility of her father and her partner meeting.

"Scott [Sameera's boyfriend] used to come and pick me up and every, like, almost like, out of, like maybe eighty percent of the time my dad would be pulling up around

the same time. So I used to like, literally I was having, like when I know Scott's about to pick me up, like I'd get ready and I'd be sitting down at the lounge and I'd be like having like tummy cramps and like, yeah. Because I don't know when my dad's gonna come back, and it was sort of like really nerve-wracking. So, actually before that, before he started picking me up outside my driveway I used to meet him at the corner. But that was even scary because my dad could be pulling up around the corner because around the corner is just my house, you know, so it didn't really make a difference so I used to be like really anxious and if Scott didn't come on time, I was like, I used to get angry with him but, but it wasn't because I couldn't wait. It was just because like, you know the timing."

<p align="right">(Sameera, female, 25)</p>

Other participants avoided explicit disclosure entirely and indirectly communicated to their parents that they were in a relationship (e.g., the partner would arrive at the participant's home to go out on dates or friends would post photos of the couple on social media). As a result, some of these participants were confronted by their parents and were then forced to admit to being in an interethnic relationship. Regardless of whether participants self-disclosed or avoided explicit disclosure, the impact of disclosure produced variable reactions amongst participants' families. The following section will focus on the impact of interethnic relationships on participants' families by examining parental and familial reactions to these relationships.

7.3 The Impact of Disclosure: Parental Reactions to Interethnic Relationships

"Me and Olivia got together, and when I sort of indicated that it was sort of serious, there was obviously there was a bit of tension and a bit of friction in them, predominantly from my mother and I guess it was sort of grew from that, and that was that, and then I asked, I sort of let them know that I was planning to ask Olivia to marry me, um, I guess that was sort of a, I think that was the last time I ever saw them [Kunal's parents], they, it was kind of just, a colourful end."

<p align="right">(Kunal, male, 34)</p>

"When we told Mum and Dad, he, Dad and Mum didn't really have a problem with him being non-Indian, like, you know, in many ways my mum was quite relieved because she felt that I would be better suited to a non-Indian, 'cause I was so non-

Indian at home that, like she was happy for me and that I found someone like Richard that was a really, really nice guy and they could connect with him, um, and Dad always said, you know, I don't, I don't really care, um, that he's, like he, like it doesn't matter to me what his race is. Um, and he only said that after I introduced him to Richard, like he never said before really, I don't care who you marry, it was just only afterwards, oh I don't really care who you marry. Like I wish I knew that!"

(Priya, female, 36)

Despite traditional discourses of asceticism, homogamy, and monogamy in Indian society intersecting to produce cultural norms that oppose interethnic intimacy, a vast range of parental reactions were reported by participants. The two quotes above illustrate reactions on either end of the spectrum, where one participant experienced being disowned and ostracised by his family specifically due to informing them of his upcoming marriage proposal to his half-Pakeha, half-Māori girlfriend. On the other hand, several parents responded with joy and happiness. Overall, it seems that most parents reacted in a neutral manner to their children's disclosures. In many cases, participants' concerns about negative parental reactions were not confirmed. Likewise, the reactions of extended family were varied. On the whole, extended family members accepted the relationship and welcomed the participant's partner into the family, although there were several instances where this was not the case. One participant talked about how she and her partner were ignored completely by her extended family at a social gathering.

"When I was sitting with him [Monique's boyfriend], they all like completely ignored me… it was still surprising though and it was a little bit rude that they all kind of ignored me and stayed away, like ones that I've never met before would normally come and talk, so that was a bit of a disadvantage, this, this other-liness that now we have…. That was, that was something different that I'd never experienced, um, my Indian family before that just, they're so inclusive, they just enwrap you."

(Monique, female, 22)

This participant's construction of herself and her partner as being 'other' is important because it highlights how they, as a couple, are being positioned by the other people that view them together. Difference is constructed negatively in this light and is something that should be ignored. This ostracising behaviour seems to have several functions. Firstly, it indicates the social consequences of violating norms of the community. In essence, bringing one's non-Indian partner to an Indian social gathering is here viewed as distasteful, and as

such the participant is subjected to punitive measures. Ostracising, therefore, demonstrates that in this instance, interethnic intimacy is viewed as shameful and embarrassing and no one else around them wishes to be associated with such behaviour. More importantly, however, the nature of ostracising suggests that ignoring the couple is done because of the threat that they represent. If they are validated in any way, then interethnic intimacy is subsequently conveyed to other young individuals as an acceptable behaviour. What this suggests is that the difference between the two people in the couple is constructed as highly repugnant, and certainly not an appropriate behaviour to pursue.

> "We had a really big wedding. We invited everyone we knew, um, people that we weren't even really close to, like Dad had already had arguments with them and stuff, um, but out of respect, respect is the big thing, is that we had invited everyone and they all came. And the wedding was a really, it was more than just a wedding, it was a really lovely way to reunite with a lot of our family and I think because they had seen Richard [Priya's husband] in that context and he was really um, quite a happy kind of person, the wedding was a great event, it sort of just broke down a lot of barriers and um, and so we, and after that we got, we were invited to a couple of family um, sort of celebrations and stuff and Richard was fine. They, a lot of our family in New Zealand have been in New Zealand for a long time, so it wasn't such a huge thing for them, they were really quite accepting, um. They gave him a hard time about stuff, like eating goat curry and, you know like deliberately making his food more spicy and it was, it was great, they were really really supportive."
>
> *(Priya, female, 36)*

In contrast, other participants reported that extended family responded positively to their interethnic partners. Here, difference is constructed by these others as beneficial—there is no perceived threat. Family exposure to the partner seems to be a key element of reducing this perceived difference as a problem (as indicated in the above quote) because it allows the partner to partake in assimilation activities (like Priya's husband gamely trying to eat spicy food and responding positively to her family's teasing of him). Comparing these quotes from Priya and Monique, it appears that the way in which difference is constructed is part of the greater discursive framework that enables family members to react to interethnic partners in the way that they do. In stating this, however, a question must be asked: what is it about difference that some families found threatening? What is this potential threat that they identified and what governs the ways that they responded to it? In order to address these questions and to determine the discourses that are being articulated in such questions, it is

necessary to examine the ways in which participants and their partners are able to integrate/assimilate into each other's families.

7.4 Family-Partner Dynamics

"As an Indian in an interracial relationship, it's, I think it's, for me, I'm quite lucky with the support that Olivia [Kunal's wife] and her family, have given us. They've accepted, they've accepted me straight away, they value my, they show value of my input into their sort of family or into our family, but it's also about that there's no sort of, there's been no barriers between myself and them, so yeah it's you know, I guess I've been lucky that I've had the support that I've had from Olivia's side of the family."

(Kunal, male, 34)

"I felt sad because his [Sameera's boyfriend's] family's so welcoming of me, like they are so warm and they just love to have me over and if we were having a fight they would always take my side even if I'm in the wrong, you know what I mean? It's like, he's um, he's very like, they're very warm and stuff and I think sometimes it bothers me when I can't do the same with my family. You know? Like, and plus I don't have much of family here, I only have my dad, my brother, and my cousin. That's about it for us in terms of family, so, like, I always apologise to him that it's, I'm really sorry that I can't do that."

(Sameera, female, 25)

One of the most consistent observations to emerge from the texts in this study concerns the differences in how well the Indian participants integrated into their partners' families, compared to the invisible but unmistakable barriers preventing their partners' full integration into the participants' families. With only two exceptions, most participants reported that their partners' families were more accepting, welcoming, and supportive of them, and they were able to fit in with little discomfort. On the other hand, the non-Indian partners generally had a more difficult time fitting into participants' families. In several instances, some Indian families continued to articulate preferences for participants to find Indian spouses, even though participants were already in relationships with non-Indian individuals. The below quote shows a participant drawing on discourses of difference to articulate the challenges

she and her partner experienced in combining their respective families, despite both families' outward and explicit acceptance of the relationship.

> "My parents even up till last year said, oh wouldn't it be nice if you were to marry an Indian person, and so yeah it is more comfortable for them, to marry within the religion, they, they prefer it that way, it's probably easier for them to communicate and I guess with that, my, if I were to marry an Indian person, my um, in-laws would sort of have this, not the same, but a similar mentality and similar ideologies to my parents so at least they'd have more to talk about... I don't feel there's discomfort, but I feel like there's still an us and them situation, not, not discomfort so much, but more of like, we'll always be different, there will always be a cultural difference. My dad can't, my dad loves making jokes, he can't make jokes in Hindi that they would understand. I feel like he'd be more at ease with Indians versus white people... my parents put me in difficult situations where I have to choose between them and him [Anna's boyfriend]. And I don't think that's cool and I feel like they might be a little bit more understanding if he was Indian."
>
> *(Anna, female, 22)*

Here, Anna's family draws on discourses of homogamy quite heavily. There is an assumption that a shared cultural background is critical to mutual understanding, and it seems that her family strongly relies on that to find common ground with others around them. Cultural difference here is problematic for the family—it inhibits communication and places awkward barriers when interacting with the out-group. Additionally, it assumes that every individual who belongs in the in-group will share similar beliefs, worldviews, values—and even language—and that these attributes will differ strongly to those of the out-group.

Although this observation was stronger for the Indian families reported on in this study, one participant did report experiencing difficulties with integrating into her partner's (French) family. The below photo of an advertisement of a play called 'La Merda' (translated as 'The Shit' in English) represented her struggles in learning the French language and trying to fit into a French family.

"I've gone through the last five years, many many situations being around a whole bunch of French people every day, not knowing what they're talking about and sitting at the table and feeling like I'm furniture, and also like, um, you know, I've had his [her husband's] aunties at Christmastime going, when are you going to learn French because this isn't good enough, type of thing, you know, on Christmas Day, making me feel just like shit right? You know they have this thing that people just starting learning languages like that, especially the French language, 'cause it's so beautiful and amazing and the fact that I haven't thrown myself into learning it is a reflection that I don't want to connect with them, um, 'cause they don't really speak English. His brother does, but you know the family language is French… they feel that, like they don't, they don't get me. Um, his brother once said that to them I am this, like ethnic creature, that you know, this, this, um, really exotic is what he said, like there's not that many Indians, and the ones that are in France obviously speak French but I am from Fiji."

(Kavita, female, 35)

From these stories, it seems that individuals' integration into their partners' families becomes problematic when there is a lack of *cultural* integration as well. More significantly, this integration is hindered when difference is constructed as undesirable. It appears that

discourses of homogamy are so ubiquitous that they not only regulate the ways that families are able to fully welcome their children's partners, but also the extent to which families are willing to negotiate and compromise over cultural differences. Research has suggested that as a 'tight' culture, Indian society is known for having rigid social norms (Gelfand et al., 2011). This may be symptomatic of the degree to which discourses of homogamy are endorsed within Indian families. Similarly, New Zealand is thought to be a fairly 'loose' society in terms of its open and flexible social norms (Gelfand et al., 2011), which may explain why participants' partners and their families (who were predominantly Pakeha) were more willing to accept the participants into their families. In Kavita's case, the reasonable 'tightness' of French culture (Gelfand et al., 2011) may similarly explain her partner's family's reticence towards her.

Even though many participants' parents explicitly accepted their children's partners, this did not always translate into implicit acceptance and facilitating integration. Ultimately, this reticence seems to be contingent on concerns about culture and the ways in which cultural differences are viewed. Greater concerns about cultural loss or dilution were associated with drawing on discourses of difference, which enhanced the challenges experienced during assimilation. On the other hand, viewing the interethnic couple as an opportunity to learn about other cultures led to constructing difference in a more positive light and diminished the barriers that were perceived in welcoming a person of another cultural group into an intimate place in the family.

7.5 The Threat of Interethnic Intimacy: Culture Loss

As we have identified, it seems that the threat surrounding interethnic intimacy pertains to a potential loss or dilution of culture, a threat that appears to be considerably stronger for the Indian families of participants than for the mostly Pakeha families of partners. As one participant reflected, Indian families and individuals seem to have a very tight connection to their cultural heritage.

> "I think Indian more than other ethnic groups, as immigrants, the culture is something that they sort of hold onto. It's more than having their identity or heritage, it's almost as if the culture is the central part of their being, so as a person growing up they have to, we were wrapped up in that sort of cultural comfort, so any time you go outside of that zone, they sort of see it as an attack on themselves as opposed to being able to integrate into other um, aspects, so I think Indian culture as opposed

to, it's more that they see that if they take on aspects of other cultures they lose their own culture."

(Kunal, male, 34)

Fears about cultural dilution/loss for Indian families are specifically linked to experiences of being immigrants to New Zealand. Being away from the country of origin and in a new cultural environment where one's heritage may no longer be cohesively experienced in everyday life may mean that it is comforting for immigrants to cling ever more tightly to tangible markers of culture (e.g., language, religion, food, clothing, social practices). This may be done in order to ensure the survival of their traditional lifestyles and to alleviate distress resulting from contact with another culture (Berry, 1997; Neto, Barros, & Schmitz, 2005). Such strict adherence to one's cultural practices may require immigrants to endorse the superiority of their own cultural identity and heritage, and consequently leaves little room for taking on the cultural and social practices of the new environment. In fact, what Kunal describes above is a pattern of cultural *separation*, as described in Berry's (1980) model of acculturation (as cited in Ward, 2008), where immigrants reject the cultural practices of the host country in order to maintain and preserve the practices of the country of origin. What Kunal appears to suggest, then, is that Indian immigrants are more prone to endorsing cultural separation rather than acculturation, compared to other groups of immigrants.

Although it is not fully explored in the texts why this might be the case, several participants suggested that there is a sense amongst Indian immigrants of the superiority of their collective lifestyles, compared to that of the Western/Kiwi lifestyle. Again, participants were not particularly concerned with reflecting on why this might be, but there were hints that the longevity of Indian culture, as well as the context of colonialism and alienation from the cultural homeland (particularly for Fijian Indians), might have played a part in the denigration of Western culture and the increased pride in being Indian. Therefore, for Indian immigrants moving to Western nations like New Zealand, encountering Western culture in such an intimate setting may heighten fears of cultural loss and dilution, particularly for first-generation parents raising their second-generation children in New Zealand. This is only one possible reading of the texts produced for this study; other readings are somewhat limited given the lack of reflection by participants on this topic.

Familial fears about cultural dilution/loss seem to be more strongly associated with employing discourses of difference to articulate the abyss between two partners in an interethnic relationship. The perceived inability to overcome such vast cultural differences enables families to justify their opposition to such relationships. On the other hand, smoother processes of acculturation to Western culture, where Western practices are

adopted but blended with Indian cultural practices seem to allow families to view cultural differences between the interethnic couple positively. Here, the threat of another culture dominating and erasing Indian culture is minimised, because the family views the merge of two different cultures as only enriching their own lifestyles.

The ways in which participants' families draw on discourses of difference also seem to influence the ways that participants construct their relationships. When families construct difference negatively, participants seem to endorse discourses of homogamy more often, perhaps as a means of validating their relationships. However, this does not preclude participants from identifying their cultural differences positively. The following section will further examine how participants comply with and resist discourses of homogamy in their interethnic relationships.

7.6 Complying with and Resisting Homogamy through Embracing Difference

"This photo sort of like represents Scott's culture basically. His traditional outfit, but I feel like it looks very Indian, so I told him if I could take a photo of this because I thought that, in that way, we sort of link our cultures, you know, surprisingly when I got with Scott I realised how close Indian and African cultures are, like the type of colours they like, like burgundy and you know, that sort of colours, you know?... Yeah so this looks like a *kurta* top. I've been out with him while he's worn this top and I think people think that I've given it to him to wear but it's actually, when I tell them that it's his traditional outfit, they're like quite surprised by it… I feel this photo

> sort of reminds me of how we link… it always reminds me that we connect, you
> know, like in that way."

(Sameera, female, 25)

Despite efforts from others to construct the interethnic couple in terms of difference, the speakers in these texts attempted to subvert these discourses of difference by emphasising the cultural similarities between themselves and their partners. Thus, participants seem to largely comply with discourses of homogamy. Indeed, the texts exhibit an awareness amongst participants of the discursive positioning of differences between two individuals in a romantic relationship as problematic, thus illustrating the ubiquity of discourses of homogamy as the ideal form of mate selection. Therefore, in order to comply with dominant norms of homogamy as the standard of partner selection, speakers frequently articulated the ways in which their similarities in other areas were able to bridge this cultural difference. As Sameera explains in the quote at the beginning of this section, couples often identified areas of overlap and were able to establish mutual understanding and connection. For instance, some speakers discussed the shared religious and spiritual worldviews that they shared with their partners, or their shared interests and hobbies, or their shared opinions and values.

Social psychology discusses the factor of similarity between potential partners as one of the more robust factors of interpersonal attraction (M. Johnson, 2016; Kosslyn et al., 2014), as it is natural for partners to search for commonalities in each other. However, this emphasis on similarity seems especially pronounced amongst participants, perhaps because in deploying discourses of homogamy, they are able to justify the existence of their relationships by subscribing to normative forms of relationship functioning. If couples are able to show that their romantic relationships are no different to those of co-ethnic relationships (which may be viewed as superior because of the assumed shared cultural understanding), they can neutralise the threat of difference. In doing so, they may then be placed on an equal footing with co-ethnic couples. The function, then, of complying with discourses of homogamy seems to be about self-validation and belonging. This is significant because these interethnic couples may not have received such validation of their relationships from other quarters, nor might they have been made to feel by others that they belong together as a romantic unit.

However, at the same time that speakers in these texts position their relationships in terms of similarity, the texts simultaneously indicate that speakers resist homogamy by articulating difference to emphasise the cultural aspects of their relationships. This does not seem to be viewed as paradoxical or inconsistent whatsoever to participants. For instance, one participant discussed the cultural differences in her relationship in terms of the benefits

that she reaped, even though she had previously constructed the bond between herself and her partner in terms of similarity.

> "It [being in an interethnic relationship] opens me up to a different culture, it is really different. We don't celebrate Christmas 'cause we're Hindu, um, so the first time I, so I always started celebrating Christmas at Jack's, and it was like, at Diwali we get lots of sweets together and like, you all sit down and eat, they do that at Christmas. And I knew that because I saw it in movies but to be honest like I've never sat at a Christmas, I never sat at a Christmas dinner until I met his family, but they never used to put up a tree and stuff, and we never did that 'cause we didn't celebrate it so last year was the first time, like I was so excited, I bought so many presents, we put up a tree, I decorated the tree, I put all the presents underneath the tree, that was the first time ever, so it opens me up to like a new culture, I get to see different things and meet different people."
>
> *(Anna, female, 22)*

Here we can see that Anna simultaneously draws on homogamy and complementarity to articulate issues of culture in her relationship. She uses her previous experience of her own culture to compensate for her lack of understanding about her partner's culture, and in doing so, attempts to link the two by sketching connections between them. At the same time, even though she perceives clear similarities between Diwali and Christmas, the latter celebration is viewed as unique, different, and exciting. Difference, in this sense, is positioned in terms of novelty and freshness and only enhances participants' life experiences.

Likewise, blending food from each partner's culture was viewed as an effective way of resisting homogamy, and it was interesting how often participants took photographs of food to represent beneficial cultural differences in their relationships. The quote and photograph below is representative of this experience amongst participants.

"I had made a curry, but Hunter [Maya's fiancé] wanted to make an entrée so he, you know, came in and he started making his balsamic vinegar, tomatoes, on toast, I think it was, with coriander or something, so it was, this was cool because it kinda just showed like our little um, fusion cooking, you know? So I made a, the main of an Indian curry, and he did an entrée of balsamic tomatoes, sweet balsamic tomatoes and that was kind of cool, like we had a little like, Western entrée and then an Indian main which was cool, so yeah I just, I just see that as fusion cooking."

(Maya, female, 24)

Food acts as a nexus of cultural intersection, where differences come together in order to create a novel and exciting amalgamation. It seems to be a simple and informal way for couples to work out how to bridge their cultural differences. In doing so, couples are able to fuse their differences to create a new lifestyle that suits both partners in the relationship. Adopting this new fusion culture allows couples to promote similarity and homogamy between them as well, as they become increasingly familiar with the cultural practices from their partners' backgrounds.

In several cases, food also prompted self-reflection on what elements of each culture should be retained or discarded. For the participant below, while the food of his cultural background is considered worth retaining and carrying forward in his interethnic relationship, the gender roles associated with food preparation are not considered as valuable.

"I've watched my mum, so this is where I've tried to keep the, retaining the culture because um, it doesn't always have to be, um, well I mean this is stereotypical, my

mum cooks, Indian woman cooks, Indian man eats or it just, you know? It doesn't have to, and Hannah [Yohaan's fiancée] like, doesn't cook at all, much. She does cook and it's awesome when she does but not very often and then so um, growing up and watching Mum cook, I've tried to, I try and cook her dishes now as well. So I was like oh, it doesn't, Hannah doesn't have to cook it, that's not what the, path that you can keep, it's more the actual food and the dish so, yeah I've tried, again I'm really bad, um, I can't get, like I can do the ingredients and the steps right but I can't get the flavours to, to work, um but I've, yeah. I'll just keep doing it until I get it right."

(Yohaan, male, 29)

We have seen that the speakers in these texts simultaneously draw on discourses of homogamy and difference to construct cultural elements in their interethnic relationships in ways that may seem inconsistent, but which do not seem incongruous to themselves. This begs the question: how do these participants articulate homogamy and difference at the same time without experiencing dissonance? What do they gain from doing so?

As previously discussed, it appears that participants draw on homogamy to justify the validity of their relationships—but it seems that they draw on difference for precisely the same purpose. By drawing on difference, they outline the benefits of cultural fusion and illustrate how this blending of cultures strengthens the relationship. In many ways, drawing on discourses of difference/complementarity subsequently permits speakers to distinguish their relationships from co-ethnic relationships as being more interesting, enriching, and beneficial. Therefore, difference augments interethnic relationships by making them unique—they are extraordinary, in ways that co-ethnic relationships are not. By focusing on cultural difference as valuable, not only do they show the perceived superiority of their relationships, but they are also able to undermine and resist societal attempts to articulate their differences as insurmountable.

Occasionally, cultural difference is problematic for the couple—not overwhelming, but certainly a potential area of conflict.

"At some level, he will never really understand who I am. He will never really understand my music, he will, I will never really be able to have a heart to heart with him in my native tongue…. The heart to heart that I'll be able to have with my friends, I'll not be able to have with him, so there is a certain gap there I think… like this morning because he wasn't there when I was doing the dishes and all that, I was singing songs in my language in a loud voice. Sometimes I don't do that when he's

around because I think I don't know how he's going to find that, it might be annoying after a while. You know, it can be uncomfortable when the person around you is saying things you don't understand. I, I'm never in that boat because I understand English and he doesn't speak any other language so, so I'm mindful of that so sometimes probably I'm not fully openly me when he's around. There is a slight difference I've noticed in myself when he's not around."

(Vidya, female, 48)

"When she'd come over for like, 'cause my parents pray and stuff like every now and then so, when she'd come over, she was like from a Christian family, so for her like just the rituals were a bit weird, like it seemed like very, I don't know, like the rituals were much different to her rituals so she wouldn't be very comfortable with it. So then we'd try like OK, you can come and observe it and stuff but you don't have to be a part of it, like compromises like that. But then like over time, the compromises would just like, I don't know, just divide us more eventually."

(Vijay, male, 24)

Here, employing discourses of homogamy are not possible and validation of the relationship is subsequently difficult for participants, resulting in more on-going cultural conflicts. Likewise, employing discourses of difference does not seem to be able to promote self-validation, given that the difference continues to be viewed as problematic. In these scenarios, participants are not able to shift towards articulating difference as beneficial. This may have future negative repercussions for their relationships, given that if there is anything that most speakers made clear throughout the texts, it is that constructing cultural difference as positive, as well as bridging cultural difference to promote homogamy, is essential for the survival and prosperity of interethnic relationships.

Discourses of homogamy and difference also had implications for the subject positions that speakers were able to access. In many instances, the nature of being in an interethnic relationship affected how participants constructed their ethnic/cultural identities. The subsequent section will explain the most common subject position accessed by participants, and demonstrate not only how it functions but also how it further allows participants to comply with and resist hegemonic discourses about homogamy.

7.7 Subject Position: The Cosmopolitan Kiwi

> "You're Indian, and you always have this I am Indian and there is India and I'm so connected to this, this massive country but you don't know how. You know? You know though like that culturally you're completely connected um, but you've never been there, it's like this far away kind of world."
>
> *(Kavita, female, 35)*

Notably, an almost universal observation that emerged from the texts produced for this study was the fact that most participants reported grappling with issues of what it meant to be Indian. For some, these concerns stemmed from the nature of being immigrants whose ancestors had been forcibly removed from India. This challenge was especially salient for the Fijian-Indian participants, who indicated feelings of alienation from India as a cultural and physical homeland. This is unsurprising given that most Fijian-Indians have been separated from India for many generations through ancestral indentured labour (Friesen et al., 2005; Khan, 2011). Therefore, these feelings of alienation in the Fijian-Indian participants may represent a potentially confounding factor when examining the issue of ethnic identity. On the other hand, it may mean that the Fijian-Indian participants had greater awareness of and introspection about Indian ethnic identity, given their experiences as "twice migrants" (Friesen, 2008, p. 49), which could add richness to the data. For other participants, however, the very nature of being in an interethnic relationship gave rise to reflections about identity. Intimate encounters with their partners' cultures challenged them to think about their own relationships with Indian culture. Frequently, participants positioned themselves as identifying more as New Zealanders rather than as Indians, as demonstrated by the participant below.

> "Apart from that, and you know just the home cooking and talking at home, the Indian culture has been a very small influence to me, like I'm actually more uncomfortable going to Indian gatherings and you know, stuff like that, I'm more comfortable just going to, you know, Kiwi gatherings like Christmas and so on, Easter and all with my friends and their family, I've spent actually two or three times, Christmas as one of my friend's house, um. I happen to be doing something there and then the family's like hey join us, you know with dinner and all, and they do their prayers and all that, I find that more comforting, um, not comforting, easy to deal with I think. Yeah I mean I have gone to Diwali and like um, to the temples and so

on, but I just feel so out of place being among other Indians. I'll be honest, I feel so out of place."

<div align="right">*(Dev, male, 33)*</div>

By positioning themselves as more 'Kiwi', participants indicate a sense of discomfort, or in several cases, rejection, of Indian culture, and a sense of greater comfort with what it means to be a New Zealander. Again, this may stem from experiences of being an immigrant who has been distanced from an immediate Indian environment and from growing up in New Zealand from a very young age (all but one participant had either been born in New Zealand or had arrived here before the age of ten). An inability to connect with Indian culture may have influenced participants' choice of partners—as we have noted, most participants had Pakeha partners. However, many participants disagreed with the notion that a specific rejection of Indian culture had led them towards choosing a partner from a different ethnic background. In fact, most participants positioned themselves as being curious, interested, and open-minded to other cultures.

> "I'm like quite diverse, I have friends of all cultures so you know like, Muslim friends, Asian friends, Arab friends, whatever, like, a whole mix of friends, I could just like go do things randomly with them, like be a part of their things… I'm open to everything."

<div align="right">*(Vijay, male, 24)*</div>

> "I was like quite open to any race, like for me, when somebody asks me who do you think you'll go out with or what type of race, you know, I don't really have a type, I think that's what made me like, as an Indian, be OK to date an African, like I didn't have a fixed stereotype of what, you know, I really wanted to date or anything so I was really open to any culture."

<div align="right">*(Sameera, female, 25)*</div>

By declaring themselves to be willing to cross ethnic and cultural boundaries in all types of relationships, participants positioned themselves as being cosmopolitan, multicultural, and inclusive. In doing so, they seem to be deploying elements of post-racial discourse. Post-racial discourse refers to the idea that society has progressed to an era where racial concerns no longer matter and all people are equal regardless of their racial or ethnic identification (Ikuenobe, 2013; Visintin, Birtel, & Crisp, 2017; Yogeeswaran, Davies, & Sibley, 2016) (for a more detailed analysis of post-racial discourse where it pertains to the

data from this study, please refer to Chapter Eight). By drawing on post-racial discourse, participants seem to be signalling that ethnicity and race are superficial characteristics that ought not to be significant in mate selection, and that there are negative connotations for people who do care about such trivial attributes. As such, they position themselves as more open-minded, flexible, and dynamic, while others who prefer endogamous mate selection are positioned in contrast as stagnating, rigid, and close-minded.

By taking up the subject position of the 'cosmopolitan Kiwi', the speakers in these texts are able to accomplish several purposes. Firstly, this positioning is again about validation and belonging. By presenting themselves, first and foremost, as Kiwis, they are demonstrating their social acculturation to the mainstream culture in New Zealand and, subsequently, their willingness to adapt to the mainstream lifestyle. Indeed, existing Indian immigrant literature indicates that second-generation immigrants seem to be more willing to assimilate/acculturate compared to their first-generation parents (Ahluwalia, 2002; Das Gupta, 1997; Dasgupta, 1998; Gingrich, 2004; Sodowsky & Carey, 1987a, 1987b). Because of the way that participants have previously constructed New Zealand as 'open' and India as 'closed', participants position themselves as modern, progressive, and willing to change themselves to fit in with New Zealand. Yet they do so in a way where they construct their Kiwi identity as natural and easy—there is no sense of having to struggle to fit in with New Zealand social norms. On the other hand, creating an Indian ethnic identity is viewed as more difficult and as something that must be learned. Ultimately, it seems that participants view their ethnic identities as binary and find it difficult to hold both Kiwi and Indian identities simultaneously.

Secondly, positioning themselves as cosmopolitan allows participants to signal their social mobility. Accessing this subject position allows participants to indicate their ability to skilfully navigate various social/cultural spaces in New Zealand with little discomfort. By demonstrating that they can peacefully co-exist with various other ethnic groups in the country, participants may be attempting to minimise the implicit threat of minority groups and immigrants in New Zealand towards the dominant social order, and subsequently, the potential dangers of interethnic romantic relationships to that social order. As such, they may additionally be trying to challenge perceived notions about immigrants' lack of social integration in New Zealand.

Additionally, it is also possible that participants are implicitly responding to repeated invalidation where people of colour or immigrants are not considered by the dominant ethnic group as New Zealanders; thus, by accessing this subject position, participants may be trying to demonstrate the compatibility of being a Kiwi, a person of colour, and an immigrant, and consequently, their ability to belong in New Zealand. An individual trying to access the

subject position of the cosmopolitan Kiwi may, therefore, be attempting to demonstrate the benefits of multiculturalism over isolationism. Embracing a variety of cultural practices is viewed to be more life-enhancing than following any one traditional lifestyle. As such, this subject position may be viewed as a mechanism used by participants to protect themselves from invalidation.

7.8 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed why and how discourses of homogamy and difference are alternatively deployed to construct issues of culture by the Indian adults in interethnic relationships in this study. Although they are apparently distinctive sets of discourses, they seem to be used for the same purpose of validating, distinguishing, and elevating the status of interethnic relationships in the eyes of those around them. In accordance with these purposes, participants positioned themselves in ways that, again, validate and protect the relationship and their personal identities.

The next chapter will continue to analyse the texts produced for Study 2 by focusing on race and gender as potential axes of societal microaggression and oppression. Specifically, this following chapter will discuss experiences of racial microaggressions, post-racial discourse, and abnormal sexualities in interethnic relationships.

Chapter Eight: The Problematisation of Race and Gender in Indian Interethnic Relationships

8.1 Introduction

The findings from Study 2 on the experiences of Indian adults in heterosexual, interethnic romantic relationships in New Zealand have shown the ways in which these particular individuals navigate internal family challenges and cultural conflicts within their romantic relationships. The previous chapter demonstrated participants' deployment of discourses surrounding the normativity of homogamy in relationships, as well as participants' constructions of difference as being beneficial to romantic relationships. Constructions of difference were supported by discourses of romantic love, which naturalised and validated these relationships.

However, an analysis of the texts produced for Study 2 would not be complete without a discussion of how these interethnic relationships are viewed by society. The data from this second study indicate that the axes of race and gender are critical to discuss because their intersection has profound and somewhat troubling implications for how these interethnic couples are perceived by distant others. These heterosexual couples, by nature of their romances across racial lines, are viewed primarily through the lenses of race and gender when out in public together. The resulting judgements that are formed are problematic for these couples because they appear to be vulnerable in ways that co-ethnic couples are not.

Firstly, many of the speakers in these texts indicated that they were vulnerable to societal aggression, mainly on one front: that of race. This aggression was directed primarily towards the non-White partners in these relationships, and participants reported a variety of strategies that were used to cope with such aggression. Secondly, although these racial aggressions were significantly harmful on their own, there were instances when the added layer of gender further highlighted the interracial nature of the relationship and rendered these couples uncomfortably visible in some contexts and upsettingly invisible in others.

It is this problematisation of the intersecting issues of race and gender in public spaces that will be the focus of this chapter, with reference to the abnormal forms of sexuality that such an intersection implies.

8.2 Noticing Racial Difference

"[This photo] represents how like, we're not only culturally different but also physically we look really different and so, like in this day and age you wouldn't think that it's like that, especially in New Zealand, in Auckland… and I've come to this house like the last five years but every time we drive down, if there is, if one of them [the neighbours] is standing outside, they will always stare at us as we drive past. Every single time and I'm like it's not that new, you see me in his car like every day… But when, like so many times usually when it's an Indian person they always stare and it's uncomfortable. And it's clearly because we, just because we look different, yeah. It's very weird… I just feel like sometimes people, like if Jack [Anna's boyfriend] and I are holding hands and someone stares at us, they look at Jack, they don't just, like they'll look at me, they'll look at him, they'll stare, but when they look at Jack they like give him the evils, I feel like they just like why, why are you with her, like you shouldn't be with her, you're not, you're not up to it, you know? And Jack has said that so many times and I think it's really weird. I don't think people should

stare at all anyway, but I feel like, yeah, it's upsetting, it's like we're in the twenty-first century and we're living in Auckland and it's pretty normal, like stop staring."

(Anna, female, 22)

It is well-documented in the academic literature that interethnic couples make important distinctions between culture and race, where cultural challenges are viewed as significantly more salient to couples, compared to racial differences, and that cultural dynamics have far more impact on the internal workings of interethnic relationships (Bischoff, 2005; Bystydzienski, 2011). On the other hand, the impact of race is typically trivialised by interethnic couples (Karis, 2003; Killian, 2002, 2012; Steinbugler, 2007). It is only under society's watchful eye that these couples seemingly become aware of their racial differences.

When making such distinctions between culture and race, it is important to define what these terms mean to interethnic couples. Although there has traditionally been overlap in the usage of the terms 'culture' and 'race' in academic literature, efforts have been made to formally define each term. However, definitions over the years have been contested, since the concepts of race and culture can be ambiguous. Culture has been defined as a dynamic system of shared lifestyles, assumptions, meanings, and ideas that underlie the thoughts, emotions, attitudes, and behaviours of people (S. Johnson, Jr., 1990; Vaughan & Hogg, 2011). Culture informs individual behaviour, often on an unconscious level (Vaughan & Hogg, 2011).

On the other hand, where race was once viewed purely as a biological/genetic fact, it is now increasingly defined as a social construct (Bridges, 2013; Dein, 2006). A common criticism of the concept of race is that there does not seem to be any valid reason that some morphological attributes are considered more significant than others (Smith, 2002). Moreover, scientists have demonstrated that there is more genetic diversity within racial classifications than there is between them (Long & Kittles, 2003). However, because society continues to treat race as a valid form of categorisation (probably because it is so visually salient compared to culture), it may be worthy of analysis, because of its social, economic, and political effects (S. Johnson, Jr., 1990; Templeton, 2013).

It seems that interethnic couples in existing research make similar distinctions between race and culture. However, it is intriguing that race is not often treated with the same gravity by interethnic couples in the way that culture is. Frequently, race is viewed as a superficial physical difference that is not worth worrying about between the partners, and which is only noticed by those outside of the relationship. As such, racial difference is either silenced or minimised, and becomes salient only when the topic is raised, either explicitly or

implicitly, by outsiders to the relationship (Hibbler & Shinew, 2002; Karis, 2003; Killian, 2001a, 2001b, 2002, 2003, 2012; Steinbugler, 2007).

It is important to position the above photo and extract with this context in mind. Descriptively, the quote at the beginning of this section is significant because it shows that, although the speaker is clearly cognisant of the physical differences between herself and her partner, at least on a surface level, she seems to not have fully realised the connotations of such difference until she is confronted with it by others viewing the couple. As an Indian person, her close physical proximity to a White individual of the opposite sex in a public arena generates a very specific reaction from Indian people around them, which, as she perceives, implies something highly abnormal about the relationship. She further speculates that it is not just the interracial nature of the heterosexual relationship that is viewed as odd; the added dimension of being an Indian *woman* with a White *man* may further create problems for those viewing the couple.

Like Anna, most other participants reported experiencing subtle racial hostility in public spaces, which they believed rendered them extremely visible in often unpleasant situations. Frequently, the dimension of gender was inextricably linked with the ways in which these aggressions manifested for women participants. In other scenarios, these aggressions had the opposite effect of rendering participants and their interethnic relationships *invisible*. The following section will, therefore, begin by explaining different types of racial aggressions that were experienced by participants in this study, how they coped with such experiences, and the repercussions of these types of experiences.

8.3 Racial Microaggressions

Existing research has frequently reported the experiences of racism that interethnic couples have when they are in the public eye (Hibbler & Shinew, 2002; Iwasaki et al., 2016; Keyser, 2011; Killian, 2003; Leslie & Young, 2015; Yahya & Boag, 2014). These experiences usually encompass a multitude of racist incidents that vary in their intensity, from the overt and blatant racial attacks, to the more subtle and covert incidents. Experiences on each end of this spectrum can leave lasting impressions on interethnic couples, regardless of whether they were physically or verbally instigated.

In this sample, it was extremely rare for participants to experience outward racism in the form of verbal slurs or physical aggression. However, participants were far more likely to describe covert incidents that, to them, were based on racial stereotypes. Such incidents are called *racial microaggressions* in the academic literature and are those subtle forms of racism that are usually verbal in nature, and which contain implicit negative messages about certain

ethnic groups (Iwasaki et al., 2016; Sue et al., 2007; G. Wong, Derthick, David, Saw, & Okazaki, 2014). There is an enormous body of literature on the subject, in relation to the experience of racial microaggressions in educational environments, in professional workplaces, in the therapy room, in different ethnic and social communities, and so on (G. Wong et al., 2014). However, despite the incidence of racism regarding interethnic relationships, racial microaggressions constitute a subject area that is under-reported in the interethnic intimacy literature.

According to the seminal research article on racial microaggressions, there are three main types of racial microaggressions: microinsults, microinvalidations, and microassaults (Sue et al., 2007). Microinsults refer to rude or insensitive statements or messages that denigrate individuals in terms of their ethnic identity or heritage. Microinvalidations negate the experiences, emotions, and thoughts of people of colour. These first two types of microaggression can often be unconscious; that is, it is often the case that neither the aggressor nor the victim realise that a microaggression has occurred. On the other hand, microassaults are conscious and explicit verbal or nonverbal acts of racial aggression. Evidence of all three types of racial microaggressions was observed in the data of the present study, although microinsults and microinvalidations were much more commonly reported by participants.

8.3.1 Microinsults

"Indian people stare. Because they pick up I'm Indian, Indian people can tell who Indians are. You can tell straightaway, Indian people stare. Indian men stare, more than women do… I think a lot of questions buzz in their heads, what is she doing with this man, um, why is she with this man. Again it varies from person to person, initially I think it's curiosity, they try to figure me out like I have gone to, in west Auckland there is an Indian eatery that's quite popular, so if any time I go to west Auckland, I, I drop in there… I have a meal at that eatery. Um so if I go with him [Vidya's partner], um we get stared at… I have been stared at a bit, I, um, I don't get it, why. But yeah, it's a funny thing, men stare more than women do."

(Vidya, female, 48)

"I remember we [Dev and his girlfriend] went to a café [in a small rural town in New Zealand] and a couple of people, more elderly were like curious. I'm sure they were talking about us and that's when I'm like, that's when it first, oh maybe it's a bit more different for people that are in these smaller towns, which I didn't really feel in

Auckland… because in Auckland you know, everybody's just like so used to seeing um, everybody's just mixing together, you know, all the cultures and all this stuff, but um, I guess when you go to smaller towns, a lot of people are just like oh, they're probably just more married with people from the same culture or something and it's not that common to see people from other cultures you know, being a couple."

(Dev, male, 33)

The most common type of microinsult reported by participants in this study was the experience of being stared at openly while they were in a public space with their partners and/or their children, as illustrated by the quotes above. Participants sometimes interpreted such ogling as stemming from interest or curiosity, but more often than not, indicated that they perceived staring to be openly hostile, judgemental, and disapproving. Strikingly, the female participants described being stared at more frequently than did the male participants, who, overall, did not recall as many staring incidents. Even when the men did recall such events, they did not seem to dwell on them in the same manner that the women did. Additionally, the female participants interpreted staring incidents as being more unpleasant, while the male participants thought that staring was based in curiosity.

"Maybe my frame of mind has shifted, because when we [Roma and her partner] were just friends I didn't think to look out for stares. So if it did occur I didn't notice, but when we got, when we started being like, you know, romantically involved I think that's, that's when I started noticing because maybe I was on the lookout for that."

(Roma, female, 27)

Additionally, all participants, regardless of gender, claimed that the perpetrators of such staring behaviour were almost always Indian themselves. It is unclear whether the perpetrators truly *were* always Indian or whether participants were simply more likely to notice or expect staring behaviour when initiated by other Indian people. Only the participant speaking in the extract above showed explicit awareness over this issue, explaining that she only started noticing how Indian individuals would stare at her and her partner in public *after* they began dating—even though they had been in public spaces together many times before their romantic relationship began. This is significant because it suggests that Roma has implicit awareness of underlying discursive structures regarding the appropriate ways for women and men to interact in public spaces that are inhabited and monitored by other Indian people. Moreover, her newfound vigilance indicates that she is aware that she is violating norms around propriety by being in highly close physical proximity to her partner in public

spaces, as well as norms about endogamy. Perhaps, then, the women in this study interpreted being stared at in a more negative light compared to the men, given that they may have been more deeply entrenched in certain discourses about sexuality. This idea will be further explored later in this chapter.

8.3.2 Microinvalidations

"It'd be funny 'cause sometimes like I'd be with her [Vijay's girlfriend] and they'd think like I can't speak English or something. Like you know what I mean? We'd go to these events like, she used to be in plays and things like that so we'd go and it would just be like, European people and then I'd be like the only Indian person and they'd kind of just assume like, I don't speak English or I'm real bad at English or I don't understand or something. I was like what are you talking about, like I was born here, I have to tell people I was born here for them to understand that like, I understand, like you know. So yeah things like that, it's pretty funny like it's just like what they presume of you, like they pre-think, before they talk to you."

(Vijay, male, 24)

Not all experiences of microaggressions were as obvious as being ogled. Sometimes participants were prone to receiving subtle communications from others about their capabilities that were specifically based in negative racial stereotypes about Indian people. This had the impact of invalidating participants' complex experiences of being Indian immigrants and people of colour, while also identifying as New Zealanders. The consequence of this invalidation often meant that participants received the hefty burden of having to prove that they did not fulfil the stereotype that had been conveyed. For example, the participant above is forced to prove that he is capable of speaking English fluently, specifically because of his racial appearance. What this suggests is that there continues to exist in New Zealand a very specific image of what a New Zealander or a Kiwi looks like: someone who looks to be of European descent (Gilbertson, 2010; Kobayashi, 2009). In this instance, that particular image excludes those who do not look European in appearance, and ultimately excludes those individuals who are obviously of an ethnic minority.

"When we go to a restaurant or something like that, you know, they'll be asking if we're together as opposed to, I guess it's little things like that you do as you're growing up, as a person of colour it's something that you pick up on but Olivia

[Kunal's wife] probably wouldn't pick up on since she hasn't had to worry about that."

(Kunal, male, 34)

Likewise, other participants reported similar microinvalidations where their abilities or even their relationships to their (usually European) partners were questioned. Such microinvalidations typically caught participants off-guard and they accordingly had to formulate appropriate responses that simultaneously resisted the stereotype while not offending the perpetrators of the microinvalidations. It should be noted that, in such cases, the perpetrators likely did not realise the magnitude of their statements or actions. Arguably, these microinvalidations can be more harmful specifically because perpetrators do not often realise that they have articulated negative racial stereotypes and implicit beliefs about ethnic minorities.

"I felt like I didn't have someone that normalised me a little bit as I've taken the girls [Priya's daughters] out everywhere, like, um, and I don't know if that's just me and my mindset, like, or that, um, you know little things when we go for a walk and I was, it was just me and the girls. I found less people said hello to me than with Richard [Priya's husband], and I don't know if that was just like me thinking I'm, you know, picking up on it but I just felt like when he's with me other people assume that I'm a bit friendlier and open-minded with him, because it's the two of us and when we walk, you know, together, like everyone said hello to us. I don't think anyone's ever said hello to me by myself when I was walking with the girls and I was like, maybe I don't, maybe it's like they don't, they feel like I'm not as approachable."

(Priya, female, 36)

Repeated exposure to microinvalidations often had long-lasting consequences for some participants. These invalidations made some participants feel excluded from dominant constructions of what a New Zealander could and should look like, which consequently also affected their feelings of being excluded from social spaces where the mainstream ethnic group (in the New Zealand case, Europeans/Pakeha) held dominance. Travelling in such social spaces could sometimes make participants feel vulnerable, due to feeling that they were unusual or somehow out-of-the-ordinary. In fact, these participants often felt like being with their Pakeha partners normalised them, as discussed by the participant above. Being with her husband (a member of the in-group) in a public space allows her to temporarily become a member of the in-group as well. This means that she can access ways of interacting with the

in-group and travelling in in-group dominated spaces that she would not normally be able to access. The absence of her husband likewise undermines her confidence, and, therefore, her ability to navigate such social spaces with ease, which bolsters her awareness of her exclusion.

8.3.3 Microassaults

There was only one reported instance of microassault in the texts produced for this study. Despite the rarity of such incidents, it may be important to discuss this instance for several reasons. There is some evidence to support the idea that New Zealanders prefer to deny the existence of racism in contemporary society, beyond the existence of a few fringe, radical white supremacist movements (Kobayashi, 2009). When racist attacks do occur, it is viewed with little importance because of the overall low incidence of such attacks. However, this phenomenon of racism denial is under-researched and it is unclear how prevalent it is in New Zealand. In light of the feminist-poststructuralist lens of this research inquiry, it is crucial to give a space for voices that disrupt the dominant narrative of the non-existence of racism in New Zealand and to analyse the discursive structures that make racism—and its dismissal—possible.

The following incident was described by a participant, Sameera, an Indian woman who is currently in an interethnic romantic relationship with a man of African descent. Sameera described being in a public place with her partner one night, when she was approached by an inebriated, middle-aged Pakeha woman. The subsequent exchange began pleasantly, but took a downturn when the woman learned that Sameera was in a relationship with an African man, and began making racial slurs about African men.

> "So basically she just kept talking about like, you know, they're [men of African descent] no good and stuff, I was with a Kenyan guy, I went there to do missionary work, Kenyan or Nigerian and I went there to do missionary work and like he raped me and made use of me and even though I gave him money and things like that, you know. I thought we were in a relationship and stuff like that, and she was literally like, like put her hand on Scott's [Sameera's boyfriend] head and was like, you know like being really rough, like sort of like, she wasn't very nice, like, and then she was like oh you stay away from her and stuff like that, she kept saying to him. And he, she put his, ah her hand on his neck… and he's like can you please get your hands off me. Don't touch me, you know? And I said stop touching him, I, I said that to her. And um, he's like, she was like, oh you all are the same anyway… and I said he's not, you know, and he's a good man, you know, so she said oh that's what they

claim… she was literally like, belittling him. You know? And it was really horrible and it was like, I, I couldn't believe I was seeing that."

(Sameera, female, 25)

As stated previously, microassaults are usually conscious and verbal discriminatory acts. Although this incident included this type of microaggression, it should be noted that it also escalated into physical aggression. Although the verbal aggression was perceived as unpleasant by the participant, it seems that the physical aggression was the most shocking element of this incident for her. Moreover, it is the explicit nature of the attack that allows her to clearly identify this incident as racism, whereas microinsults and microinvalidations may be more difficult to identify and justify as racism. As such, there may be different ways that participants find appropriate to cope with being on the receiving end of different types of microaggressions. The following section will deal with this topic.

8.4 Post-Racial Discourse and Other Coping Mechanisms for Racial Microaggressions

"I don't think it, it's not racism, it's more just a predisposition, like we see the world in different ways. It's not right or wrong, it's just how some people view their world, it's not, I don't think it's racism, it's more about um, being out of their comfort zone, something that's out of their comfort zone."

(Kunal, male, 34)

Although racial microaggressions may initially seem like harmless events in comparison to blatant racism, they are arguably more harmful than obvious racial attacks specifically *because* they appear innocuous on the surface. However, they can be insidious because they contain implicit negative racial messages about certain ethnic groups, which can be more difficult to clearly identify and, consequently, to highlight their potential damages. As such, it can be challenging for people of colour to justify their feelings of distress when they are exposed to microaggressions, because they are often dismissed or accused of being over-sensitive. This dismissal can silence or erase these subtle forms of racism, allowing them to become more deeply entrenched in how people talk about race (Kobayashi, 2009). It can also cause psychological distress for people of colour (G. Wong et al., 2014).

With this in mind, there seem to be very specific ways that participants in this study coped with microaggressions when they occurred. Many seemed to be aware that subtle

forms of racism, like microinsults and microinvalidations, were not clearly articulated in dominant discourses about race and, therefore, tended to cope with microaggressions internally. Some talked about either ignoring or suppressing their feelings of anger or annoyance, while others rationalised their experiences of racism. For instance, the speaker at the beginning of this section uses a cultural relativist approach to justify other people's reactions regarding racial discrimination or prejudice. In doing so, he is able to minimise the potential harms of racist incidents or microaggressions, but is also unconsciously able to place himself on a higher moral footing by demonstrating his empathy towards those who have a different viewpoint than him.

Other participants likewise minimised the potential threat of racial microaggressions by searching for the humour in the situation, like one participant who commented: "Ultimately I just find it really funny 'cause like I see the positives and I'm like oh wow these people don't know." Other participants were able to rationalise racial microaggressions by suggesting that racism in New Zealand (particularly Auckland) was insignificant compared to that in other nations. One such participant remarked that, "racism just feels so small in Auckland that it's awesome. It actually is awesome." Participants with similar remarks suggested that people of colour living in New Zealand (or Auckland) were fortunate to only be on the receiving end of mostly microinsults/microinvalidations rather than overt racism.

When reacting to microaggressions that were linked to the interethnic relationship itself, such as being stared at while out in public, participants reported debriefing with their partners. In doing so, couples were able to rationalise upsetting or distressing incidents that had occurred to them, which helped to deepen their emotional bonds. For example, when participants experienced being stared at in public, they often pointed it out to their partners, which would lead to a conversation in which the couple would attempt to understand why the microinsult had occurred. Such conversations would frequently culminate in the couple bonding closer together over the shared insult. Additionally, such conversations usually led to Pakeha partners gaining greater understanding of the racial experiences of non-White people and becoming allies to their Indian partners.

It is clear that there exists a variety of ways in which participants in this study attempted to resolve emotional distress as a result of receiving a racial microaggression. We have briefly discussed rationalisation as a response to racial microaggressions. However, there was one particular type of rationalisation evident within the texts that is important to explore further. Namely, the speakers in these texts would articulate a particular type of discourse to allow them to alleviate the threat posed by racial microaggressions: post-racial discourse. Post-racial discourse espouses a vision of an ideal world in which complete racial equality has been achieved and concerns about race have been transcended (Ikuenobe, 2013;

Kim, 2013). In such a world, race does not matter as an axis of differentiation between people. For instance, hints of post-racial discourse can be detected in Martin Luther King Jr.'s celebrated 1963 speech, "I have a dream" (Ikuenobe, 2013; Yogeeswaran et al., 2016), where he outlines a vision for racial equality for humanity, as well as for shared fraternity between all people, regardless of the colour of their skin (Hansen, 2003). One aspect of post-racial discourse manifests as colour-blindness, a phenomenon where racial characteristics (like skin colour) are viewed as illegitimate grounds for selecting individuals for certain activities or services (Ikuenobe, 2013; Visintin et al., 2017; Yogeeswaran et al., 2016).

Post-racial discourse has certain benefits, such as championing the belief that all people should be equal and promoting the elimination of racial discrimination (Ikuenobe, 2013). However, endorsing post-racial discourse can also have downsides, such as erasing the importance of race as a continued site of oppression or discrimination for people of colour (Ikuenobe, 2013; Yogeeswaran et al., 2016). This disadvantage was evident in the texts produced for this study. In order to cope with racial microaggressions, some participants attempted to reduce or erase the threat of the microaggression by endorsing post-racial discourse. However, in doing so, they also dismissed racial microaggressions as being a form of racism/discrimination. For example, the participant below, Sameera, explained her reaction to the incident reported in the 'Microassaults' section above, where a middle-aged Pakeha woman both verbally and physically assaulted her boyfriend, who is a dark-skinned man of African descent.

"I was even more traumatised because this whole time I was telling him not to think that about New Zealanders 'cause they're nicer, you know, if you were in Australia maybe, you know because they can be quite racist, like, you know, but they're nicer here and stuff like that, and you know not all of them are like that… And it was really horrible and like, I, I couldn't believe I was seeing that. You know? Because here this guy has been telling me this whole time that you don't see it but the people, they show it towards me and that's how I know… that was a pretty bad experience, and I sort of clicked then. I was like oh yeah, you know, this sort of thing happens, but after that, like he never really, after that few months, he never really brought up anything racial again and I felt really bad, I don't know whether it's because I told him I didn't wanna have to hear about it or, you know? But I don't know whether I was being in denial with myself that I didn't wanna hear it, or whether it was just a bit of both, him overreacting… I think that's one point where I probably feel kind of guilty about still, you know? 'Cause I think I just didn't realise how bad it was."

(Sameera, female, 25)

In this extract, Sameera explained that, prior to the incident, she was not receptive to her partner's experiences of racism and believed that his interpretations of previous incidents as racist were completely mistaken. She expressed the idea that people in New Zealand were "nicer"—that is, not racist—and implicitly suggested that incidents of racism in New Zealand are rare and perhaps overblown. She adds elsewhere in the texts that none of her other "multicultural friends" (friends of non-White ethnic identification) had ever complained to her about experiencing racism, reinforcing her belief that racism in New Zealand was close to non-existent. We can see here that she drew on post-racial ideas of race as an illegitimate ground of discrimination and also of the unimportance of race as a societal concern. Additionally, she conveyed the idea that racism does not happen in New Zealand, thereby constructing New Zealand as a utopia for people of colour and race relations. It is only when visually confronted with an explicit occurrence of racism that she begins to draw on counter-discourses disrupting post-racial discourse.

The use of post-racial discourse in this instance—and in other instances in the texts—allows participants to dismiss racist occurrences or racial microaggressions as one-off events. The benefit of this is that participants are able to rationalise negative emotions that have resulted from these events. However, at the same time, using post-racial discourse to rationalise racial microaggressions puts participants at a disadvantage, because this coping mechanism only serves to silence and suppress racial discrimination that continues to happen. The mere fact that participants articulate post-racial discourse to minimise racial microaggressions indicates that participants do *not* live in a post-racial world where skin colour and other racial characteristics do not matter.

So far, this chapter has considered participants' experiences of racial microaggressions and their responses to these incidents. However, it is important to further investigate how race and gender interact in public spaces to render participants and their partners simultaneously visible and invisible.

8.5 Visible and Abnormal Sexualities

"We [Anna and her boyfriend] booked a cruise and, I kid you not, I told my mum on the Saturday and then on the Sunday my mum goes Anna can I say something if you don't get, can I say something but promise you won't get annoyed and I was like what is it. And she was like, get married and I was like excuse me and she was like yeah just have like a court marriage and I was like that's the stupidest thing I've ever

heard like why would you say that, it's like me running away with someone and she was like, yeah just, just get married before you go and I was like, you're actually not making any sense right now, like I'm just gonna walk away and I walked out of the room, but I was talking to my aunty about it yesterday and my aunty was like I, I get it, she doesn't want to, she doesn't, 'cause she knows that when other people hear that you've gone on a cruise with your boyfriend, they're automatically gonna be like oh shit they've gone on a holiday together, they're gonna be sleeping together. And, I think that's what it is, I feel like my parents are in denial. They know what's going on but they won't admit it to themselves or to anyone else and we went on holiday together last year, I went with him and his friends. That was fine because there were other people around. Logic. But now it's not because we're going alone [on the cruise] together."

(Anna, female, 22)

The interview transcripts produced for this study (Study 2) indicate similar competing discourses of eroticism and asceticism that were evident in the interviews and focus groups from Study 1. In Study 1, participants noted that the close physical proximity of the bodies of the heterosexual couple (regardless of whether they were same-race or interracial couples) in geographic isolation from other bodies was problematic because it rendered the sexuality of the heterosexual couple highly visible. For example, the quote above explores the differences between the (interracial) heterosexual couple going on holiday alone versus going in a wider group. In the latter category, the threat of premarital sexual intimacy is mitigated by the presence of other people monitoring the couple.

This general eroticisation of the heterosexual couple in Indian society (regardless of whether they are co-ethnic or interethnic couples) disrupts normative modes of silence around sexuality and prompts certain responses from those surrounding the couple. These responses attempt to exert disciplinary power over the couple in order to prevent their further deviation from social norms. Common techniques include surveillance and normalising judgement. In Study 1, these techniques manifested in the form of others in the community monitoring the behaviours of younger members in the community, which frequently has the effect of coercing youngsters to self-regulate in public spaces and thus pre-empts them from engaging in deviant behaviour. When such surveillance was ineffective and youngsters deviated from normative behaviour, punitive measures like gossip were employed (refer to Chapter Five for a more detailed analysis of the function of community gossip). Surveillance was also reported by the participants in the present study, where participants experienced being stared at in public spaces, primarily by other Indian people.

Such surveillance serves the purpose of rendering non-conforming individuals visible, which they perceived as an unpleasant consequence.

The interethnic participants in this study (Study 2) were also subject to Foucauldian disciplinary processes of normalisation in relation to their sexual behaviours, where others attempted to train participants to conform to unspoken norms around premarital celibacy. The above quote showcases one aspect of this experience. The participant, Anna, explains how her mother tried to coerce her into marrying her boyfriend (a strategy that can be identified as normalising), prior to going on holiday with him alone, in order to prevent members of the wider community from taking punitive measures through social gossip. The purpose of this normalisation seems to be about preventing the sexual intimacy of the unmarried couple from becoming visible to external observers of the relationship, given the suppression of erotic sexuality discourses that is evident in Indian society, as discussed in Chapter Five.

It seems that the close proximity of heterosexual couples in Indian spaces is an important trigger for community disciplinary processes. However, existing research on *interracial* intimacy suggests that interracial couples are *even* more vulnerable to disciplinary processes in public spaces, which is indicated by their experiences of both overt and subtle forms of discrimination (Hibbler & Shinew, 2002; Keyser, 2011; Steinbugler, 2005, 2007). The key point to take away here is that interracial couples are generally more visible in public spaces compared to their same-race counterparts (Steinbugler, 2005, 2007). This means that, in Indian spaces, the close proximity of *interracial* heterosexual couples may be even more prone to disciplinary action compared to same-race heterosexual couples. Steinbugler argues that it is specifically the interracial element of heterosexual couples that contributes to their hyper-visibility. This hyper-visibility is a symptom of the perceived abnormality of these types of relationships. However, before we can explore Steinbugler's argument that interraciality is an abnormal form of sexuality within the predominant monoracial relationship paradigm, it is first necessary to explore what is meant by 'normal' and 'abnormal' in prevailing sexuality discourses. This is in large part because Steinbugler's argument is founded on the normal/abnormal spectrum in sexuality studies.

In her ground-breaking article on human sexuality, "Thinking Sex" (1984), Gayle Rubin revolutionised the ways that scholars theorised about sexual behaviours. She differentiated between 'good/normal' and 'bad/abnormal' types of sexuality. Good forms of sexuality are those that are heterosexual and within monogamous marital relationships. Sex within these relationships are for procreative purposes between two people of the same generation, in a private space. Such sex is non-commercial and does not involve the use of sexual aids/objects or pornography. On the other hand, 'bad' forms of sexuality are those

that are directly opposed to good sexuality: they are homosexual, promiscuous, outside of a marital context, and are for purely sexual/self-indulgent reasons. Bad forms of sexuality also include those that are for commercial purposes; that take place in public; that are in groups or alone; that are cross-generational; that involve BDSM (practices including bondage, dominance and submission, and sadomasochism); and that involve pornography or the use of sex toys.

Rubin (1984) additionally proposed that good and bad forms of sexuality are best conceptualised on a spectrum, since there exist some bad types of sexuality that are mitigated by certain dimensions. For instance, homosexual couples in stable, monogamous relationships are perceived to be more socially acceptable than homosexual individuals who engage in promiscuity (Rubin, 1984). Moreover, to provide another example from contemporary times, present-day monogamous couples living outside of wedlock in New Zealand are considerably more acceptable than they were fifty years ago, as indicated by rising cohabitation rates (M. Baker & Elizabeth, 2013). Thus, Rubin demonstrated the variability in the perceived acceptability of sexual behaviours according to particular modifiers: for example, monogamy is shown to have an overriding influence that undermines the abnormality of many sexual practices. In addition, it is important to remember that Rubin's article was written at a time during the Western feminist movement when discussions around sexuality were especially contentious (Rubin, 2011). Some of the forms of sexuality that she classified as abnormal then have become increasingly acceptable now (like homosexuality and premarital cohabitation), more than thirty years on.

The purpose of this discussion of Rubin's conceptualisation of sexual behaviour is to demonstrate that sexual behaviours are often equated with moral behaviour in the public eye. Good types of sexual behaviour (like monogamous heterosexuality) offer various types of social privileges, like greater social mobility and respectability, which are often supported by the legality of these behaviours. On the other hand, bad types of sexual behaviour are often associated with having a distorted moral compass, and those who engage in these forms of sexual behaviours are thought to be disreputable (Rubin, 1984; Steinbugler, 2005). However, a shortcoming of Rubin's theory was her lack of consideration of interracial sexuality and its inclusion as an abnormal type of sexuality (Steinbugler, 2005, 2007). Interracial sexuality and marriage was once illegal in the United States (Bratter & King, 2008; Eastwick et al., 2009), and even though it was fully decriminalised in 1967 (Gaines et al., 2015), opposition towards interracial marriages/relationships persists (Iwasaki et al., 2016; Keyser, 2011; Leslie & Young, 2015). It is thus appropriate to conceptualise interracial sexuality as an abnormal type of sexuality, according to societal perceptions. Concerns about

interracial marriage often stem from worries about racial purity—that is, about the sexual intermingling of different racial groups (Ezzell, 2002).

Few scholars have given attention to the problem of interracial sexuality as an abnormal form of sexuality. Steinbugler's (2005, 2007) work begins the task of addressing this gap by examining the ways in which interraciality disrupts the privileges usually granted to heterosexual couples, and further, how it creates additional problems for homosexual couples. Although her work focused primarily on gay and lesbian interracial couples, Steinbugler also argued that heterosexual interracial couples are simultaneously visible and invisible in public spaces. These couples experience visual dislocation in public spaces—that is, partners are assumed to be unrelated or not together—which makes these couples upsettingly invisible. However, experiences of being stared at—which stem from the persistence of monoracial sexuality as the ideal type of sexuality—make them unpleasantly visible at the same time.

There is evidence of this phenomenon of dual visibility/invisibility in the texts produced for this study, in participants' experiences of racial microaggressions. Experiences of microinvalidations, for example, serve to make the relationships between participants and their partners as either insignificant or unseen. On the other hand, the intense public scrutiny that participants sometimes endure when they are with their partners make them overly observable. Knowing that they can be observed at any moment may render participants especially vulnerable and prompt them to self-regulate behaviour in order to prevent other disciplinary actions from those that are observing them.

> "I've never been stared at by anyone who's White or Asian or African, or another ethnicity, it's always Indian men and I don't know what it is, I don't know if they're thinking oh what's this Indian girl doing with this White boy, is she going around behind her parents' back, is she, you know, is she having sex with this White boy, that sort of thing. And then it, at the same time it's also kind of hostile towards James [Roma's boyfriend] because it was like what are you doing with this Indian girl, you know, she's one of ours, you can't touch her, you can't have her and that's what it would feel like."
>
> *(Roma, female, 27)*

Although Steinbugler's (2005, 2007) argument about how interraciality disrupts normative heterosexual privileges is compelling, it does not fully account for some of the gender differences in how participants in this sample were rendered visible. Specifically, the data from this study indicate that Indian women who are in romantic relationships with non-

Indian men may encounter greater public surveillance and judgement compared to Indian men who are in romantic relationships with non-Indian women. Alternatively, there may be no real difference in public surveillance and judgement for Indian women and men; rather, it is possible that there exists amongst the female participants a greater awareness and expectation of being grounded in a different discursive reality, compared to the male participants. Indeed, the female participants seemed to attribute malicious causes to staring more frequently, whereas the male participants were more likely to believe that staring behaviours arose from curiosity and interest, rather than from disapproval and judgement. As a result of this observation, I wish to extend Steinbugler's position by arguing that abnormal sexualities are further complicated not just by the dimension of race, but in fact, the interaction of race *and* gender.

Chapter Five of this thesis discussed the general gender differences in sexual liberties in Indian culture, where men possess greater freedoms in engaging in sexual intimacy compared to women—despite the explicit ideal of premarital sexual chastity for both women and men (Kumari, 1988). Further analysis of the discursive framework of normative Indian sexuality discourses in Study 1 revealed tensions between erotic and ascetic discourses, as well as anxiety regarding women's sexuality (and the subsequent regulation of women's bodies).

This may be why the Indian women in Study 2 *perceived* greater judgement than the Indian men from other Indian adults around them, as indicated by the participant in the extract above, Roma, who talks about the concerns about interracial sexuality that she speculates that Indian observers have regarding her relationship. She is aware of the proper forms of behaviour required for females within Indian culture and also knows that such norms prompt greater judgement and monitoring of her behaviour. Thus, she is aware that her interethnic relationship is perceived as an abnormal form of sexuality to Indian outsiders, not just because of the interracial element, but also because of underlying gender role ideology. An Indian woman in close physical proximity with a non-Indian man in a public space may signal her character to other Indian adults in that same space. As Rubin (1984) argued, sexual behaviours and preferences are often equated with morality; thus, an Indian woman in an interethnic relationship may be perceived to have a sexually disreputable character, compared to an Indian man in an interethnic relationship, whose gender may confer greater social privileges and flexibility.

8.6 Conclusion

The present chapter has explored how race and gender are problematised in the Indian interethnic relationships included in this study, by discussing how the intersection of race and gender in these relationships has repercussions for the perceived sexuality and morality of interethnic couples.

The following (and final) chapter of this thesis will synthesise the findings that emerged from this research inquiry with existing literature and knowledge regarding interethnic intimacy and Indian approaches to love, sexuality, and partner selection. This chapter will also outline the limitations, strengths, and implications of this research project, as well as offer recommendations for practice and suggest directions for future research.

Chapter Nine: Discussion

9.1 Introduction

This research inquiry examined the problematisation of interethnic intimacy in Indian culture. In the first study, it was necessary to explore the attitudes and perceptions of a sample of Indian adults towards love, partner selection, and sexuality, to contextualise the complicated nature of interethnic intimacy for Indian people. Following that first study, Indian adults in interethnic relationships were interviewed in Study 2, to gain a better understanding of the discourses articulated in their experiences of being in those relationships. The previous four chapters presented the findings that emerged from the discourse analysis of those two studies. Since a thorough analysis of the findings and their potential interpretations have been presented in these previous chapters, I will provide a brief summary of my analysis and situate it in existing literature, in order to comment on the overall significance of the major findings. This chapter will also reflect on the strengths and limitations of this research and will conclude by providing some recommendations for practice and future research.

9.2 The Evolution of Indian Culture

The data shows hints of the displacement of an ancient culture into a modern and confusing world, which is trying to navigate its proper place in the new cultural context. Additionally, it shows how participants in this study (many of whom have been raised in this contemporary cultural context) navigate the tensions that they experience as they try to fulfil their responsibilities to their elders (who represent that ancient culture), whilst also maintaining their own authenticity. The data strongly suggests that these younger participants are attempting to resolve the frequent dissonance resulting from wanting to honour the values set out by their parents' culture, while also desiring greater autonomy to love as they wish. Cumulatively, the data hints at evolution of some Indian cultural values in New Zealand.

In line with this central proposition, I have selected several of the most meaningful findings for further consideration here. These findings are vital to contemplate because they are small examples of how participants navigate tensions through a new cultural context. Moreover, they have profound and far-reaching ramifications for a number of stakeholders: not just for Indian adults in interethnic relationships, but also for Indian families, communities, and individuals; for people of colour who have migrated to Western nations and must manoeuvre between two cultural contexts; and for health practitioners of all

backgrounds working directly with, not just Indian, but non-Western migrant families and individuals generally.

9.2.1 Shifting Marriage Discourses

One of the key issues that this research addressed was the extent to which traditional Indian values about partner selection have transformed in a context with drastically different understandings of marriage. Previous scholarship has indicated that Indian people consider marriage to be an important familial and societal obligation that has its roots in divine mandate, and that it is an indissoluble lifelong commitment (Dhar, 2013; Kapadia, 1966; Kumari, 1988; Mahajan et al., 2013; Medora, 2003; I. Trivedi, 2014). However, there is a sparsity of knowledge about the impact of Western values on Indian immigrants who take their traditional values about marriage to Western nations, where phenomena like divorce, premarital cohabitation, and premarital sex are much more common.

The data from this research shows that traditional Indian values about partner selection are undergoing change amongst participants in New Zealand. Younger interviewees held different views than their elders about practices like dating, interracial relationships, living together before marriage, and the dissolution of relationships, while older interviewees suggested that their own open-minded attitudes towards the same practices were exceptional amongst their generation. Participants also endorsed positive attitudes towards divorce. These findings are consistent with existing literature, which show that, in the United States, first-generation Indian immigrants are similarly concerned about the partner selection behaviours of their second-generation children (Ahluwalia, 2002; Bacon, 1996; Das Gupta, 1997; Dasgupta, 1998; Kurian, 1986; N. Manohar, 2008; C. Sinha, 2005).

However, the degree of change indicated by participants is not very pronounced. Traditional Indian discourses of monogamy and commitment remain prevalent in the way that participants conceptualise marriage, which indicates a greater underlying current of cultural continuity than of change. In fact, marriage discourses are not *changing* so much as they are being *reframed* to accommodate the new discursive environment of agency and liberty that these Indian participants now find themselves in.

It seems clear from the present inquiry that participants (usually second-generation Indian New Zealanders) must navigate numerous cultural minefields, particularly where they relate to partner selection. They are expected to fulfil their obligations to their families by marrying appropriate individuals, but have grown up in a country that prizes liberty. It is perfectly logical that these conflicting messages should lead to tensions that these individuals must attempt to resolve, including conflicts with their parents about: self-differentiation from the family unit; confusion about identity and belonging; and uncertainty about whether they

truly have the freedom to love whomever they wish. Even when parents seemed lenient with regards to dating, interracial relationships, and premarital cohabitation, their reactions to their children engaging in such practices were often moderated by their perceptions of what the wider community would think—which was frequently portrayed by participants as a disapproving shadow committed to upholding traditional values as rigidly as possible. The data shows that participants are deeply aware of these multiple concerns and are actively trying to reconcile them with their own personal goals for happiness—specifically because they have an enormous amount of respect for their parents' culture.

Premarital cohabitation can be considered as an example of this attempted reconciliation by participants. While premarital cohabitation may be alarming for older Indian adults in New Zealand (as suggested by participants), as it may represent to them an abandonment by their children of traditional cultural values, I argue that young participants' choices to live with their partners prior to marriage do not indicate a departure from or a rejection of Indian culture. Instead, premarital cohabitation presents an opportunity for couples to trial their domestic compatibility; to consolidate their relationship by fortifying it against within-couple conflict; and to deepen their commitment. This is considered a necessary step by younger participants because of the ease of divorce in the New Zealand context. In New Zealand, the Family Proceedings Act 1980 made provisions for either spouse in a marriage to seek marital dissolution on the grounds of irreconcilable differences, without having to prove in court which spouse was at fault for the marital failure (Statistics New Zealand, 2001). Since then, divorce has become commonplace (Statistics New Zealand, 2013b, 2017) and is a real, potential outcome of marriage. Even in India, where marriage is traditionally considered sacred and divorce stigma is high, there are increasing levels of divorce and separation (Biswas, 2016; Dummett, 2011). Thus, the data shows this sample of young Indian participants view premarital cohabitation as a protective factor contributing to marital quality and stability.

It is worth considering whether these young people are choosing to live together before marriage because it is the best thing for their future marriages, or simply because they want to enjoy the benefits of marriage without the same level of commitment. The body of literature on premarital cohabitation and marital quality initially seems to paint a dire picture: premarital cohabitators who marry are more likely to have *lower* marital quality and commitment, and more likely to divorce than couples who did not live together before marriage (e.g., DeMaris & Rao, 1992; Krishnan, 1998; Teachman, 2003; Woods & Emery, 2002). However, the evidence is inconsistent and is complicated by: the varying motives, personalities, and attributes of premarital cohabitators; methodology differences; and cross-cultural differences (Jose, O'Leary, & Moyer, 2010; Kuperberg, 2014; J. Phillips & Sweeney,

2005; Woods & Emery, 2002). For instance, Jose et al. (2010) conducted a meta-analysis that showed that cohabitators had higher rates of marital dissolution than non-cohabitators. However, those who reported living with their eventual spouse prior to marriage did *not* experience the same negative association with marital stability. This suggests that cohabitation can have varied meanings and levels of commitment amongst individuals, which mediate the relationship between cohabitation and later marital quality.

Certainly, the individuals in this study reported only wanting to cohabit with their intended marital partner, suggesting that their high levels of commitment are indeed associated with their relationship quality. It is apparent that premarital cohabitation for these young people only occurs in scenarios where the couple intends to get married anyway; thus, it is a way for younger participants to uphold traditional marriage discourses in a discursive environment that does not necessarily value marriage in the exact same way. The challenges of marriage thus seem to be different for these young people compared to those experienced by their parents and grandparents. Therefore, it is necessary for younger participants to reframe marriage discourses in a way that ensures the continuity of the spirit of traditional monogamy discourses.

By reframing traditional marriage discourses to allow for premarital cohabitation (and premarital sex only within the framework of these long-term, monogamous relationships), younger participants are able to blend what they see as the best of both worlds: the significance and sanctity accorded to marriage within Indian monogamy discourses, and the autonomy and self-sovereignty encouraged by Western discourses. Most importantly, it allows their understandings of Indian culture to adapt in a way that is reconcilable with the values of the New Zealand host culture and still allows Indianness to survive—albeit in a form that may appear unfamiliar to their elders. This process of change will likely continue to occur for these younger participants, and maybe through their children.

The change in this small participant sample prompts some speculation. How widespread is this degree of change? How might Indian culture look in New Zealand in twenty years? What could these changes mean for Indian people living in this country? Could increasing numbers of New Zealand-born Indian people result in a loss of this traditional culture over time? What might it mean for how Indian people in New Zealand navigate issues of love, family, and identity? What sorts of benefits and/or detriments would there be of losing this discursive framework about how partner selection is constituted, as Indian understandings of marriage and love evolve within the Western context? The present doctoral project is unable to answer such questions—it has only prompted them—but they are increasingly imperative to consider as cultural diversity in New Zealand intensifies.

One issue that can be considered here regards the consequences of the Indian discursive framework of monogamy and commitment that has emerged from the present data. The data suggest that this framework acts as a safety net and moral guideline for participants and the people they know. For example, participants are rooted in an environment that has embedded values regarding the importance of committing to one's romantic relationships. Terminating a long-term romantic relationship is not an action to be taken lightly, and all efforts should be made to resolve conflict between the partners. One could argue for the moral and character-building benefit of this framework.

At the same time, participants implied that the protectiveness of this framework applies only to individuals who conform to it. The data shows that non-conformity (e.g., interracial dating, premarital cohabitation with no intention of marriage, casual relationships, etc.) can have damaging consequences. For instance, the data demonstrated that, even though participants and the people they know are becoming more accepting of divorce, divorce stigma persists in the more conservative circles of their Indian communities. It is perhaps necessary for such circles of the community to question whether their censure of non-conformity serves any meaningful purpose in the present day. Indeed, in many cases, the data suggested that it is only damaging and unhelpful to the community at large, and further perpetuates unjust gender role ideologies. Therefore, is community punishment of non-conformity ultimately damaging to the continuity of Indian cultural values in New Zealand? Is it possible that younger members of the Indian community might increasingly reject Indian culture for what they may view as archaic beliefs, in favour of the more liberal attitudes held by New Zealand society? These are questions for future research to consider.

The questions of how protective/restrictive this discursive framework is for Indian individuals, and of how beneficial it is to Indian communities, must also be considered in relation to attitudes towards sexual intimacy, given the remarkable changes in attitudes towards sexual practices unequivocally endorsed by participants.

9.2.2 The Threat of Sexuality

The present inquiry provides a deeper understanding of sexual/romantic behaviours that has rarely been articulated by previous literature. It is firmly established in scholarship and journalism that modern Indians have troubled, ambivalent attitudes towards sex (Chakraborty & Thakurata, 2013; M. Gupta, 1994; Kakar, 1990; Mahajan et al., 2013; A. Trivedi, 2014; I. Trivedi, 2014). There has, however, been little exploration of the underlying discursive framework of sexuality discourses in Indian society.

Based on the findings from Study 1, I argued that space continues to influence the appropriateness of intimate behaviours between heterosexual partners for Indian participants

because of the continued association of sex with danger and immorality. Younger participants feel freer to express affection with their partners in New Zealand public spaces here than they would in public spaces in India or in Indian spaces in New Zealand. Most significantly, it seems that there continues to be an implicit societal understanding amongst participants that family spaces are regarded as inappropriate when it comes to the expression of intimate behaviours.

Additionally, participants stated that there continue to exist gendered double standards surrounding sexual conduct among Indian adults living in New Zealand. Even though they believed that both men and women were expected to remain sexually chaste prior to marriage, there exists a greater onus on women to do so. Moreover, men can expect leniency in community disciplinary actions when they engage in sexual relations before marriage, whereas women are more frequently subjected to harsher consequences for violating premarital chastity.

Existing research shows that eroticism and asceticism discourses have been in competition in the Indian psyche for hundreds of years (I. Trivedi, 2014). Scholars have argued that invading influences—particularly the Victorians—resulted in the dominance of asceticism discourses (Kakar, 1990; I. Trivedi, 2014). This hegemonic discourse manifests in systematic ways: it denigrates any exogamous, non-marital sexual behaviour; it discourages overt expressions of sexual desire; and it adopts complex attitudes towards women's sexuality that involve venerating women in explicitly non-sexual roles while simultaneously disparaging women who freely express their sexuality.

Although this explanation provides some insight into complicated Indian attitudes regarding sexuality, it does not explain the underlying fears that are articulated by ascetic discourse. Namely, this research extends the argument based on the erotic-ascetic dichotomy by proposing that normative silence around sexual intimacy is based on a perception that sex threatens the sanctity of the family. Sexual desire may be viewed as threatening within the ascetic discourse because of its potential ability to distract individuals from their obligations to their families. Not only that, but sex may have the ability to sway one's allegiance from one's family to one's romantic/sexual partner. In this way, discourses from participants hint that sex is being implicitly articulated by their elders as the enemy of family wellbeing.

Chapter Five further demonstrated that female sexuality is an uneasy subject. Even though participants talked about their parents' outward acceptance of women being able to date and choose their own partners, they conveyed that other, darker undercurrents still hold sway in wider Indian society. Women could only date if they conducted themselves in an irreproachable manner, whereas if they were seen to engage in sexual intimacy, they were viewed with contempt and denigration.

The consequences of violating norms about female sexuality and silence around sex are perfectly embodied in interracial relationships. In Chapter Eight, I introduced the idea that interracial relationships may represent an abnormal form of sexuality because interraciality renders the sexuality of the heterosexual couple acutely visible (Steinbugler, 2005). I extended this position by arguing that these relationships could represent disruptions of the dual threats of sexual desire and female sexuality in Indian culture. The interracial heterosexual couples in this study were visible in Indian spaces in New Zealand in ways that co-ethnic couples are generally not. Because of their Otherness (the contrast between the partners, and between the couple and other co-ethnic, heterosexual couples in the same space), partners' mere proximity to each other was sufficient to disrupt normative modes of silence around sexuality—even if they were not engaging in overt public intimacy. However, the Indian men with non-Indian women in this study do not seem to be as visible compared to the Indian women with non-Indian men in this study. Sexuality discourses of asceticism and female chastity interact to disadvantage these Indian women who are seen in close physical proximity with non-Indian men, rendering them more vulnerable to surveillance, judgement, and other disciplinary processes.

These findings are suggestive of ambivalent sexism. Ambivalent sexism can be defined as "the subjectively positive feelings toward women that often go hand in hand with sexist antipathy" (Glick & Fiske, 1996, p. 491). As such, ambivalent sexism is a construct that is comprised of two complementary concepts that, together, uphold gender inequality (Glick & Fiske, 1997). Benevolent sexism is characterised by chivalrous and idealised attitudes towards women, and is underpinned by stereotypical understandings of masculine dominance and feminine submissiveness/subordination. Hostile sexism can be understood as misogyny: prejudice towards women due to beliefs about female inferiority compared to men (Glick & Fiske, 1996, 1997; Viki & Abrams, 2002). Although seemingly distinct, researchers have found positive correlations between hostile and benevolent sexism, and have suggested that both concepts act to perpetuate male control over women's bodies (Glick & Fiske, 1996, 1997, 2001; Sibley & Wilson, 2004). Peter Glick, Susan Fiske, and colleagues have argued that benevolent and hostile sexism are two sides of the same coin, where benevolent sexism, with its seemingly positive stance towards women, rewards women who conform and submit to societal control of their bodies. On the other hand, hostile sexism, with its overt derogatory approach to women, is used to punish women who violate traditional gender and sexual roles and thus assert male social control (Glick, Diebold, Bailey-Werner, & Zhu, 1997; Glick & Fiske, 2011). It can be argued from a Foucauldian perspective of disciplinary power that such a two-pronged method of social control is insidiously effective, because it encourages women to unconsciously behave in ways that will ensure

they are rewarded in this framework, in order to avoid the harsher outcomes that would result from non-conformity.

The data of the present inquiry indicates an ambivalent sexist approach by participants' Indian community networks towards women's sexuality. Participants (regardless of gender) were aware (and did not approve) of the boundaries that they perceived were imposed on women's sexual behaviour. They suggested that young women in particular could not safely step outside of traditional sexual roles without inviting censure. Women who violated these roles were cautionary tales, and at worst, were blamed for their own romantic misfortunes, indicating hints of victim-blaming women who do not conform to traditional gender roles. The Indian women in interethnic relationships in this study were prone to being stared at in public spaces by other Indians when they were with their (usually White) male partners. These stares were interpreted as hostility by these women due to their non-conformity to norms about endogamy, sexuality in public spaces, and female chastity.

I have already argued in this chapter that non-conformity in the Indian community, where it regards violations of marriage discourses, may have damaging consequences for individuals, and this certainly extends to those individuals who breach normative gender and sexual roles as well. At the very least, ambivalent sexist attitudes towards female sexuality can be damaging for young women *and* men. Such attitudes perpetuate victim-blaming (Masser, Lee, & McKimmie, 2010; Viki & Abrams, 2002) and teach young people potentially dangerous ideas about masculinity and femininity. We know that benevolent and hostile sexism are moderately correlated (Sibley & Wilson, 2004); thus, endorsing chivalrous and paternalistic attitudes towards women can so easily be turned into violence and contempt. Domestic violence is already a problem amongst some Indian communities in New Zealand, associated with patriarchal attitudes and male entitlement, and enabled by communities siding with male abusers (Ahmad et al., 2000; Somasekhar, 2016). Perhaps educating young people about ambivalent sexism and empowering them and their communities may contribute in some way to reducing gender inequality and violence in this population.

More broadly, the general idea that sexuality is dangerous is one that needs consideration. Setting clear restraints around sexual activity may act as a protective and moral framework. Such boundaries are important, but not to the extent that it limits individual autonomy and promotes guilt and fear about sex. More importantly, while it is one thing to limit physical affection in outdoor, public spaces, the lack of physical affection between parents, like kissing or hugging in front of one's children, can result in youth not having healthy romantic relationships modelled to them and developing negative understandings of romantic relationships. For example, many participants (especially young women, who were particularly prone to internalising sex negativity) confided their feelings of shame and fear

about sex, which inhibited their sexual development later in life. They said they had learned from their families and communities that sex—particularly premarital sex—was bad. It is unclear from this small sample how widespread this stigmatisation of sex is in Indian society in New Zealand. However, if it is widespread, it is likely negatively affecting young people and it may be helpful in this case for Indian communities to consider whether the denigration of those who violate current sexual norms is useful in any way, and to think about what might be gained by adopting a more sex-positive approach that welcomes and protects young Indian people in the community, rather than shutting them out due to non-conformity. Researchers may find it useful to examine Indian attitudes towards sexuality in New Zealand on a larger scale, in order to measure if this stigmatisation of sex is more widespread, as this sample is too limited to make such judgements.

The findings of this inquiry have raised more questions than they have answered, such as the questions of how widespread changing values around love, marriage, and sexuality really are for Indians in New Zealand, and to what degree researchers can expect Indian culture to transform in New Zealand over the coming decades.

9.2.3 Racism and Post-Racial Discourse

Previous research on interethnic intimacy has thoroughly documented interethnic couples' experiences of explicit instances of racism from those around them (Hibbler & Shinew, 2002; Keyser, 2011; Leslie & Young, 2015). However, subtler forms of racism have been an underdeveloped focus in this field. These types of racism are referred to in the literature as racial microaggressions and an enormous body of research exists on this topic (e.g., Hughey et al., 2017; Sue et al., 2007; G. Wong et al., 2014). This research has attempted to link this corpus of work with the literature on interethnic intimacy, in order to highlight the ways in which the disruption of normative racial endogamy render interethnic relationships more vulnerable to societal censure.

The present study found that Indian adults in interethnic relationships were prone to receiving racial microaggressions. Common amongst these experiences were microinsults (such as being stared at by others in public) and microinvalidations (such as exclusion from dominant images of what a New Zealander should look like). The data supports previous findings (Iwasaki et al., 2016) that show how those in interethnic relationships can be exposed to unwitting forms of racism. Importantly, it does so in the New Zealand context, which is known for being a country that endorses multiculturalism (Ward & Masgoret, 2008) and, anecdotally, where racism is substantially less common than in other countries. Thus, this evidence of racial microaggressions is significant because it demonstrates that racially-charged incidents are not as rare as public belief would have it (e.g., Kobayashi, 2009).

It is this multicultural New Zealand context which may explain the unexpected finding that post-racial discourse was used by interethnic couples in this study to deal with racial microaggressions. As discussed in Chapter Eight, post-racial discourse espouses a vision of an ideal world in which complete racial equality has been achieved and concerns about race have been transcended (Ikuenobe, 2013; Kim, 2013). The present study demonstrated that, to cope with racial microaggressions, some participants drew on post-racial ideas of race as an illegitimate ground of discrimination and the unimportance of race as a societal concern. They further conveyed the idea that racism does not occur often in New Zealand, thereby constructing New Zealand as a safe place for non-White people. The use of post-racial discourse allowed participants to dismiss racist occurrences as one-off events, thus permitting them to rationalise negative emotions arising from these events. However, this simultaneously places participants at a disadvantage because their experiences of racial discrimination are only silenced.

These findings have far-reaching implications that need to be considered. On an individual level, the mere fact that participants articulated post-racial discourse to minimise racial microaggressions indicates that participants do *not* live in a post-racial world. Contrary to popular opinion, racism does not need to be unambiguously hostile to be damaging (Sue et al., 2007). In fact, overt racism may actually be easier for those in interethnic relationships or people of colour to dismiss, because modern Western/Enlightenment discourses of liberty and equality explicitly denounce prejudice. Perpetrators of such discrimination are positioned as being bigoted in these discourses and are usually censured by others around them. Subtle forms of racism, on the other hand, seem harmless on the surface. It is possible in these instances that neither the perpetrator nor the victim realise the potential harms of the microaggression that has occurred, because the negative messages about certain racial/ethnic groups that are contained in microaggressions are implicit. Not only that, but in cases where the victim might attempt to point out the injustice done, the perpetrator can dismiss it or claim that the victim is being oversensitive, particularly because the damage done is not clear (Sue et al., 2007). It is apparent, then, that racism can manifest in different forms. The accumulation of seemingly small but numerous microaggressions over time can be detrimental to victims' mental health, as it teaches them to internalise inferiority and to suffer in silence.

Because post-racial discourse eliminates the possibility of discrimination on racial grounds, it likewise hinders effective public dialogue about experiences of racism. While the individual instances of racism in the present study are not generalisable, it does hint that there may be a greater undercurrent of racism denial in New Zealand. For instance, Kobayashi (2009) explored racial discourses in Christchurch after an anti-racism rally in 2004,

concerning Asian immigrants' experiences of racism and Pakeha reactions to this issue. She argued that public debate indicated a discursive crisis in Christchurch regarding the existence of racism, and noted that discourses of denial, affront, and Whiteness intersected to assert that racism was an historical artefact that no longer had any meaning. This denial of racism allowed White speakers to feel insulted at accusations of racism and permitted them to deflect blame onto racism victims as being oversensitive, intolerant, and ruining what White speakers perceived as positive social interactions. This ultimately resulted in the exclusion and trivialisation of the experiences of people of colour, and masked racist attitudes. In a similar vein, Fozdar (2011) studied Māori-Pakeha interracial friendships in New Zealand, in order to explore contact theory (Allport, 1958). However, Fozdar argued that the historical context of race relations influenced participants' interactions with their friends. As such, they demonstrated anxiety, discomfort, and distrust of interracial interactions. Although claiming to not see colour, Pakeha participants in particular displayed strategies of minimising racial difference and avoiding/suppressing situations where racially contentious issues could arise in their friendships with Māori individuals.

These two studies are only examples, but along with the present study, indicate that, rather than eliminating racism in New Zealand, we may have only suppressed conversations about race and our anxiety about other ethnic groups. There may be a deeper sense of unease about race in New Zealand—not just on a macro-level, but in individual-level interactions as well. These insights raise the need to further explore why race is uncomfortable to talk about in New Zealand. It may be possible to link racism denial to system justification theory, which suggests that people are motivated to preserve the status quo because they believe it is fair and legitimate, even if it is not. This motivation can be due to any number of compelling psychological reasons (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004). Thus, racism denial may occur in New Zealand because (for instance) of an enduring shared belief in the ideas of post-racial discourse: that we are a society that treats everyone fairly regardless of ethnic identification and that everyone has an equal opportunity to liberty, happiness, and prosperity. Acknowledgement of racial microaggressions would undermine this predominant discourse.

This insight may affect multiculturalism debates in New Zealand. Other researchers have argued that, although New Zealanders support cultural diversity in principle, this may not translate to support for diversity in practice (Sibley & Ward, 2013). This is supported by findings that show New Zealanders' advocation of the benefits of diversity and preferences for immigrants to integrate, rather than assimilate or separate. At the same time, however, these findings also show preferences for White immigrants (like from Australia and the United Kingdom) compared to Asian or Pacific immigrants (Ward & Masgoret, 2008). Additionally, New Zealanders are less in favour of promoting equality by attempting to

resolve group-based disadvantages (Sibley & Ward, 2013). The added layer of racism denial may support the assertion that New Zealanders are not as comfortable with multiculturalism in practice as they are in principle.

9.2.4 Culture: Finding Belonging and Acceptance

In Chapter Three, I argued that romantic relationship development may be governed by hegemonic discourses of homogamy, which interethnic couples access to normalise their relationships. In doing so, they can access subject positions that provide a degree of protection from external threats. This assertion was based on previous literature that indicated that interethnic couples are deeply aware of how discourses of racial/ethnic homogamy regulate partner selection in the general population (Killian, 2002). This awareness is likely what influences interethnic couples to demonstrate tendencies reported in other research (e.g., Brummett, 2016; Bystydzienski, 2011; Karis, 2003, 2009; Killian, 2003, 2012; Seshadri & Knudson-Martin, 2013) to minimise their racial differences and to accentuate their structural similarities.

The data of this research supports those previous findings. However, in this research, couples *also* emphasised their differences—to each other and to other romantic couples. Emphasising within-couple differences was generally done in terms of complementarity (i.e., 'we both bring different things to the table, which can be blended to create something new and exciting') or in terms of highlighting their uniqueness compared to other couples (i.e., 'our differences involve personal learning and growth, which would not have been possible if we were both from the same culture'). These actions of both: 1) minimising their differences and highlighting similarities and 2) highlighting their differences, did not seem to be contradictory to participants.

I argue that both types of actions are complementary and serve the same purposes: validation and belonging. Ultimately, these actions are about interethnic couples carving out a place for themselves in a society that remains sceptical of them. Context influences whether these couples minimise or emphasise their differences. When these couples feel threatened by external parties, they tend to point out all the ways in which they are *similar* to each other, in order to fend off outside insinuations that racial difference is too great to overcome. However, when in a position of relative safety, emphasising *complementarity* can be a source of pride, since it helps these couples feel unique. This dual approach, therefore, acts as a way to assert the validity of the couple identity.

This dual approach is perfectly logical given that Indian adults in interethnic relationships may not feel that their needs for acceptance are being fully met by their families. Indeed, even when Indian parents expressed outward acceptance, participants in this study

reported sensing invisible barriers in their parents around their non-Indian partners. It is understandable that Indian adults should want the full support of their families. Therefore, it is natural that these individuals have attempted to create conditions for acceptance themselves.

This may have wider implications for Indian family relationships and how interethnic couples are situated within them. On the one hand, it can be argued that this dual framework is beneficial for interethnic couples in this study, because it helps the partners develop into a strong, self-contained couple unit that can effectively defend against external threats. On the other, this role of the safety net is one that is usually assumed by the couple's families. The Indian partner in particular may feel adrift because of a perceived lack of the protective family support that is usually afforded to Indian co-ethnic couples.

From a parental perspective, it is reasonable that Indian parents should feel hesitant about their child's non-Indian partner, due to fears about cultural loss. The cultural differences may seem too vast to fully accept a non-Indian person into the family and they may worry that their child's choice of partner also represents a rejection of the Indian lifestyle. However, the present research shows that Indians in interethnic relationships in this study actually have the utmost respect for their parents' culture and wish to ensure its continuity. In fact, being in an interethnic relationship increased their cultural awareness, so parental fears of cultural loss may have been unwarranted.

In light of this, it is possible that parents and adult children who are in interethnic relationships may find it useful to consider the importance of open, honest, and two-way communication. Previous work has demonstrated the conventional lack of intergenerational communication about relationships (Bacon, 1996; Kurian, 1986). Opening dialogue on both sides regarding this issue may be a starting point to alleviating interethnic couples' needs to assert the validity of their relationships by helping their families—particularly the Indian partner's family—to appropriately create a protective support system, and it may also help to mitigate parental worries about cultural dilution.

Not only did interethnic couples wield their similarities and differences to justify their relationships to external parties, it should also be understood that each interethnic couple in this study used their similarities and differences to establish belonging *within* their relationships. Despite their alleged cultural differences, participants and their partners sought common ground with each other and invariably found it in tangible markers of culture: in food, clothing, cultural celebrations, religious/spiritual views, and so on. When common ground could not be *found*, they *created* it for themselves. Those same tangible markers of culture were blended together to establish a lifestyle that both partners were comfortable with, but which also contained enough unfamiliarity to allow each partner to grow

(individually and together as a couple). Importantly, this cultural unfamiliarity was usually not viewed as threatening in enduring interethnic relationships; instead, couples perceived it as exciting and interesting.

This research shows that interethnic couples have the opportunity to learn about other ethnic groups in a way not typically afforded to others who do not encounter ethnic groups in such an intimate, proximal setting. The learning that occurs here is not the surface-level manner that most people learn about other cultures in New Zealand, such as through school, public cultural festivals, brief everyday interactions, and, to a somewhat deeper extent, through friendships. Instead, interethnic couples do not *learn* so much as they *internalise* different cultural perspectives, because they encounter these other perspectives daily and intimately.

As a result of this internalisation, it is possible that interethnic couples could represent, at the micro-level, multiculturalism in practice rather than in principle. The participants made efforts to organise their cultural differences in ways that were beneficial and satisfying to both partners, which Seshadri and Knudson-Martin (2013) argue is essential for interethnic relationships to be strong, healthy, and enduring. While it is likely that those in enduring interethnic relationships are those who are already predisposed to possessing open-minded and flexible worldviews, the data of this study indicate that being in an interethnic relationship may hone one's ability to embrace other cultures—and to subsequently have the flexibility to navigate various other ethnic social spaces with ease. Although this is an equally important point for both the Indian participants and the mostly Pakeha partners in this study, this developed cultural competence may be more significant for Pakeha individuals, who are the majority ethnic group in New Zealand, and for whom daily interactions are more likely to occur with other Pakeha. Their previous exposures to minority groups—like Māori, Pacific, Chinese, and Indians—may be limited to distant, collegial, media-facilitated, or stereotypical interactions. This, then, is the real benefit of interethnic romantic relationships: the opportunity to lessen anxiety and fear about ethnic intergroup contact and increase positive interactions through intimate encounters: not just the encounter between the two partners, but more broadly, the encounter between the two families. This may indicate that the most effective method of promoting multiculturalism in New Zealand is through daily, positive, and emotionally close micro-level interactions with other ethnic groups, rather than distant interethnic interactions on the macro-level.

9.2.5 Summary of Discussion Points

Numerous key findings have emerged from this research, which have illuminated some of the underlying dynamics of one of New Zealand's significant and growing immigrant

populations. The findings hint at some changes in the shape of Indian culture in New Zealand, through potential shifts in Indian marriage and sexuality discourses. These changes are underpinned by intergenerational conflict, particularly where they pertain to interethnic romantic relationships and the violations of normative discourses about partner selection that they represent. These conflicts may be occurring in many Indian families across New Zealand, and are thus important for Indian families and communities, researchers, and health practitioners to consider going forward as Indian culture continues to evolve in this country.

9.3 Strengths and Limitations

Some of the methodological limitations of this research have been discussed elsewhere in this thesis (Chapter Four), particularly where they pertain to recruitment difficulties. I described how these challenges resulted in unequal numbers of female and male participants, and also participants over the age of 50. I hypothesised that these difficulties can be attributed to the firm gender and age boundaries of Indian culture and the general lack of communication on subjects like love and sexuality. Additionally, the subject matter of the research itself may have appealed more to women than to men. Potential male participants may avoid discussing particular topics because they are generally viewed as the purview of women; thus, discussing personal relationships may be viewed as a feminine behaviour. Moreover, where it concerned Study 2, the topic of interethnic relationships may have been more meaningful to Indian women in these types of relationships compared to their male counterparts. Indian men simply may not experience the same kinds of difficulties as Indian women do in interethnic relationships, or may not consider such experiences significant. Finally, I also noted that the use of reflexive photography and photo-interviewing in Study 2 may have influenced the gender disparity in recruitment.

Given the importance and unconventionality of the reflexive photography method employed in this inquiry, it is important to evaluate its usefulness. Despite the problems of participant recruitment and the resulting gender disparity, the use of a visual medium to collect data was ultimately valuable and a strength of this research, as it produced a number of advantages over the conventional interview method. Firstly, it seemed to influence how participants disclosed their thoughts and emotions. It seemed to be helpful for many of them to capture their experiences with visual stimuli, because it provided an external, objective focus while discussing intimate thoughts and feelings. The photos also allowed them to think about their experiences prior to their interviews, which prompted deeper reflections and more intimate disclosures throughout the interviews, compared to normal interviews. From post-interview conversations with participants, I also believe that the photography process

was therapeutic and empowering for participants. Based on this experience, I believe there is great worth in using the reflexive photography method. However, I think it is equally important to improve academic understanding of the method itself. For example, it may be worth examining whether the gender differences in response rate/participation was due to the method or the interpersonal topic of the research, in order to assess the method's overall usefulness with different research topics and populations.

Another strength of this research was the achievement of data saturation in Study 1, and for the female participants in Study 2. The small numbers of male participants in Study 2 hindered data saturation. Potential male participants may have been deterred by the on-going commitment required of participation. It is probable that this study would have seen greater male recruitment and retention had they only been required to give up an hour of their time in a conventional interview. However, despite these disadvantages, the use of reflexive photography was beneficial for the richer data that it offered, compared to a conventional interview. The process of taking the photographs seemed to prime participants to reflect deeply about their relationships. When it came time for the interview, they had each spent several weeks dwelling on their photos and guided the interview in directions that were important to them. Not only did this provide richer data, but it also meant that the interviews were more actively authored by the participants. This made the resulting interview transcripts more appropriate from a discourse analysis viewpoint.

Additional limitations should be acknowledged. Participants were recruited entirely in Auckland, the largest city in New Zealand. Therefore, these findings cannot be generalised to other areas of New Zealand, where there are smaller Indian populations. However, because Auckland is home to approximately 70% of New Zealand's Indian population (Statistics New Zealand, 2014), it was not considered necessary to recruit elsewhere. Most of the participants across both studies came from two migration pathways: from India and from Fiji. Only three participants were South African Indian. However, New Zealand census data indicates that most of the Indian population in New Zealand originally came from India and Fiji (Statistics New Zealand, 2014), which is reflected by the samples.

There is also the possibility of sampling bias. Because of the subject matter of Study 1, it is almost certain that the participants who agreed to be interviewed were open to talking about love and sexuality and, more to the point, likely had open-minded and liberal views on these subjects. Indeed, several of the older male participants pointed out that it was unlikely that I would be able to recruit many other men from their generation for this very reason. They also suggested that their perspectives were more open-minded compared to their peers. Likewise, most of the participants in Study 2 reported being in healthy, positive, and loving interethnic relationships. This may not reflect the overall experience of being in an

interethnic relationship; rather, it is likely that those in healthy interethnic relationships were more likely to volunteer for participation compared to those in negative interethnic relationships.

Finally, one of the most important strengths of this research relates to the chosen methodology and cultural perspective. The insights offered by the feminist-poststructuralist lens used in this inquiry, particularly the historical, social, and cultural discursive foundations underlying interethnic intimacy and partner selection, have provided novel ways of understanding these topics, and likely would have not been possible within another methodological framework, such as an objectivist or a phenomenological approach. Likewise, the use of an Indian perspective in this research has also been pivotal. There is a need for cross-cultural lenses to query topics from a non-Western perspective, as Western understandings of culture often lack the cultural knowledge required to appropriately conceptualise certain phenomena. Although the Indian perspective here is not complete— for instance, it only includes explicit Hindu worldviews, and does not fully account for other dominant religious perspectives in the Indian diaspora, like Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, etc.—it provides the beginnings of a cultural scaffolding that may be useful to future researchers aspiring to do further work in this area.

9.4 Recommendations

The findings of this research inquiry and their overall implications have prompted some recommendations for practice and research. These recommendations are summarised in Table 2 and are discussed in the following section.

Table 2

Summary of Recommendations

	Recommendations
For Indian adults in interethnic relationships	Manage cultural differences
	Build strong social support networks
	Communicate with parents
For Indian families	Communicate expectations with children
	Recognise children's identity struggles
	Recognise that desire for autonomy does not represent rejection of culture
For health practitioners	Develop competency with Indian and other migrant cultures
	Train more Indian/South Asian therapists
For researchers	Develop Indian family research
	Research Indian/South Asian engagement with mental health services
	Focus on racial microaggressions and racism denial in New Zealand

9.4.1 For Indian Adults in Interethnic Relationships

Based on the findings of this inquiry, it seems that one of the most beneficial things that Indian adults in interethnic relationships can undertake is the task of managing their cultural differences with their partners in a mutually satisfactory way. Culture seems to be salient for these couples, particularly given that the Indian partners come from a culture with a rich heritage and systematic rules about social relationships. Cultural misunderstandings are likely to occur when this culture encounters another, particularly one like Western culture, which views love and marriage differently. If Indian interethnic couples are to develop healthy, enduring relationships, then it might be necessary for them to establish a way to negotiate their cultural differences. The data of this inquiry suggest that cultural integration could be the most effective way of doing so, where partners collaborate to create a third lifestyle that blends the best of both cultures while discarding undesirable aspects. However, other research suggests that cultural assimilation may be just as useful, because there remains room for accommodation when it is necessary. The method itself does not matter, provided that each partner is satisfied with the negotiation of cultural differences (Seshadri & Knudson-Martin, 2013).

Indian adults in interethnic relationships may also benefit from building strong social support networks. The data of this research show that Indians in interethnic relationships in this study sometimes encountered opposition of varying degrees from their families and communities. This opposition ranged from mild (e.g., parents endorsed explicit acceptance of the relationship but displayed reticence about mingling with the partner) to extreme (e.g.,

being ostracised). Any form of resistance to the interethnic relationship may result in Indian partners feeling socially isolated. It is, therefore, important to develop a strong social network that includes sympathetic family members, as well as supportive friends outside of the family. Understanding friends, in particular, may help alleviate some of the pressures felt due to being in an interethnic relationship. The partner's family—usually Pakeha families in this study—may also be a strong source of support for the couple. These social relationships are important because they provide interethnic couples with comfort, safety, and acceptance, which they may lack elsewhere.

It seems that acceptance takes time. Some families may be opposed to the relationship at first, but the data suggests that this attitude can soften over time. To facilitate acceptance, some Indian adults in interethnic relationships may find it helpful to communicate with their parents about their relationships. Traditionally, there has been a lack of communication about love and sexuality in Indian culture (Bacon, 1996). A lack of communication may hinder parents' full acceptance, as they may not initially understand the motives of the relationship. Therefore, opening up communication may help to lessen parental fears while also allowing each party to understand the other's perspective. It must be noted that this approach may not be helpful for all Indian adults in interethnic relationships, as their families may be vehemently against the relationship and may refuse to engage in any kind of constructive dialogue. In this case, if there is nothing that can be done, Indian adults in these situations may find it comforting to rely on other sources of social support, like their friends or culturally-sensitive and informed therapists (as discussed below).

9.4.2 For Indian Families

One of the most important recommendations to be offered by this research is for Indian parents in New Zealand. The findings of this inquiry have suggested that there could be a lack of communication between Indian parents and their children about love, marriage, and sexuality, which may affect children's later approach to romantic relationships and their subsequent parental relationships. It is probable that silence on these topics is no longer an effective stance to take. Although it may be deeply uncomfortable for Indian parents who have grown up in a culture that imposes prohibitions in openly talking about these topics, it could be helpful for them to engage in honest, two-way dialogue with their children from a young age about marriage, love, sexuality, and relationship expectations. Silence on these issues can be psychologically harmful, particularly when children feel like they must hide their romantic involvements from their parents because they perceive a lack of support and understanding (Jethwani, 2001). It could also be helpful for children to understand their parents' expectations and to gain a better understanding of these important issues. Thus—

although it might seem obvious—it is important for Indian parents to openly communicate with their adolescent and adult children.

The data of this inquiry and existing evidence have shown that second-generation Indian immigrants grapple with issues of identity and culture in ways that are usually not recognised by their first-generation parents. It is completely understandable that first-generation parents have fears about cultural loss, particularly in a nation with values seemingly opposed to their own. However, it could be helpful for parents to become more sensitive to the struggle that their children are grappling with. Second-generation Indian individuals typically interact with New Zealand culture on a daily basis from a young age—in school, then at university and the workplace—and first-generation parents may need to come to terms with the fact that their children cannot maintain complete cultural separation from New Zealand lifestyles. It is important for them to integrate if they are to have the most positive psychological wellbeing (Berry & Hou, 2017; Berry & Sabatier, 2010). These second-generation children are highly likely to internalise New Zealand values, to varying extents, and this is an inevitable consequence of choosing to raise your children in New Zealand.

This may mean that children will disobey parents from time to time, particularly as they get older and desire more autonomy and independence than is usual in Indian culture. In fact, this disobedience is an important part in developmental progression for all children/adolescents, as they learn to become autonomous, individual adults (Erikson, 1950, 1968, as cited in Robinson, Demetre, & Litman, 2017). It is possible that this disobedience is delayed in some Indian families due to the respect instilled in youth for their elders. The hierarchical nature of the Indian family and the primacy of the collective unit over the individual mean that children's disobedience is not viewed as mere youthful contrariness or an important part of development, but as disrespect/rejection for the family and culture as a whole. The repercussions of disobedience, then, are often more severe and may seem blown out of proportion to the Western eye. Thus, it is important for Indian parents to recognise that their children's desire for autonomy and the ability to choose one's own partner does not represent a rejection of Indian culture. Neither does it represent ingratitude to one's parents, nor does it mean that they no longer need their parents. It is more likely to be about wanting to develop autonomy and a healthy sense of self-differentiation from the larger family unit.

9.4.3 For Health Practitioners

In New Zealand, there exists an incomplete understanding of Indian culture, worldviews, and values. However, as this population grows, it is increasingly important for health practitioners of all backgrounds to be able to communicate appropriately with Indian

families and to deliver culturally sensitive interventions. This inquiry has shed light on some of the underlying dynamics of Indian families in New Zealand, using an Hindu-Indian perspective. Although this perspective is not complete, it does offer a starting point in understanding some of the most important aspects of Indian families—like their hierarchical structure, their gender and age boundaries, their approaches to the developmental lifespan, and so on—many of which may seem puzzling from a Western viewpoint. Health practitioners may use some of the insights offered by this research to develop their cultural competence, and may apply their newfound understanding in engaging with Indian and other non-Western immigrant clients. It should be understood that not all Indian families will be the same due to several factors, like acculturation, religion/spirituality, language, beliefs, etc. Thus, the information discussed in this thesis cannot be consistently applied to all families. Practitioners could use this information merely as a starting point, and use their judgement and further research (which this thesis will hopefully prompt) to deepen their competence in working with Indian clients.

The training of more Indian/South Asian therapists could be very helpful to Indian people, who may be more likely to respond to another Indian therapist compared to a non-Indian therapist, because the former is viewed as part of the in-group. For instance, Ahmad et al. (2000), in their article on child safety in Indian families, suggest that Indian families may be more likely to respond to an Indian social worker, because the assumed shared cultural understanding may prompt Indian families to present their family situations in normalised terms. On the other hand, an Indian family may attempt to minimise or deny problems when dealing with a non-Indian social worker. That is not to say that non-Indian therapists should not work with Indian clients. However, it is important for non-Indian therapists to consult those with a well-developed understanding of Indian culture, as it differs considerably from Western culture (Ahmad et al., 2000; Wali, 2001). These consultants will likely be Indian individuals themselves, as those who have been raised in Indian culture throughout their lives are much more likely to have a deeper understanding of these worldviews. Additionally, psychological intervention is a reasonably new concept for Indian people, as Indians usually rely on spiritual or religious healers for psychological help (Wali, 2001). An Indian therapist with this cultural understanding may be better able to provide therapy in a manner that incorporates these spiritual needs. As the Indian population in New Zealand increases, it seems important that more Indian therapists are trained to not only assess Indian clients and deliver culturally appropriate interventions, but also to collaborate with non-Indian therapists so that they can develop skills to work with this population.

9.4.4 For Researchers

Over the course of this inquiry, there were several topics that were explored tangentially, which would be worth giving direct scholarly attention to in the future. Firstly, this research shed some light on the underlying dynamics of Indian families. The data indicated the persistence of some gender and age boundaries in families, and hinted that there were precise ways for communication. It would be useful to explore Indian family dynamics in New Zealand with a central focus, which would improve scholarly understanding of a population that is projected to increase considerably over the coming decades (Tan, 2015). An improved understanding of Indian families could then inform assessments and interventions.

It is also important to deepen academic understanding of Indian attitudes towards love, marriage, and sexuality in New Zealand, given that my focus was small-scale and thus unable to be generalised. Particular topics of interest could include: repression of sex around the family; possible conflicts arising from prioritising the couple bond over family obligations; the impact of divorce; promoting marital quality in Indian couples; gender role ideology; the experiences of LGBTQ individuals in the Indian community, and so on. As a suggestion, a large-scale quantitative survey examining Indian attitudes towards love, sexuality, marriage, and partner selection that also measures acculturation could be a useful way to assess how widespread the degree of change hinted at in this study is in New Zealand.

Many of the findings from this study could also be worth exploring beyond the Indian context. For instance, findings concerning marriage and sexuality discourses, like the erotic-ascetic discursive dichotomy and the hegemony of monogamy discourses could be worth investigating in the general New Zealand population. This would be particularly interesting because the Indian participants in this study claimed there were fewer restrictions in sexual behaviours and partner selection in New Zealand spaces, so it would be interesting to assess if sexuality and marriage discourses are truly as liberal in New Zealand as perceived.

Additionally, participants also suggested that Indian/South Asian communities tend to have lower engagement with mental health services compared to other ethnic groups. Indeed, there is some recent data suggesting that Asians in New Zealand generally use mental health services less compared to Pakeha, Māori, and Pacific peoples (C. S. Chow & Mulder, 2017). Stigma about seeking help for mental illness persists and Asians are more likely to seek help from family members or religious/spiritual advisors. This tells us that mental health services are not viewed as effective, viable, or safe by this group of people. For instance, Asian mental health issues tend to be under-diagnosed, as doctors are often not able to identify issues because of cultural and language barriers (C. Lee, Duck, & Sibley, 2017). Given the growing proportion of Indian/South Asians in New Zealand and their low engagement

with mental health services (despite issues of intergenerational conflict, domestic violence, and acculturative stress), it is necessary to study Indian/South Asian engagement with mental health services in this country. Such research needs to focus on how we can improve the effectiveness of therapeutic work with South Asians by shaping interventions to be culturally appropriate for them.

Finally, it seems that racism and racial microaggressions continue to be a common experience not only for Indian adults in interethnic relationships, but also for people of colour more generally. Given New Zealand's commitment to promoting tolerance and warm race relations, it seems like this discrepancy between policy and the everyday reality for people of colour is worth researching. Although there are various race relation initiatives launched by the New Zealand Human Rights Commission (Human Rights Commission, 2008-2018), it may be worth undertaking research evaluating the efficacy of such campaigns and assessing racism denial in New Zealand. It would also be useful to conduct qualitative research into the experiences of racism/racial microaggressions experienced by people of colour in this country, so that researchers can better understand the concerns of this population and how best to solve these issues.

9.5 Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to address the problematisation of interethnic intimacy in Indian society in New Zealand. In doing so, it has also been necessary to explore the problematisation of intimacy itself in Indian culture, given that it has traditionally been a challenging topic in Indian families. Previous knowledge on these topics has been useful because it has empirically uncovered the existence of barriers in Indian interethnic relationships. However, the present inquiry has attempted to develop this understanding by exploring the historical, social, and cultural discourses in which Indian interethnic relationships are situated. The Indian perspective deployed here was critical, as a Western perspective likely would not have had the same capacity to unearth the insights that emerged in this study of the experiences of and challenges faced by Indian adults in interethnic relationships in New Zealand.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Study 1 Recruitment Flyer

Are you Indian?

Are you 21-65 years old?

Do you have some time to talk about Indian attitudes towards love and romantic relationships?

Indian Romantic Relationship Attitudes Study

**For more information, please contact:
xfs8074@autuni.ac.nz**

Appendix B: Study 1 Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

AUT
TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TĀMAKI MAKAU RAU

Date Information Sheet Produced:

9 March 2016

Project Title

Attitudes towards love, dating, and (intercultural) intimacy of Indian communities in New Zealand: A focus group approach

An Invitation

Hello, my name is Ashleigh Prakash. I would like to invite you to participate in my research, which will examine the attitudes and perspectives towards love, dating, and intercultural relationships that Indian families and communities have in New Zealand. Your participation is completely voluntary, and should you feel uncomfortable, you may withdraw at any time. I would appreciate your participation, as the completion of my research will contribute to me gaining my qualification, the Doctor of Philosophy (Psychology).

What is the purpose of this research?

The main purpose of this study is to explore how Indian families and individuals in New Zealand think and feel about 'Western' values of love, dating, and marriage. Specifically, I will be asking questions about the attitudes and perceptions that Indians in New Zealand have about Indian people in intercultural relationships (i.e., Indian adults either married to or dating non-Indian adults). I aim to gain in-depth knowledge on this subject, as little research has been done in this area. I anticipate publishing the findings via a number of academic outputs, such as in academic journals, in conference papers, etc. I would also like to share my findings with the Indian community, in the hopes that it will be of some use in informing therapeutic interventions with Indian families and individuals. Finally, this study will also count towards me gaining a Doctor of Philosophy (Psychology).

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

Recruitment has been done via word-of-mouth, flyers, social media, and advertisement by Indian community organisations in Auckland, New Zealand. It is likely that you have seen or heard an advertisement telling you about this research, or that someone you know has told you about this study, and invited you to contact me.

What will happen in this research?

You will be invited to take part in a focus group discussion, where either I (Ashleigh) or a facilitator will be present, as will around 3 other Indian adults around your own age and gender. Here, you will be asked to discuss and share your thoughts on the attitudes and perspectives of Indian families in New Zealand, regarding love, dating, marriage, and intimacy. The idea is to discuss your thoughts with the other participants, sharing your experiences and knowledge with the group. Either I (Ashleigh) or a facilitator will be present to guide your discussion with some focus questions, and to ensure everyone has an opportunity to speak.

When setting up the focus group discussion, we will choose a time and a location that suits the availability of all participants. It is expected that the focus group discussion will be about 1-2 hours long. It can take place in the secure and confidential rooms at Auckland University of Technology, Akoranga Campus. Alternatively, we can choose another venue that suits all participants. The focus group discussion will be digitally audio-recorded and later transcribed and analysed for the final report.

What are the discomforts and risks?

There are no physical discomforts and risks associated with this study. However, it is always possible that you might experience some emotional discomfort. Sharing your opinions on particular topics may be uncomfortable for you. This may be especially true for the topics in this focus group discussion, like love, dating, and intimacy, which can be hard to talk about in Indian culture. You will be reminded in the interview that you don't have to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable, and you can always withdraw from the study at any time. Given that other Indian adults will also be present, issues of confidentiality and privacy are also important to think about.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

In order to ensure the confidentiality and privacy of all participants, it is important to understand that the identity of your fellow participants is confidential, and should not be shared outside of the group. Likewise, our discussions in the focus group are also confidential.

During the focus group, you don't have to answer any questions that cause you severe discomfort. If you become too distressed, we can pause the focus group session and give you time to recover. Alternatively, if you wish to leave the focus group, you may do so. If you feel distressed due to issues that came up in the focus group, you can access a maximum of three free counselling sessions at AUT Health, Counselling and Wellbeing. To make an appointment, you can call your nearest centre and let the receptionist know that you are a research participant, and provide my contact details.

AUT Health and Wellbeing Centre City Campus:

WB219, level 2 in the Te Ara Poutama Building, 55 Wellesley Street East, Auckland

Phone: +64 9 921 9992

AUT Health and Wellbeing Centre Akoranga Campus:

AS104, level 1 by the café, 90 Akoranga Drive, Northcote, Auckland

Phone: +64 9 921 9998

What are the benefits?

By participating in this research, you will have the opportunity to share your knowledge and experiences about how Indians in New Zealand think and feel about (intercultural) intimacy, dating, and marriage, and how this might affect the wellbeing and personal relationships of Indian individuals and families. Very little is known about this topic, so you will have the ability to contribute to the knowledge base, and offer insights that will help Indian families, the community, therapists, and researchers. This research will also help me (Ashleigh) to successfully gain the qualification of Doctor of Philosophy (Psychology).

How will my privacy be protected?

Your privacy and confidentiality will be maintained throughout the entire research process. You will be reminded of this at the beginning of the focus group, so that you are aware of this and can remain comfortable. No identifying information will be reported in the write-up of the study, and self-selected pseudonyms will be used on all transcriptions, reports, and publications. Only the researcher (Ashleigh) and the project supervisors will have access to all the data. All data (recordings and transcripts) will be securely stored and protected. It is important to remember that other participants will be present during the focus group discussion. As such, the identities of all participants, and our discussions, must remain confidential, and must not be shared outside of the focus group.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

There are no costs of participating in this research, other than your time. The focus group discussion will be approximately 1-2 hours long. Travelling times to the venue of the focus group may vary.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

You have two weeks to consider and respond after receiving this Information Sheet. If you want to find out more information, you can contact either me or my supervisors (contact details below).

How do I agree to participate in this research?

Attached to this form is a Consent Form. If you decide to participate, please sign it and return it to me. Please retain a copy for your own records.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Yes. At your request, I will send you a summary of the research findings.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, *Rhoda Scherman, rhoda.scherman@aut.ac.nz, (09) 921 9999 extn. 7228*.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, Kate O'Connor, *ethics@aut.ac.nz* , 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Researcher Contact Details:

Ashleigh Prakash, xfs8074@autuni.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Rhoda Scherman, rhoda.scherman@aut.ac.nz, (09) 921 9999, extn. 7228

Janis Paterson, janis.paterson@aut.ac.nz, (09) 921 9999, extn. 7324

Appendix C: Study 1 Consent Form

Consent Form

AUT
TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TĀMAKI MAKAU RAU

Project title:	**Attitudes towards love, dating, and (intercultural) intimacy of Indian communities in New Zealand: A focus group approach**
Project Supervisor:	**Dr. Rhoda Scherman, Professor Janis Paterson**
Researcher:	**Ashleigh Prakash**

○ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 9 March 2016.

○ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.

○ I understand that the identity of my fellow participants and our discussions in the focus group are confidential to the group and I agree to keep this information confidential.

○ I understand that notes will be taken during the focus group and that it will also be audio-recorded and transcribed.

○ I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.

○ If I withdraw, I understand that while it may not be possible to destroy all records of the focus group discussion of which I was part, the relevant information about myself including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will not be used.

○ I agree to take part in this research.

○ I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one): Yes○ No○

Participant's signature: ....

Participant's name: ....

Participant's Contact Details:

....

....

....

....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 16/03/2016, AUTEC Reference number 16-53.

2 July 2015   page 1 of 1   This version was last edited in July 2015

Appendix D: Study 1 Interview/Focus Group Schedule

1. How do you think Indian people of your age and gender in NZ approach and experience subjects like love, choosing a spouse, and marriage?
   a. You can use examples of your own experiences, or those of people you know
   b. This can include thinking about things like age, family, culture, society, etc.

2. What do you think Indian people of your age and gender in NZ think about NZ/Western values of love, like dating before marriage and love marriages? Do you think these values are similar and/or different to Indian values of love?

3. How do you think other Indian adults would react to an interracial couple where one partner is Indian?
   a. Do you think gender would make a difference in how Indian people would react to this couple?

4. What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses for Indian adults who choose to marry or date interracially?

5. Based on your experience, what advice would you give to Indian people who are dating or have married someone who's not Indian?

6. Based on your experience, what advice would you give to Indian families, where a son or daughter has chosen a non-Indian partner?

Appendix E: Study 2 Recruitment Flyer

Appendix F: Study 2 Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced:

8 March 2016

Project Title

The Experiences of Indian Adults in Heterosexual Intercultural Relationships in New Zealand

An Invitation

Hello, my name is Ashleigh Prakash. I would like to invite you to participate in my research, which will examine the experiences of Indian adults who are in romantic long-term relationships with non-Indian adults. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and should you feel uncomfortable, you may withdraw at any time. I would appreciate your participation, as the completion of my research will contribute to gaining my qualification, the Doctor of Philosophy (Psychology).

What is the purpose of this research?

The main purpose of this research is to explore the ways that Indian adults in intercultural relationships talk about their experiences of being in this relationship, and how it has affected other areas of their lives, such as their wellbeing and relationships with other people. I aim to gain in-depth knowledge on this subject, as little research has been done in this area. I anticipate publishing the findings of this research via a number of academic outputs, such as in an academic journal, in conference papers, etc. This study will also count towards gaining a Doctor of Philosophy (Psychology).

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

Recruitment has been done via word-of-mouth, flyers, social media and networking, and Indian media in New Zealand, such as newspapers and radio stations. It is likely that you have seen or heard a flyer or advertisement telling you about this research, or that someone you know has told you about this study, and invited you to contact me.

What will happen in this research?

You will be provided with a camera (or will use your own camera-phone, if you have one) for the purpose of taking photos that describe or represent your experiences of being an Indian adult in an intercultural relationship. If you consent to take part, I will give you two copies of a Consent Form to fill out and sign (one for your own records, and one to return to me). I will then set up a meeting with you where we can sit down and discuss how to go about taking photos, and where you can address any questions or issues you have, as well provide you with a camera and a notebook. You will then have one month to take as many photos as you like, writing a caption and small description of each photo. Your description can include your thoughts and feelings at the time of taking the photo. After this, we will set up an interview (about 1-2 hours long), where you will bring your photos and the camera along. Here, you will be invited to discuss your photographs and to share your experiences of being an Indian adult in an intercultural relationship. Interviews will be digitally audio-recorded and later transcribed and analysed for the final report. Interviews can take place in the secure and confidential rooms at Auckland University of Technology, Akoranga Campus. Alternatively, your interview can be conducted in your own home, or in a private and quiet location of your own choosing, if this is more convenient and comfortable.

What will be done with the data?

After interviews have been transcribed, each participant will receive a copy of their transcript to check. In the findings section of the final report, quotes will be used from interview transcripts, as well as some of the photos that participants have provided. Apart from the thesis, the data is intended to be used in academic outputs, such as academic journal articles and conference papers. With participants' permission, the photos will also be publicly exhibited and/or published in book format.

What are the discomforts and risks?

There are no physical discomforts and risks associated with this study. However, it is always possible that you might experience some emotional discomfort. The process of taking photos of your experiences, and then discussing them with me in an interview, may be uncomfortable for you, which is always a possibility when talking about personal experiences. You will be reminded in the interview that you don't have to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable, and you can always withdraw from the study at any time. I hope to publish and exhibit the photographs that you take, and so there is also the issue of confidentiality and privacy to consider.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

We will establish a clear photographic protocol to prevent issues of confidentiality and privacy from arising. One of the key things to understand is that confidentiality may be limited in this study. If you choose to take a photo of yourself, or of other people, I can't protect your confidentiality. I would encourage you to take photos of objects and places to represent your experiences. However, if you wish to take a photo of yourself, or of other people (this does not apply to photos taken in a public space), then you should take the photos in such a way that no one is identifiable. If this is not possible, then you need to get written consent from the people you want to take photos of, which must state that they understand that these photos can't be confidential and will likely be published. It is important that you understand that any photos you take of yourself in which you can be identified, will also breach your confidentiality.

I will also ask you if you wish to be identified in the final report and in any other academic publications resulting from this study. Your choice in this is voluntary, and will not disadvantage you in this study in any way. However, it is important to understand that if you do not want to be identified, it may be possible to identify you through your photographic material and any other information you provide in the interview. This is because the number of Indian adults in intercultural relationships in New Zealand is fairly small, so it is possible that someone may be able to identify you. If you don't want to be identified, we will work together to change or remove your identifying information from the final report, and to negotiate which of your photos can be used for publication.

During your interview, you can pause or stop the interview at any time, and you don't have to answer any questions that cause you severe discomfort. If you become too distressed, I will stop the interview and give you time to recover. Alternatively if you wish to stop the interview, you may do so. If you feel distressed due to issues that came up in our interview, you can access a maximum of three free counselling sessions at AUT Health, Counselling and Wellbeing. To make an appointment, you can call your nearest centre and let the receptionist know that you are a research participant, and provide my contact details.

AUT Health and Wellbeing Centre City Campus:

WB219, level 2 in the Te Ara Poutama Building, 55 Wellesley Street East, Auckland

Phone: +64 9 921 9992

AUT Health and Wellbeing Centre Akoranga Campus:

AS104, level 1 by the café, 90 Akoranga Drive, Northcote, Auckland

Phone: +64 9 921 9998

What are the benefits?

By participating in this research, you have the opportunity to share your knowledge and experiences about being in an intercultural relationship, and how this can affect your relationships with other people, your wellbeing, and other areas of your life. You will have the ability to contribute to the knowledge base, and offer insights that will help clinicians, researchers, and the wider community to understand the unique concerns that Indian adults in intercultural relationships have, especially since very little research has been done on this topic. This research will also help me (Ashleigh) to successfully gain the qualification of Doctor of Philosophy (Psychology).

How will my privacy be protected?

Your privacy and confidentiality will be maintained as much as possible throughout the entire research process. You will be reminded of this at the beginning of the interview, so that you are aware of this and can remain comfortable. No identifying information will be reported in the write-up of the study (unless you have chosen to be identified), and self-selected pseudonyms will be used on all transcriptions, reports, and publications. Only the researcher (Ashleigh) and the project supervisors will have access to all the data. All data (photographs and interview transcripts) will be securely stored and protected. Your photographic material has a risk of breaching your privacy, as well as of other people who you take photos of. It is important that you understand that taking identifiable photos of yourself and/or of other people requires an understanding that confidentiality can't be maintained in this instance, and that written consent of those in photographs is needed.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

There are no costs of participating in this research, other than your time. The initial meeting between you and me will be no longer than an hour. You will then have one month to take photographs. After this, interviews will be 1-2 hours long.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

You have two weeks to consider and respond after receiving this information sheet. If you want to find out more information, you can contact either me or my project supervisors (contact details below).

How do I agree to participate in this research?

Attached to this form is a Consent and Release Form, which you can look over. During our initial meeting, we will address any queries that you have regarding this study, and the how-to of taking photographs that represent your experiences. If you decide to participate, you can then complete and sign your Consent Form and return it to me.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Yes. At your request, I will send you a summary of the research findings.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Rhoda Scherman, *rhoda.scherman@aut.ac.nz, (09) 921 9999, extn. 7228.*

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, Kate O'Connor, *ethics@aut.ac.nz* , 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Researcher Contact Details:

Ashleigh Prakash, xfs8074@autuni.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Rhoda Scherman, rhoda.scherman@aut.ac.nz, (09) 921 9999, extn. 7228

Janis Paterson, janis.paterson@aut.ac.nz, (09) 921 9999, extn. 7324

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 16/03/2016, AUTEC Reference number 16-54.

Appendix G: Study 2 Consent and Release Form

Consent and Release Form

AUT
TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TĀMAKI MAKAU RAU

Project title: **The Experiences of Indian Adults in Heterosexual Intercultural Relationships in New Zealand**

Project Supervisors: **Dr. Rhoda Scherman; Professor Janis Paterson**

Researcher: **Ashleigh Prakash**

○ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 8 March 2016.

○ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.

○ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that interviews will also be audio-taped and transcribed.

○ I understand that I may withdraw myself, my image, or any other information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.

○ If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information, including tapes, transcripts, photographs, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.

○ I permit the researcher to use the photographs that are part of this project and any other reproductions or adaptations from them, either complete or in part, alone or in conjunction with any wording solely and exclusively for educational exhibition and examination purposes.

○ I understand that the researcher and I co-own the copyright to the photographs that I produce in this research, and that these photographs will be used for general academic purposes only and will not be published in any form outside of this project without my written permission.

○ (Optional) I agree to be identified in the final report.

○ If I have not agreed to be identified in the final report, I understand that it may be possible to identify me through the publication of the photographic material and interview transcripts that I have provided for this research project.

○ I agree to take part in this research.

○ I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one): Yes ○ No ○

Participant's signature: ....

Participant's name: ....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

....

....

....

....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 16/03/2016, AUTEC Reference number 16-54.

2 July 2015   page 1 of 1   This version was last edited in July 2015

Appendix H: Study 2 Photographic Protocol

- Consent Forms signed and returned

- Initial meeting (30 minutes to 1 hour long) with each participant about how to take photos. They can take as many as they like. Photos can reflect problems, issues, and strengths of the relationship, and areas of their lives affected by the relationship. Photos will be used in the interview as prompts/stimuli

- Participants are encouraged to take photos of objects, places, and event. If they want to take photos of themselves or of other people, they either need to get written consent or take the photos in such a way that ensures that no one is identifiable. It may still be possible to identify people in photos due to background details. Participants will be asked if they wish to be identified, or if they wish for pixellation of faces in their photos. Will be asked again at the photo-interview. If non-participating individuals are present in photos, and no written consent has been obtained from them, their facial features will be pixellated in the photos.

- Participants will be asked not to take photos of any illegal activities

- Participants will be asked to try take photos by themselves first. If they are really stuck, the researcher will provide 1-2 examples of her own.

- Ethical issues to discuss:
  - o Confidentiality and privacy (see above)
  - o Intellectual Property: participants and researcher will co-own copyright of the photos. Photos will only be published for academic purposes and only with explicit permission of participants.
  - o Identification: participants will be asked at the interview if they wish to be identified in the final report or future publications.

- Photo-taking session: participants have one month to take their photos using their own smartphones. If they have questions/concerns, they can contact the researcher. Towards the end of that one month, the researcher will schedule a date, time, and location for the interview

- Photo-interview: participants bring their photos and discuss them with the researcher. The researcher will have a list of questions that they can use to address areas that the participant hasn't attended to or that they can incorporate into what the participant has already said, in order to gain more insight. Interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed

Appendix I: Study 2 Interview Schedule

Schedule of Potential Interview Questions

This document includes potential questions that will be asked in the semi-structured interviews with participants. Please note that questions are subject to change during subsequent interviews, as more information is gathered throughout the interview process. Possible questions that could be asked of participants include:

General
- Opening questions about the participants' interracial relationship (e.g. how did the two of you meet? How long have you been together?).
- Tell me a bit about this photo. What were you thinking/feeling when you took it? What does it mean to you?

Culture
- What has it been like, being in an interracial relationship? What are some of the positive and some of the negative things about it? How has it affected your personal wellbeing?
- How have beliefs and messages from Indian culture affected your relationship? What are some things you have done to overcome any difficulties caused by these beliefs/messages?
- How have beliefs and messages from your partner's culture affected your relationship? What are some things you have done to overcome any difficulties caused by these beliefs/messages?

Gender
- Has your experience of being in an interracial relationship been affected by your gender, or vice versa?
- How would you define the masculine and feminine gender roles in your relationship? What are your expectations about what your partner should do in his/her role?

Relationships with Others
- How has your romantic relationship affected your relationships with your family? What role does your family/extended family play in your relationship?
- How did your family react to your decision to be in this romantic relationship?
- How has your romantic relationship affected your relationships with friends and others in your life (e.g., classmates, colleagues, acquaintances, etc.)?

Identities
- What role, if any, does religion and spirituality play in your relationship? How do you and your partner negotiate any conflicts that arise from differences in religion/spirituality?
- How has being in an interracial relationship affected your self-image/identity (this can be personal and/or cultural)?

Children (If the couple has them)
- How do you think your children have been affected, growing up in an Indian interracial family?
- If you were asked to give some advice to another Indian interracial couple on how best to empower their children to handle negative reactions from other people, what would you tell them?

Educating Others
- If you were given the opportunity to educate the Indian community about being in an interracial relationship, what would you tell them?

Appendix J: Ethical Approval

AUTEC Secretariat

Auckland University of Technology
D-88, WU406 Level 4 WU Building City Campus
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

16 March 2016

Rhoda Scherman
Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences

Dear Rhoda

Re Ethics Application: **16/53 Attitudes towards love, dating, and (intercultural) intimacy of Indian communities in New Zealand: A focus group approach.**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 15 March 2019.

As part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTEC:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 15 March 2019;

- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 15 March 2019 or on completion of the project.

It is a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTEC approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to obtain this.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, please use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at ethics@aut.ac.nz.

All the very best with your research,

Kate O'Connor
Executive Secretary
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Ashleigh Prakash a.s.prakash13@gmail.com, Janis Paterson

AUTEC Secretariat

Auckland University of Technology
D-88, WU406 Level 4 WU Building City Campus
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

16 March 2016

Rhoda Scherman
Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences

Dear Rhoda

Re Ethics Application: **16/54 The experiences of Indian adults in heterosexual intercultural relationships in New Zealand.**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 15 March 2019.

As part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTEC:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 15 March 2019;

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It is a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTEC approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to obtain this.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, please use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at ethics@aut.ac.nz.

All the very best with your research,

Kate O'Connor
Executive Secretary
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Ashleigh Prakash a.s.prakash13@gmail.com, Janis Pateron

Appendix K: AUT Counselling Endorsement

Appendix H: Counselling Endorsement

AUT

Memorandum

To	Ashleigh Prakash
From	Paul Wedge
cc	
Subject	AUT Counselling services for research participants
Date	16 February 2016

Dear Ashleigh

As the Head of Counselling of AUT Health Counselling and Wellbeing, I would like to confirm that our counselling service is able to offer confidential counselling support for the participants in your AUT research project entitled:

"Attitudes towards love, dating, and (intercultural) intimacy of Indian communities in New Zealand: A focus group approach"

The free counselling, for participants who require it, will be provided by our professional counsellors for a maximum of three sessions and must be in relation to issues arising from their participation in your research project.

Please inform your participants:

- They will need to drop into our centres at WB219 or AS104 or phone 921 9992 City Campus or 921 9998 North Shore campus to make an appointment
- They will need to let the receptionist know that they are a research participant
- They will need to provide your contact details to confirm this
- They can find out more information about our counsellors and counselling on our website http://www.aut.ac.nz/students/student_services/health_counselling_and_wellbeing

Current AUT students also have access to our counsellors and online counselling as part of our normal service delivery.

Yours sincerely

Paul Wedge
Head of Counselling

From the office of: Paul Wedge, Head of Counselling,
AUT Health, Counselling and Wellbeing
e: paul.wedge@aut.ac.nz | p: 09 921 9999 xtn 6045

AUT

Memorandum

To	Ashleigh Prakash
From	Paul Wedge
cc	
Subject	AUT Counselling services for research participants
Date	27 October 2015

Dear Ashleigh

As the Head of Counselling of AUT Health Counselling and Wellbeing, I would like to confirm that our counselling service is able to offer confidential counselling support for the participants in your AUT research project entitled:

"Indian Adults in Intercultural Relationships in New Zealand: A Foucauldian Discourse Analysis"

The free counselling, for participants who require it, will be provided by our professional counsellors for a maximum of three sessions and must be in relation to issues arising from their participation in your research project.

Please inform your participants:
- They will need to drop into our centres at WB219 or AS104 or phone 921 9992 City Campus or 921 9998 North Shore campus to make an appointment
- They will need to let the receptionist know that they are a research participant
- They will need to provide your contact details to confirm this
- They can find out more information about our counsellors and counselling on our website http://www.aut.ac.nz/students/student_services/health_counselling_and_wellbeing

Current AUT students also have access to our counsellors and online counselling as part of our normal service delivery.

Yours sincerely

Paul Wedge
Head of Counselling

From the office of: Paul Wedge, Head of Counselling,
AUT Health, Counselling and Wellbeing
e: paul.wedge@aut.ac.nz | p: 09 921 9999 xtn 6045