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Interracial Intimate Relationships in Post-Apartheid South Africa

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (Community-Based Counselling)

University of the Witwatersrand, 2007.

ABSTRACT

Although both the Immorality Act and the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act were repealed in 1985, for the most part, interracial intimate relationships continue to be fraught with controversy. It was hypothesised that discourses on interracial intimate relationships in post-apartheid South Africa would intersect with racist and/or antiracist discourses. This study sought to identify and explore discourses on these relationships, and to investigate the possible intersections with discourses on racism. Thompson's method of depth hermeneutics (of which critical discourse analysis was a component) was employed to analyse data generated by two focus group discussions and two interviews with interracial couples. The study yielded a wealth of data. This research report presents significant findings in terms of how discourses on interracial intimate relationships in post-apartheid South Africa intersect with discourses on race and racism. The three main discursive themes were on race, whiteness, and interracial intimate relationships, with the latter theme dominating. Of particular significance was how discursive strategies were employed in order to deny, negate and justify racism. The most striking findings relate to how discourses on interracial relationships intersect with discourses on three main themes: i) experimentation, as depicted by discourses on developmental psychology, ii) geographical locations, socio-economic status, and class, as manifested in the discourse of "It depends on where you go", and iii) the ideological construction of the family, which functions to maintain a racially stratified society that maintains the status quo.

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report entitled " Interracial intimate relationships in post-apartheid South Africa" is my own, unaided work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated by means of complete references. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts (Community Based Counselling) at the University of the Witwatersrand. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.

Signed this _____ day of _____ 2007

_____

Claire Lisa Jaynes

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The aim of this study was to explore current discourses on the topic of interracial intimate relationships[1] in post-apartheid South Africa. South Africa has entered into her second decade of democracy. However, as a democratic society we are still in the stage of infancy if one considers the lengthy duration of colonialism and apartheid. Thus, the ideologies and practices of the oppressive and segregationist past of South Africa may still be rife in the country. Racism may still be a huge obstacle to be overcome in South Africa, and it is argued that this racism may be reflected in the discourses of intimate relationships between individuals classified by the apartheid government as belonging to different racial groups[2].

The *Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act* of 1949 was repealed over twenty years ago in 1985 (Ratele, 2003). Although interracial marriages are now legal, they are still a highly controversial topic. Attitudes towards interracial marriages and intimate relationships in South Africa may represent some kind of yardstick to measure the degree of transition the country has achieved thus far (Morrall, 1994; Ross, 1990). As Lewis and Yancey (1994-1995, as cited in Yancey & Yancey, 1997, p. 650) observe, "[n]egative attitudes toward interracial unions…provide for formidable psychological and emotional barriers to interracial contact, helping to maintain a racially stratified society". It can thus be inferred that positive attitudes towards interracial unions are in some way indicative of a society where there is less of an adherence to racial segregation.

It is argued that opposition to interracial intimate relationships may be indicative of what Ratele (2002) has named "subtle racism". At its core, this new form of racism is no less racist or offensive than 'old-fashioned' racism; it is just disguised in a more 'sophisticated' and socially accepted argument, that of opposition to intimate relationships between people classified as belonging to different racial groups. Justifications for this opposition are based on supposedly

[1] The term 'interracial intimate relationships' denotes all relationships which are romantic (involving love/sex/sexual attraction) in nature, and between individuals classified as belonging to different races (see note below), whether formalised marriages, or informal dating arrangements.

[2] The current study makes use of the terms 'black', 'white', 'Indian' and coloured as per the apartheid classification system. While the notion of the validity of these terms is firmly refuted, paradoxically, in order to address the concepts of race and racism, the use of these terms is inevitable. The dangers of re-inscribing essential notions of race are heeded, and readers are also urged to keep this in mind.

non-racist reasons such as concern for the welfare of the children produced by such relationships (Frankenberg, 1993).

Exploratory research on the discourses on interracial intimate relationships may expose underlying racism in the opposition to such relationships or alternatively a stance against racism in the support of such relationships. Thus, this research fits into the broader context of academic enquiry into racism. The results of the study will have relevance for future research in the areas of racism, interracial relationships, interracial families, and cross-racial adoption, amongst others. The current study will also make a contribution in redressing the wrongs of the past, whereby during the apartheid era, South African psychology "played a pivotal role in the perpetuation, elaboration and reproduction of racism" (Duncan, Stevens, & Bowman, 2004, p. 363). This study, rather than denying and authorising racism, will seek to expose it by analysing a corpus of discourses on interracial intimate relationships.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

The research report is comprised of six chapters. The current chapter provides an introduction to the study, and presents the rationale for the research as well as an outline of the ensuing chapters.

Chapter 2 presents an overview of the relevant literature relating to interracial intimate relationships both from an international and a South African perspective. The concepts of race, racism and discourse are briefly addressed, and the connection between the study of racism and the use of discursive methodologies is established. Reference is also made to studies relating to the issues of race and racism that utilised discursive approaches, with specific focus on studies on the discourses on interracial intimate relationships. Interracial couples and families are looked at in terms of the influence that racism may exert on them. The chapter goes on to address the intersection of race and gender, as well as how these variables function in the constructions of whiteness.

Chapter 3 provides an explanation of the methodology employed in this research endeavour. Details are provided about the sample, the procedure followed, and the method of analysis utilised, namely Thompson's (1990) depth hermeneutics.

The analysis and discussion of the results are presented in *Chapter 4*, under the three main headings of race, whiteness, and interracial intimate relationships. The section on discourses on interracial intimate relationship forms the main focus of this chapter, with considerable attention being paid to the denial, negation, and justification of racism. The chapter concludes with a succinct section on the rhetorical devices employed by the research participants.

Chapter 5 attempts a synthesis of the results and integrates the findings with relevant theoretical perspectives, as well as providing a more in-depth look at the most striking and prominent themes to emerge from the data, namely the discursive themes of 'Experimentation', 'It depends on where you go' and the various themes relating to the family. The chapter begins with a section addressing the silences in the data, as what was *not* said may be as significant as what was said. Brief comments are then made on the findings related to race and whiteness. A discussion of how the discourse of interracial intimate relationships as experimentation intersects with discourses of developmental psychology is then presented. Thereafter the chapter provides an exploration of how the constructions of interracial intimate relationships intersect with discourses on geographical locations, socio-economic status, and class, as manifested in the discourse of "It depends on where you go". Lastly, chapter 5 discusses how the various discursive themes relating to the ideological construction of the family function to maintain a racially stratified society that maintains the status quo.

The final chapter, *Chapter 6*, draws conclusions as well as addressing the limitations of the study and directions for further research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

THE INTERNATIONAL HISTORY OF INTERRACIAL INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

A thorough review of the history of interracial intimate relationships would be a huge undertaking that although interesting and informative, is beyond the scope of this research. However, in order to contextualise interracial relationships, a brief review is provided of the history of these relationships in the United States of America, Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Latin America, and Jamaica.

In the United States of America, most states (at one stage forty out of fifty) enacted laws against racially mixed unions and marriages (Phoenix & Owen, 2000). The categories of who was forbidden to marry varied between states, but all forbade marriage between black and white (Reuter, 1931, as cited in Phoenix & Owen, 2000). These laws were only declared unconstitutional as late as 1967 (Young, 1995, as cited in Phoenix & Owen, 2000). Census data from 1980 to 1987 show a small but consistent increase of interracial marriages in the United States since 1970 (Spigner, 1994, as cited in Lewis, Yancey, & Bletzer, 1997). Research undertaken from 1992 to 1994 found that within black-white marriages in the United States, non-racial factors were more important in spouse selection than racial factors (Lewis *et al*., 1997). In 1998 the rate of interracial marriage in the United States was just over 24 per 1000 married couples (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1999, as cited in Crowder & Tolnay, 2000). This is extremely modest, but an increase from fewer than 4 interracial marriages out of 1000 married couples in 1960 (Crowder & Tolnay, 2000). A nationally representative sample of 17219 children from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study in 1998 indicated that 10.4 per cent of the children were the products of interracial unions (Brunsma, 2005). This figure is much higher than the above-mentioned rate of interracial marriage in 1998 of 0.024 per cent. Therefore, it may indicate that interracial liaisons may produce children, although not necessarily marriages.

According to a national survey conducted by the *New York Times* in 2000, out of 1071 whites interviewed, sixty-nine per cent said they approved of interracial marriage (Johnson & Jacobson, 2005). The rate was somewhat higher in the West (82%) and somewhat lower in the South (61%). Additionally, the approval rate was positively correlated with tertiary education, higher

income, and interracial friendship. Gender was not related significantly to approval of interracial marriage. Age was negatively correlated with approval rates. Political affiliation also influenced whites' attitudes to interracial marriage, with Democrats seventy-two per cent more likely to approve of interracial marriage than Republicans. It can be argued that this may not be a true reflection of people's attitudes, as they may answer in a politically correct fashion that is incongruent with their true feelings on the matter. Of the 61.5 million married and cohabiting couples in the United States in 2000, approximately 7 per cent were in interracial relationships (Rosenfeld & Kim, 2005). It can be inferred that a sizeable percentage of those relationships were cohabitations rather than marriages, as in 2002 only 2.9 per cent of all marriages in the U.S. were interracial (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2003, as cited in Joyner & Kao, 2005).

Unlike the United States of America, there were no legal restrictions on mixed marriage in Britain (Tizard & Phoenix, 1993). This may have been due to the fact that even up until the mid 1950s the number of black people in Britain was marginal – 15 000 or less (Tizard & Phoenix, 1993). The results of the 1991 Census Sample of Anonymised Records for Great Britain show that although 99 per cent of white men and women living with a partner had a white partner, among the three black groups, black-white couples ranged from 17.5 to 51 per cent for black males, and 14.3 to 43.8 per cent for black females (Phoenix & Owen, 2000). The percentages of South Asian people with white partners was much lower, with the highest percentage being eight per cent for Indian men with white partners, and the lowest figure being for Bangladeshi women, who had no white partners.

In keeping with the theoretical underpinnings and accompanying methodology of this research report, the literature review now shifts focus from quantitative survey research to research that is qualitative in nature. Grimshaw (2002) discusses the interracial marriages of two women, one in Australia, the other in New Zealand, both in the late nineteenth century, to support her argument that "interracial sexuality and interracial marriages are significant indicators of colonizing white societies' management strategies of subject groups" (Grimshaw, 2002, p. 12). During the nineteenth century, the missionaries in the British colony of Victoria, Australia, sought control over the marriage choice of their aboriginal converts to ensure their continued 'civilisation' (Grimshaw, 2002). The 1886 "Half-caste Act" dictated that those of mixed parentage leave their

Aboriginal communities and fend for themselves; this led to poverty and sickness. In addition to this, the Act allowed for the removal of Aboriginal-European children from their parents and their placement in orphanages, foster homes or industrial schools. Grimshaw (2002, p. 17) calls the Act "an effort to eliminate not only Aboriginal culture, but also the physical evidence of its very existence". The intermarriage of 'half-castes' and full Aborigines was discouraged, so as to ensure that people would intermarry with whites and thus merge with the settler population, thereby eliminating Aborigines altogether (Grimshaw, 2002). Thus, although interracial relationships were encouraged, the motives were racist in the attempt to eradicate all 'non-whites'. It is interesting to note how this view of intermarriage as a means of 'whitening' the population stands in stark contrast to the expressed fears of contemporary white supremacists who fear that intermarriage will in fact obliterate the 'white race' (Ferber, 1999).

Australia abolished overtly racist laws and policies towards both indigenous peoples and immigrants during the 1960s and 1970s and ushered in an era of supposed 'multiculturalism' (Castles & Vasta, 1999). Despite these and other attempts to confront racial inequalities in Australia, racism persists (Castles & Vasta, 1999; Sonn, 2006). Castles and Vasta (1999) remark that Australia is in the "contradictory position of being both a multicultural and a multiracist society" (p. 309). By this they mean that there exists no single racism in Australia, no simple black-white dichotomy, but rather "there is a whole range of intersecting sets of ideas and practices among different groups, which in turn interact with ideas and practices concerning class and gender" (Castles & Vasta, 1999, p. 309). It is inevitable that these ideas and practices would necessarily impact upon the attitudes towards, and prevalence of, interracial intimate relationships in Australia.

Returning to nineteenth century New Zealand, the Maoris were robbed of land and resources by the whites, but retained other human rights, including the right to choose a marriage partner (Grimshaw, 2002). Relationships and marriages between Maori women and white men were common at the time. It is proposed that intermarriage offered Maori women entry to the middle class, whereas Maori men rose in class through the medium of professional training (Grimshaw, 2002). This illustrates another instance where racism and sexism converged in that Maori men could 'improve' themselves through education and climbing the social ladder, but the only

resource seen available to Maori women was that of sexuality and reproduction. Wetherell and Potter (1992) conducted an in-depth discursive study of racism in contemporary New Zealand, and found that covert racism took the place of more overt forms. They discovered that the ideological justification of exploitative social relations was not necessarily based on "emotions of distaste, on anti-black affect, on ideas of hierarchies of civilization or on white people's concepts of innate superiority and inferiority", but that people's justifications for racist beliefs and actions took the form of supposedly "less objectionable and much more familiar" arguments, such as the rhetoric of equal opportunities (Wetherell and Potter, 1992). Although their study did not specifically explore interracial intimate relationships, it can be assumed that these disguised racist discourses would impact on both the attitudes towards interracial relationships, as well as the prevalence of such relationships.

According to Guimarães (1999) it is commonly believed that in Brazil and in Latin America in general, there is no racial prejudice, just colour prejudice. Skin colour and appearance carry more weight than origin in the Brazilian social hierarchy. Azevedo (1955, p. 90, as cited in Guimarães, 1999, p. 319) elaborates that "[s]ince color and somatic traits function, to a great degree, as symbols of status, resistance to inter-marriage suggests both class and race prejudice". In this system where whiter skin was (and is) related to higher social status, colour has become the code for race. To say that this prejudice based on skin colour is not racist would be erroneous, as Guimarães (1999) notes that a person can only have colour and be classified according to skin colour if an ideology exists that affords meaning to the colour of people. It is only within the ideology of racism that people have 'colour'. Hence intermarriage was sought by 'darker' people with 'whiter' people in order to improve their social standing and hence life circumstances. This focus on somatic features, its role in the social hierarchy, and the impact on marriage patterns closely resembles that of the West Indies, and Henriques' (1968) discussion of Jamaica in particular.

Henriques (1968) explains that in Jamaica 'colour' is evaluated in terms of literal skin colour, hair formation, features, and skin texture. All of these aspects are assessed in relation to the degree with which they match the white European ideal. The value of particular characteristics varies from island to island in the West Indies. Henriques (1968) emphasises the 'white bias' that

affects the Jamaican population, and sees the practices of hair straightening and skin bleaching, as well the male practice of marrying or cohabiting with a woman of 'better' or lighter colour, as indicators of the degree to which society is influenced by this 'white bias'. It is said to be the male prerogative to 'marry light' in order to improve his social prestige, whereas women make do with marrying someone darker than themselves with the proviso that their husbands are financially successful.

In his seminal work, *Black skin, white masks*, Fanon (1967, originally published 1952) describes the lived experience of black people in the Antilles, and in Martinique in particular. He devoted a sizeable chunk of this work to discussing interracial intimate relationships, and although his discussion thereof is marred by sexism (Hook, 2004) (discussion of this follows in the section on race and gender), he sees the pursuit of white sexual or marriage partners by black individuals as attempts to ascend the social hierarchy, and moreover as motivated by the idea of "lactification" (Fanon, 1967, p. 47). Hook (2004, p. 98) defines Fanon's lactification as the "idea of the possibility of moderating one's race, of lessening the degree of one's blackness, and 'becoming more white'". Lactification could supposedly be achieved by the mastery of a white language, the acquisition of white culture, and the achievement of wealth. It is argued that marrying a white spouse would be an avenue to lactification or perhaps proof that lactification had been achieved. Whereas Henriques (1968) avers that black women in Jamaica would marry a darker man as long as they were compensated by his financial status, Fanon (1967) paints a different picture of the black women in the Antilles:

> It is always essential to avoid falling back into the pit of niggerhood, and every woman in the Antilles, whether in casual flirtation or in a serious affair, is determined to select the least black of the men (Fanon, 1967, p. 47).

A class system primarily based on 'colour' continues to predominate in the West Indies, but individuals may negotiate movement between the levels of the hierarchy based on their choice of marriage partner. A social hierarchy based on race also existed in apartheid South Africa, however individuals could not negotiate this as it was entrenched in law, with both racial classifications and the prohibition of intermarriage being dictated by legislature. It is to this that the discussion now turns.

THE HISTORY OF INTERRACIAL INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Interracial unions in South Africa have been indelibly shaped by apartheid legislation. However, prior to the victory of the National Party and subsequent apartheid government, particularly throughout the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth century, interracial relationships were far more tolerated than during the years to follow (Jacobson, Amoateng, & Heaton, 2004). It has been noted that in the early history of South Africa many prominent Afrikaner males intermarried with 'non-white' women. Thus many White Afrikaner families have mixed racial ancestry (Jacobson *et al*., 2004).

In the early period of Dutch settlement at the Cape in the seventeenth century, white men frequently married black women. MacCrone (1937, as cited in Henriques, 1968) notes that race and skin-colour played little part in determining the attitude of Europeans to non-Europeans, and that the baptism of women of colour resulted in the rise in their legal and social status, which often led to marriage with European men.

The topic of mixed marriage assumed a central place in the political discourse of South Africa in the 1930s. The contest between the 'Purified National Party' (Gesuiwerde Nasionale Party/GNP) of D.F. Malan, and the United Party (UP), of Hertzog and Smuts, in the 1938 election revolved around "which party was most opposed to mixed marriage, and which policy was best equipped to prevent it" (Hyslop, 1993, p. 2). The GNP advocated for legislation banning mixed marriage in order to maintain racial boundaries and hence racial purity. The UP criticised the GNP for the insinuation that white women would marry black men and consequently needed legislation to prevent them from doing so. The Malanites contradicted themselves by, on the one hand, declaring that whites had an innate or instinctual aversion to racial 'mixing', but on the other hand, campaigning for legislation to prevent sexual relations between the race groups.

Hyslop (1993) illustrates how the male politicians of either side vied for the role of champions and protectors of white women against the supposed black threat. The political discourse made use of racist sexual stereotypes in order to arouse the anxiety of the white voters. The 'sexually potent' black males were going to corrupt the 'virginal' white women if white men did not act to

prevent this. However, the statistics of the time showed this fear to be unjustified. The statistics of the De Villiers commission on mixed marriages reported that for the period 1930 to 1937, the total number of mixed marriages oscillated between a high of 101 in 1937 and a low of 72 in 1934 (Hyslop, 1993). Furthermore, the majority of these marriages were between white men and 'coloured' women. From 1929 to 1931 the De Villiers Commission reported only three cases of marriage between white women and black men throughout South Africa, and that no examples of such marriages could be found in the five years thereafter (Hyslop, 1993).

The GNP further justified their promotion of legislation prohibiting mixed marriages by collectively accusing Indian shopkeepers in the Transvaal of seducing white women and trapping them into marriage in order to gain ownership of the women's property (Hyslop, 1993). Hyslop (1993) posits that this discourse was useful to the Nationalists in that it channelled Afrikaner's resentment of Indian success in the retail sector, but also latched onto resentment that Afrikaner women were working for Indian businesses. This resentment was linked to the fear that Afrikaner men were losing control of Afrikaner women to Indian men, thus threatening both the racial and gender hierarchies. (See the section on the intersection of race and gender, as well as the section on whiteness). Hyslop (1993, p. 15) goes on to label the argument that Indian traders had designs on white women as a means to acquire property as "absurd". It was unlikely that wealthy women in possession of property would be obligated to take jobs as clerks and bookkeepers. The number of white women in employ by Indian traders was also exaggerated by the GNP. A 1937 study only reported 62 such employees in the Transvaal (Hyslop, 1993).

The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act was finally passed a year after Malan's National Party came to power in 1948 (Ratele, 2003). Following this ban on interracial marriages, an amendment was made in 1950 to the Immorality Act of 1927, outlawing sexual relations between all blacks and whites (Hardie & Hardford, 1960, as cited in Makgabo, 1996). Hyslop (1993, p. 26) aptly quotes Nietzsche (1974): "The priest rules through the invention of sin", in his comment that Malan, an ordained minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, played a central role in the invention of the 'sin' of mixed marriage, and used it as one of the tools with which he and his supporters gained power.

Both the Immorality Act and the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act were repealed in 1985. The Central Statistical Service of the Republic of South Africa provides the following figures for 'mixed' race marriages for the years 1987 to 1990 (Morrall, 1994): Mixed marriages accounted for 2.08% of all marriages recorded in 1987, 1.67% in 1988, 2.15% in 1989, and 1.8% in 1990. There was a slight increase in the percentage of marriages involving one white spouse, with 34%, 38%, 53%, and 42% of mixed marriages having one white partner in 1987, 1988, 1989, and 1990, respectively. It is interesting, to note the increase from 1988 (38%) to 1989 (53%), and the subsequent decrease from 1989 (53%) to 1990 (42%). A possible explanation of this increase and subsequent decrease may be related to there having been a backlog of people wanting to marry, that is, those who had been in established relationships but who had been legally prohibited from marrying. This may have resulted in the rise in marriages, which then petered out somewhat once the backlog had been addressed.

With the release of Nelson Mandela from prison and the first democratic elections, which followed in 1994, South Africa embarked on a long journey to healing and reconciliation. Data from the 1996 census show that homogamous (that is, intraracial) marriages are still the rule, with homogamy rates in the high nineties for all groups, while interracial marriages remain rare (Jacobson *et al*., 2004). Although the data were gathered almost a decade ago, it is not known if the numbers of interracial marriages or relationships will have substantially altered. The extent of interracial intimate relationships may have been underestimated by Jacobson *et al*.'s (2004) analysis of the 1996 South African census data by restricting the analysis to marriages. Harris and Ono (2001) found that in the United States of America, cohabitations are eminently more likely than marriages to involve people from different racial groups. Joyner and Kao (2005) also cite studies that indicate that racially mixed couples are more likely to be dating or cohabiting than to be married. It is possible that this finding may hold true in the South African context. Possible hypotheses for this are as follows: those in interracial intimate relationships may be seen as unconventional, thus they may be less likely to conform to the traditional convention of a formalised marriage; alternatively, due to societal opposition to their relationship, those in interracial intimate relationships may choose cohabitation over marriage in order to placate opposing friends and family members, and reduce conflict by avoiding formalising the relationship. Joyner and Kao (2005) suggest that interracial relationships are less likely to

become marriages and therefore speculate that these relationships may also be more likely to dissolve. However, their speculations are inconclusive and they call for more research to address the question of why marriages are less likely than other types of sexual relationships to be interracial.

Some authors (for example, Frankenberg, 1993; Phoenix & Owen, 2000; Ratele, 2003) find the use of the term 'mixed' with reference to interracial relationships to be of itself communicative of judgement. Ratele (2003, p. 249) puts forward that to label a relationship as 'mixed' passes judgement and constructs the relationship as "socio-pathologic and illegitimate". Phoenix and Owen (2000) claim that the language used to describe people of mixed parentage and the sexual contact between black and white people tends to pathologise those who resist classification into the binary notion of race. They list the following as evidence of terms demonstrating essentialism, bipolar thinking, and allusions to impurity: "half-caste", "mulatto" (from mule), and "métis" (French for mongrel dog) (Phoenix & Owen, 2000, p. 74). A 'mixed' relationship is heralded as a deviation from the norm of "pure" relationships. These 'pure' relationships are at minimum between members of the same racial category, but are ideally white relationships as white is seen as the norm, and any form of 'non-white' as a deviation from the norm. Frankenberg (1993, p. 98) illustrates this by noting that in the United States of America:

> In common parlance, a person whose parents come from two different ethnic or racial groups will be identified by reference to the nonwhite, subordinate, named, or marked group rather than the dominant and therefore normative white heritage: "She's part Native American" and "I'm half Jewish" have a much more familiar ring than "She's part white".

Thus, even when the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act was repealed, the term 'mixed' remained, along with the inherent stigmatisation of 'mixed' relationships and race.

The increasing prominence and significance of interracial intimate relationships is evident by the gradually developing field of South African research in this area. This research mostly consists of dissertations completed as requirements for university postgraduate degrees, such as Ross (1990) and Morral (1994). Ross (1985) conducted a phenomenological study using six interviews with people in interracial relationships in apartheid South Africa. Morrall's (1994)

qualitative research on seven interracial families also took place just prior to the advent of a new democratic South Africa. She explored issues such as the causes for interracial marriage, the reactions of families of origin to the interracial marriages, and the raising of the children of such marriages with specific reference to identity development. Although it can be argued that the Ross (1990) study failed to go beyond the superficial, and Morrall's (1994) was strictly exploratory, devoid of any critique, the studies may still be highlighted as important research endeavours at a time when South Africa was still for the most part entrenched in apartheid. Ross (1990) expressed the belief that levels of societal acceptance towards interracial relationships provide accurate indices for "measuring the extent to which a group is achieving social, economic and political equality". Morrall (1994) saw the prevalence of interracial marriage as a barometer of social change.

However, the dearth of research on interracial intimate relationships since 1998 highlights the need for current and future research on the topic. Recent research on interracial relationships in South Africa focuses on broader patterns of racial mixing and interaction, for example the South African Journal of Psychology, Volume 35, Number 3, of September 2005, published a special focus section entitled ''Race', isolation and interaction in everyday life'. This special focus section contained articles about spatiality and temporality with regards to intergroup contact within a public space of a university (Tredoux, Dixon, Underwood, Nunez, & Finchilescu, 2005), interracial contact in university dining halls (Schrieff, Tredoux, Dixon, & Finchilescu, 2005), spatio-temporal relations between blacks and whites throughout South Africa's history (Durrheim, 2005), meta-stereotypes as a barrier to interracial contact (Finchilescu, 2005), and intergroup contact in schools (Holtman, Louw, Tredoux, & Carney, 2005). A year later Marx and Feltham-King (2006) voiced their criticism of this special focus section by stating that the research focussed "almost exclusively on privileged spaces" (p. 453) and was limited by it's "quantitative and largely observational" (p. 454) research methodology. Further critique was aimed at the omission of any discussion of the concept of race and racial classification, as well as the exclusion of the variables of gender and economic class from the analyses of racial segregation. The critical commentary by Marx and Feltham-King (2006) as well as the response of Dixon and Tredoux (2006) highlight some of the difficulties inherent in doing research within the area of race relations in South Africa that are extremely pertinent to the current study. It is

pertinent to note that the robust debate between Marx and Feltham-King (2006) and Dixon and Tredoux (2006) further emphasises the role the current study has to play in the broader context of academic enquiry into racism.

RACE, RACISM, AND DISCOURSE

Race

This research eschews the validity of notions of scientific racism and racial essentialism. Race is rather seen as socially constructed term. Guillaumin (1999) both vehemently denies that there is any scientific basis for the construct of 'race', yet firmly declares the existence of race in the world today. She explains that although 'race' "may not be valid empirically, it certainly exerts an empirical effect" (Guillaumin, 1999, p. 361). She argues that it is not possible to deny the existence of a category that has organised whole states (such as apartheid South Africa), has been incorporated into the law, and has been the direct cause, and the primary means of murder of millions of human beings. Guillaumin (1999) argues, "No, race does not exist. And yet it does. Not in the way people think; but it remains the most tangible, real and brutal of realities" (p. 362).

This research echoes the view of Guillaumin (1999) that race simultaneously does and does not exist. And paradoxically, in the endeavour to take a stance against racial classifications and subsequent social asymmetries, it becomes necessary to use the self-same terms that one is opposing. As noted by Stevens, Swart and Franchi (2006, p. 6) the "centrality of racial categorisation in providing a context for former oppression and continued privilege in South Africa, for example, accounts for some of the difficulty with simply doing away with these categories". The danger of writing about race is that research that aims to invalidate racial classifications may unintentionally re-inscribe these very categories (Stevens *et al*., 2006). Childs (2005) warns that a major critique levelled against much research on interracial relationships is that it reifies race, and rather than critically examining race as a socio-historical construct, reproduces the idea of race as real, naturally occurring and essentialist. Dixon and Tredoux (2006) maintain that the racial categories created by apartheid remain important in South Africa, "precisely to redress the violence brought about by that imposition" (p. 461). This said, they call

for reflexivity about the reifying potential of all forms of research that involve the concept of 'race' (Dixon & Tredoux, 2006).

Racism

In this study, racism is viewed as an ideology by means of which domination or marginalisation of certain 'races' by another 'race' or 'races' is organised and justified (Duncan, van Niekerk, de la Rey, & Seedat, 2001). Although racism as multifaceted and tenacious in its constant reinvention of itself resists an easy definition, the following definition is presented as both accurate and apposite: Racism consists of the following three features (Duncan, 2002, p. 116): Firstly, "it is inextricably linked to the notion of the existence of human 'races'"; secondly, "racism is an ideology that attempts to justify the domination over and marginalisation of certain 'races'"; and lastly, "racism has a consistently deleterious effect on the lives of its targets". Furthermore, as per the last feature, racism works to the detriment of its victims, but also, importantly, racism benefits the racists (Duncan *et al*., 2001).

Various psychological theories have attempted to explain racism, and prejudice in general. Katz (1996) names the Frustration-Aggression Theory, developed by Dollard, Miller, Mowrer, and Sears in 1939, and the Authoritarian Personality, developed by Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, and Sanford in 1950, as the two most prominent theories. Dollard and colleagues postulate that pent-up frustration leads to aggression. Sometimes the aggression may not be directed at the true object of the frustration, but rather displaced towards an easily identified and less powerful group, such as another racial group (Katz, 1996). Numerous criticisms have been levelled at the Frustration-Aggression hypothesis, such as the fact that it operates on an individual level, and hence does not adequately explain the collective or social nature of racial prejudice of society (Milner, 1983, as cited in Katz, 1996). Furthermore, a relationship between aggression and frustration does exist, but not necessarily in the form of stimulus and response. Aggression is only one of the possible responses to frustration (Meyer, 1997).

Adorno and colleagues postulated that parent-child relationships that were hierarchical, exploitative, and authoritarian, lead to the development of an authoritarian personality (Katz, 1996). Authoritarian personalities are said to be resistant to change, conforming to social norms,

idealising of authority figures, as well as ethnocentric and anti-semitic. Adorno sees the foundation of racism in a broad and coherent personality profile, the development of which is strongly influenced by the complex process of social relationships in the family. It thus follows that to diminish or eradicate racism, child-rearing practices would have to be addressed and changed where necessary (Katz, 1996).

A psychoanalytic interpretation of racism mostly revolves around the concept of racial scapegoating by means of projection (Hook, 2004). Projection can be defined as the process whereby particular characteristics of oneself, or certain wishes or impulses, are imagined to be situated in someone else (Hook, 2004). Thus, in the psychoanalytic interpretation of racism, (white) people are said to project the undesirable or unwanted characteristics of themselves onto the (black) Other (Fanon, 1967). Another aspect of a psychoanalytic interpretation of racism relates to the "phobic reaction of the white racist to the black" (Hook, 2004, p. 131). In psychoanalysis, phobia is ambiguous – that is the phobia contains elements of hate, anxiety, and fear, but also of idealisation, and even unconscious attraction. This ambiguity of the phobic response significantly informs a psychoanalytic interpretation of the interpersonal dynamics within an interracial intimate relationship. While deserving of further elaboration, due to the scope of this study, and the space constraints thereof, this will not be attended to here, but will be borne in mind as a potential focus for future publications.

Psychological theories of racism are severely limited in that they operate on individual level and may view the racist individual as deviant and pathological. These explanations therefore fail to account for large-scale racism such as illustrated by apartheid South Africa (Katz, 1996). It is argued that a conceptualisation of racism as ideology is able to address racism on a larger scale because it highlights the power relations implicit in the maintenance, functioning, and perpetuation of the problem (Duncan *et al*., 2001). Congruent with the view of seeing racism as ideology is a social constructionist or discursive approach. While clearly acknowledging a discursive approach to racism as "an invaluable means of combating reductive and overly-psychologising understandings of racist phenomena" that "enables us to grapple with the repeatability, the conventionality of racism as a social form that works as a regularising collectivity of meaning, social practice and identity alike", Hook (2006a, p. 174) advocates for a

complementary line of analysis. He calls for a psychoanalytic approach, but a critical one at that – a psychoanalytical approach that is attentive to social and political contexts and is careful to avoid reducing sociopolitical and structural issues to merely internal intrapsychic phenomena (Hook, 2006a).

Hook (2006a) contends that such a critical psychoanalytical approach to studying racism would be better equipped than a discursive approach to deal with what he calls "unmediated or pre-discursive varieties of racism" (p. 179). He explains these forms of racism as unintentional, reflex actions that override rational thinking. This pre-discursive racism is said to be related to the "embodied and visceral aspects" of racism, as well as the "emotional intensity and tenacity in the face of structural change" of racism (Hook, 2006a, p. 192). To this end, Hook (2006a) expands on the psychoanalytical concept of abjection, to provide an analysis of racism.

As Hook (2006a) argues, it is possible to adopt a psychoanalytical approach to analysing racism that also includes an acknowledgement of the political and structural features of racism. The seminal work of Frantz Fanon is a case in point. In *Black skin, white masks* (Fanon, 1967) Fanon undertakes a psychological (and specifically psychoanalytical) approach to addressing the impact of racism on blacks, but he also stresses that the problem necessarily entails "an immediate recognition of social and economic realities" (p. 11). In fact, Fanon sees the inferiority complex of black people as an outcome of primarily economic realities, with the psychological processes being subsequent to these economic conditions.

Discourse

The notion of discourse resists a conclusive handy definition (van Dijk, 1997). Following Macleod (2002), a conceptualisation (as opposed to a definition) of discourse will be sought. The clarification of conceptualisations of discourse is important, as it will influence how the actual analysis will proceed (Macleod, 2002). It is maintained that the conceptualisation of 'discourse' is not static, but rather in a "constant state of re-appraisal and re-working", due to its link with theoretical issues (Macleod, 2002, p. 17).

Following Burman, Kottler, Levett, and Parker (1997, p. 8), discourse is taken to refer to "frameworks of meaning that are realized in language but produced by institutional and ideological structures and relations". Discourse work resists the traditional distinction between individual and society, the personal and the political, as "language constitutes who we are, constructs the positions we occupy, is the medium by which we interact with other people and understand ourselves" (Burman *et al*., 1997, p. 7). The purpose then of discursive methodologies is to attend to how institutional power relations are both reproduced and challenged within everyday contexts of talk and action. Within this critical perspective of discourse, discourse is viewed as inextricably linked to power, and necessarily more than a medium utilised to transmit information (Duncan, 2001).

Race, racism, and discourse

Goldberg (1999, p. 363) contends that there is "no racism without some reference, however veiled, to racialized discourse". He sees different kinds of racism, or as he puts it, racist expressions, as produced through racialized discourses. These discourses are by no means fixed, but rather resolutely situated in specific times and contexts. Thus Goldberg (1999, p. 371) views race as "a fluid, transforming, historically specific concept parasitic on theoretic and social discourses for the meaning it assumes at given historical moments". Race, racism, and discourse are therefore inextricably linked.

Due to the situatedness of discourses in time and place, it is argued that the current study identifies a unique set of discourses on interracial intimate relationships in post-apartheid South Africa. This said, it is both informative and useful to review other sets of discourses on interracial relationships identified in other contexts. While many studies (for example see Duncan (2001, 2002), Durrheim and Mtose (2006), Govender (2006), Painter and Baldwin (2004), Stevens, Duncan and Bowman (2006),Wetherell and Potter (1992), and van Dijk (1983, 1989, 1992)) focussing on issues related to race and racism have appropriately used discursive methodologies, there is a dearth of research on interracial intimate relationships, and this scarcity is even more pronounced when looking for research on the topic that includes a turn to the discursive methods of analysis. However, Ratele (2002) and Frankenberg (1993) are two examples of research looking at the discourses on such relationships.

Ratele (2002) analysed interview and autobiographical data gathered between 1995 and 1999, and based on this analysis, delineates accounts of interpersonal relationships around race into four categories: *rejectionism, difference, anti-racism,* and *Africanism.* The first category, *rejectionism*, rejects the 'other' based on an essentialist view of race as a natural and biological characteristic. Rejectionist discourses are in keeping with the fundamental dualism of identification of 'us and them' or 'self and other' (Ratele, 2002).

The discourse of *difference* is currently embodied in the view of South Africa as the 'Rainbow Nation', whereby difference is not only acknowledged but celebrated. Ratele (2002) divides the discourse of difference into three components: racial voyeurism/fetishism, mulitracialism or multiculturalism, and colour-blindness. Racial voyeurism/fetishism explains interracial relationships by the act of an individual seeking out another individual because his or her skin colour is experienced as sexually arousing. Multiracialism/multiculturalism recognises an essential race difference, but promotes the acceptance, respect, and even celebration of diversity. Multiracialism or multiculturalism desires the inclusion of all race and/or cultural groups in a harmonious society (Ratele, 2002). Colour-blindness promotes the idea of a 'raceless' society, where colour and racial markers are ignored completely. One can see the merits of a raceless society as expressed in the dream of Martin Luther King of "the time when a man will be judged for the content of his character and not for the color of his skin" (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 148). However, it may be argued that the manifestation of discourses and attitudes of colour-blindness in South Africa speak more loudly of denialism and efforts to refute racism, than of King's ideal. Childs (2005, p. 2) feels this colour-blind ideology is problematic as it "ignores, even disguises, the power and privilege that still characterizes race relations".

Ratele's (2002) third category is *anti-racism*. The essentialist view of race as naturally and biologically occurring is rejected by anti-racism (Ratele, 2002). Thus, race is seen as socially constructed in the political environment and not as an essential difference. Anti-racism focuses its attention not only at the level of the individual and psychological productions of racism, but also at the broader level of the community and society. According to Ratele (2002), anti-racism both opposes racism and is a reaction to integrationism. The latter part of this statement is problematic in that integrationism may be seen as an anti-racist endeavour.

The fourth category (*Africanism*) of discourses of racialised relations is centralised around Africa and the notion of an African identity (Ratele, 2002). Africanist accounts of relationships around race make reference to origins, roots, tradition, culture and values. Africanism exists in various forms, ranging from moderate to extreme, as seen in Africanist representations of Pan-Africanism, Negritude, and African Nationalism (Ratele, 2002).

Frankenberg (1993) examined the discourse of white American women on interracial relationships, or rather, as she states the discourse *against* interracial relationships, as she identified no popular discourse in favour of these relationships while conducting her research. Between 1984 and 1986 Frankenberg (1993) interviewed thirty white women who were diverse in all aspects except for race and being resident in California. She identified the following elements in the discourse against interracial relationships. Both masculinity and femininity are racialized, oftentimes drawing on racist sexual stereotypes, for example, the portrayal of the sexuality of black men and women as being "excessive, animalistic, or exotic", versus that of whites as "civilized" or "restrained" (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 75). The discourse also produces a conception of interracial intimate relationships as contravening fixed racial or cultural boundaries. Following on this, the discourse constructs children of interracial relationships as "mixed" and thus condemned to not belong anywhere in the existing social structure. The above elements of the discourse rest on an essentialist definition of race, and also the notion that cultural differences are absolute and bound to 'race' and biological belonging. Frankenberg (1993, p. 77) identifies the last element of the discourse against interracial relationships as "the hierarchical ranking of the essential nature and character of racial and cultural groups".

RACISM AS MANIFESTED IN ATTITUDES TO INTERRACIAL INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

It has been postulated that opposition to interracial intimate relationships is a manifestation of racism, albeit often a less overt manifestation. Childs (2005) posits that rather than interracial couples being a sign of the dissolution of racial borders, these relationships "enable us to see how racial borders still exist" (p. 3). In light of these viewpoints, the phenomenon of interracial intimate relationships, and the attitudes and discourses surrounding them, act as a vehicle with which to uncover and expose racist ideologies. She goes on to liken the experiences of black-

white couples to a "miner's canary" – they reveal and alert us to problems of race that may otherwise go unnoticed and stay hidden. She explains:

> The issues surrounding interracial couples – racialized/sexualized stereotypes, perceptions of difference, familial opposition, lack of community acceptance – should not be looked at as individual problems, but rather as a reflection of the larger racial issues that divide the races (Childs, 2005, p. 6).

Childs' (2005) emphasis on interracial intimate relationships as a lens through which to view and study racism is useful and valid. Although Childs (2005) is trying to say that the experiences of black-white couples warn us of the dangerous racism within society, this association of interracial couples and danger or death is less helpful for various reasons. Firstly, it creates an association between interracial couples and danger. Although Childs (2005) means the danger of racism, the metaphor can also be interpreted as meaning that interracial relationships signal the dangers of miscegenation. Thus, the metaphor can be interpreted as congruent with a racist worldview. Secondly, Childs (2005) says that the black-white couple is a miner's canary in that it may reveal problems of race that would otherwise remain hidden, especially to whites. In this way the metaphor constructs the interracial relationship as a tool for the whites to use to perceive the world more clearly, or more sensitively. This constructs the racism incurred by the interracial couple as an indicator of broader societal problems. Although this may be true, it deflects from the experiences of the couple as significant within themselves.

The constant reinvention of racism

As South Africa and the world become less tolerant of overt racism, the "everyday performance of race changes" (Ratele, 2002, p. 397). Thus, a new form of racism has emerged, a so-called 'subtle' racism. Ratele (2002, p. 397) states that some scholars assert that this 'subtle' racism, is a "racism without race, an anti-essentialist racism". However, it is argued that although this new form of racism is not as overt, at its core, essentialist conceptions of race remain. This movement to 'subtle' racism can be seen in the supposed shift in attitudes to interracial relationships. In the past, there was major concern with the dilution of racial purity and miscegenation; whereas current opposition to interracial unions frequently masquerades as concern for the children of such unions (Phoenix & Owen, 2000).

Children of interracial relationships

Interracial relationships are often still constructed as problematic and the seemingly compassionate concern for the children masks its damaging effects in three related ways (Phoenix and Owen, 2000). Firstly, it deflects charges of racism by turning the focus to children of mixed parentage and constructing these children as misfits, who belong to neither racial group. Secondly, the problem is individualised by shifting focus to the identity of a single child, and thus distancing it from the socio-political environment. Lastly, it constructs a discourse which promotes the internal, individual regulation of interracial unions, as external controls are neither legal nor socially sanctioned. The message communicated by this discourse is that if responsible parents are concerned for the welfare of their children, they should ensure that their children are not of 'mixed' parentage.

Brunsma (2005) posits that the reason that people of mixed race have been of concern to American society is that they pose a challenge to the racial order. He further states that classification schemes have "attempted to divide and conquer diversity and difference in the social structure while preserving White privilege" (Brunsma, 2005, p. 1132). A nationally representative sample of 17 219 kindergarten-aged children from the Early Childhood Longitudinal study (which took place in 1998) found that 10.4 per cent of these children were multiracial by birth (Brunsma, 2005). However, only 2.6 per cent of these children were labelled multiracial by their parents. Brunsma (2005) speculates that because the United States remains a racially divided and unequal society, parents of multiracial children try to distance their children from the bottom of the racial hierarchy by assigning their children a racial identification that will allow them greater power and privilege in society and minimise the barriers to resources based on racial discrimination. In it's simplest form this racial hierarchy is binary, with 'white' being superior to 'non-white'. However Bonilla-Silva and Glover (2004, as cited in Brunsma, 2005) argue that a new tripartite racial system is rearing its head in which 'white' still dominates, 'multiracial' is second, and the 'collective black' is at the bottom. According to this system, parents would elect to classify their children as 'multiracial' rather than black in order to afford them more social privileges.

INTERRACIAL INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS IN DEFIANCE OF RACISM?

Interracial intimate relationships challenge racial polarity on a broader societal level by transgressing "racist expectations of homogamy, social conformity, and segregation" (Killian, 2001, p. 40). Ratele (2003) proposes that sexually intimate relationships, because of their privileged positioning in modern cultural life, are more able than other kinds of relations to shape and transform our being and relating practices. Ratele's awarding a special place to sexually intimate relationships is debatable, as sexual contact between the races has been concomitant throughout both Africa and America's histories of extreme racial oppression, segregation, and institutionalised racism (Childs, 2005). These sexual contacts may have been in the context of rape, however 'consensual' sexual contact is still a site fraught with unequal power relations. The implication that interracial intimate relationships could potentially alter racist beliefs and behaviour of individuals is overly optimistic. However, the notion that interracial intimate relationships can act as an affront to racism on a macrolevel receives support:

> Whether or not interracial couples see their relationship as an act of courageous defiance, interracial relationships challenge racism implicitly by flouting the invidious hierarchy of white over black through a partnership that demonstrates mutual respect and equanimity (Killian, 2001, p. 40).

The implied beliefs of both Ratele (2003) and Killian (2001) are problematic as they intimate that racism may be challenged on an individual level by the phenomenon of interracial intimate relationships. Before all those opposed to racism hastily initiate interracial relationships in defiance of racism, it must be stressed that racism is a social and political issue in the broader societal and global environment (Bulmer & Solomos, 1999). As such, action against racism needs to occur at the macrolevel and not merely at the level of the individual, or the intimate couple. This said, discourses on interracial intimate relationships may be indicative of the broader societal belief system, and thus may represent racist or non-racist attitudes on the macrolevel.

Furthermore, Killian's (2001) above-mentioned reference to partnerships of "mutual respect and equanimity" (p. 40) fails to acknowledge that relationships are also influenced by gender hierarchy. Hence interracial relationships may be a site in which power differentials associated

with the broad ideological categories of ‘race’ and ‘gender’ play themselves out. Additionally, the notion that close personal relationships, such as intimate partnerships or family relations, are devoid of prejudice and discrimination (racial or otherwise) is questionable. Just as sexism and gender inequalities exist within intimate heterosexual relationships, so too does racism occur within interracial relationships.

RACISM WITHIN INTERRACIAL INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

As postulated above, the notion that an interracial intimate relationship necessarily implies that the relationship partners are devoid of racism is problematic. However, finding research on racism within interracial intimate relationships proved difficult. No data could be found relating to acts of racism by one intimate partner towards another. There are limited reports of racism within the family, but these tend to deal with parent-child relationships as opposed to romantic partnerships.

Henriques’ (1968) study of race in the West Indies, and in Jamaica specifically, relates how “colour feeling” (his euphemism for racism) plays itself out within the realm of the family (p. 61). He recounts how if children of one family are of different colour nuances, the most lightly coloured of the children will be favoured at the expense of the others. When the fairer members of the family are entertaining, the darker members of the family are excluded and kept out of the way; furthermore a fair person may even completely sever social relations with darker relatives. Henriques (1968, p. 61) explains:

> The fair child is regarded as the best asset of the family, and nothing must be put in the way of its success in the form of marriage which will raise the colour status of the next generation.

Significantly, Henriques (1968) states that rather than being offended, the family generally supports the efforts of the fair individual to progress socially. He compares this with the encouragement received by fair individuals to try ‘pass for white’ by the darker members of black families in America (and it can be added in apartheid South Africa).

A study by Katz (1996) carried out in London in 1993 reports how white mothers showed favouritism to the paler of their mixed-race children and even used racist language when addressing their children. Tizard and Phoenix (1993) conducted interviews with teenagers of mixed-race living in London. Although they include a section on 'Racism within the family', they fail to address whether there was racism directed from one family member toward another, but rather look at whether family members are racist of other groups (Tizard & Phoenix, 1993). Fortes de Leff (2002) speaks of intrafamilial racism in Mexico with parents favouring their paler children over their darker-skinned children.

RACE AND GENDER

The intersection of race and gender

Following hooks (1990) it is maintained that "racism and sexism are interlocking systems of domination which uphold and sustain one another" (p. 59). hooks (1990) implores feminists and anti-racists alike not to see sexism and racism as competing oppressions, but in their commitment to resisting politics of domination, to explore and understand the connections between racism and sexism.

It is postulated that one of the domains where race and sex intersect is within interracial sexual relationships. hooks (1990, p.57) avers that during the days of slavery, "black women's bodies were the discursive terrain, the playing fields where racism and sexuality converged". The rape of black women by the dominant white male oppressors was rife.

Sexism has invariably been a political position mediating racial domination, enabling white men and black men to share a common sensibility about gender roles and the consequence of male domination (hooks, 1990). hooks (1990) declares that both white men and black men have equated freedom with manhood, and manhood with the male right to have indiscriminate access to the bodies of women. Hence the rape of black women by white men was seen as a way to continually remind the dominated men of their loss of power. The rape of black women by the white oppressors was seen as symbolic of the castration and subsequent powerlessness and impotence of black men. Following this, rape enacted by black men is often construed as a natural response to racial domination. The black man is said to redeem his conquered manhood

by the rape of white women (hooks, 1990). Similarly, popular discourse in contemporary South Africa attributes gender violence perpetrated by black men to a sense of powerlessness and impotence experienced by black men as a result of apartheid.

While Fanon's (1967) crucial text, *Black skin, white masks,* is widely heralded as a highly significant contribution to the study of race and racism, it is also an example of how sexism may intersect with not only racism, but also with anti-racist positions. Fanon devotes two chapters of his book to interracial intimate relationships: 'The woman of color and the white man' and 'The man of color and the white woman'. These chapters evince a sexist double-standard in his interpretations of interracial intimate relationships. Hook's (2004) critique of Fanon (1967) posits that while the black woman's desire for a white man is said to be inauthentic and a "detestable example of negative, self-depreciating identity", the black man's desire for a white woman is depicted very differently, "as containing an almost redemptive political value" (p. 110): "When my restless hands caress those white breasts, they grasp white civilization and dignity and make them mine" (Fanon, 1967, p. 63).

It is clear that interracial sexual relationships may have been a site where both racism and sexism played themselves out, but it can also be suggested that sexuality may have been (or continue to be) a force for subverting and disrupting power relations and destabilising the oppressor/oppressed dynamic (hooks, 1990). This ties in with the notion of interracial intimate relationships as an affront to racism. The problems inherent in this view have been discussed above, and without totally negating the potential of interracial intimate relationships to effect social change in the direction of anti-racism, it is suggested that discourses surrounding these relationships may rather act as vehicles for thinly veiled forms of racism (possibly accompanied by sexism). hooks (1990) holds that the myth that "ending racist domination is really about issues of interracial sexual access" (p. 61) must be debunked in order to confront the actual material, economic and moral consequences of racism.

Hyslop (1993) makes the link between race and gender, and racism and sexism, in his analysis of the GNP's agitation for legislation against mixed marriages in the 1930s. He asserts that the Nationalists' furore about mixed marriages in fact played a significant part in re-stabilising a

traditional gender hierarchy. Hyslop (1993) contends that by "portraying white women as sexually threatened by black men, Afrikaner males claimed the role of protectors of women, thereby reasserting their patriarchal control" (p. 4). In this way the use of racist sexual stereotypes acted in the service of the dominant group.

Racist sexual stereotypes

Concomitant with the belief that black people are intellectually inferior is the belief that black people are sexually superior. Black women are held to have "increased lubricity, and an unbounded and indiscriminate sexual appetite", while black men are held to have "enormous penises and sexual appetites" (Katz, 1996, p. 25). The accompanying stereotypes are those of white women as chaste and virginal, and white men as protectors of their women (Childs, 2005). White women are unable to resist the advances of black men, and once they succumb to the advances of black men, they are corrupted.

There is a gender gap in interracial marriage in the United States, with marriage to blacks being more common for white women than for white men, and marriage to Asians being more common for white men than for white women (Rosenfeld & Kim, 2005). One wonders whether racialised sexual stereotypes contribute to this gender gap? The intersection of race and gender, as well as racialised sexual stereotypes, are prominent components underpinning many of the constructions of whiteness, which is the focus of the following section.

WHITENESS

Ferber (1999, p. 213) declares that "[s]cholars of race have too long neglected the study of 'whiteness'". Although a dearth of research on 'whiteness' still exists, it is necessary to briefly review some of the extant literature on the subject as any study involving the concepts of race and racism necessarily intersects with whiteness.

There has been a recent rise of whiteness studies, an "interdisciplinary field of research that takes as its subject the historical development and contemporary nature of white skin privilege" (Wray, 2006, p. 3). McDermott and Samson (2005) reviewed research on white racial and ethnic identity in the United States, and found that several important characteristics of white racial identity

emerged: “[whiteness] is often invisible or taken for granted, it is rooted in social and economic privilege, and its meaning and import are highly situational” (p. 247).

Much of the scholarship on whiteness has been related to the ideology of white supremacy. Ferber (1999) conducted research on the construction of race, and of whiteness specifically, in white supremacist discourse in the movement’s literature. She found that white supremacist discourse relentlessly constructs race as “biological” and a “god-given essence”, with whiteness being constructed “in terms of visible, physical differences in appearance” (Ferber, 1999, p. 217). These immutable physical racial differences are furthermore interpreted as “signifiers of deeper, underlying differences” (Ferber, 1999, p. 219). In white supremacist discourse both race and gender are constructed as essential and immutable, and they are often interdependent. Ferber (1999, p. 215) notes that “white identity is most certainly a gendered identity”, with the contemporary white supremacist movement being fundamentally concerned with re-establishing and protecting white, male identity and privilege. The movement is opposed to both feminism and anti-racism.

Ferber (1999, pp 221-222) explains that gender is pivotal to white supremacist discourse because “the fate of the [white] race is posited as hinging on the sexual behaviour of white women”. White women are constructed as either ‘breeders’ of the race or traitors, and are defined wholly in terms of their reproductive and sexual utility. McDermott and Samson (2005, p. 254) assert that “[t]he obsession with interracial sexuality is ubiquitous throughout white supremacist discourse”. All discussions of interracial sex consist of images of white women and black men, constructing interracial sex as a threat to the authority of the white male, “usurping his control over both white women and black men” (Ferber, 1999, p. 222). This black male-white female intercourse is, in the minds of the white supremacists, tantamount to white racial genocide (McDermott & Samson, 2005). It is clearly apparent how white supremacist discourse informs racialised and gendered sexual stereotypes (mentioned above), as well as how interracial intimate relationships (especially between black men and white women) may be utilised as the major focus and central metaphor of white supremacist ideology. In this ideology, “[t]he construction of whiteness is maintained through racist *and* misogynist discourse” (Ferber, 1999, p. 223, emphasis added).

In contrast to studies of whiteness in the context of the discourse of white supremacy, Wray (2006) takes as his object of study poor rural whites in the United States in his book, *Not quite white: White trash and the boundaries of whiteness*. Wray (2006) illuminates how the dominant whites employed the stereotypes of 'white trash' to promote and protect their own claims to whiteness. 'Lubbers' and 'crackers', as these poor whites were called, threatened the status quo by transgressing boundaries – by forming communities with Native Americans and escaped black slaves, as well as crossing the colour bar in terms of interracial sex (Wray, 2006). The discourses surrounding 'white trash' intersect with discourses on gender and eugenics. 'White trash' was said to be a result of deviant sexual relations, such as incest and interracial sex. Poor white women were also subjected to involuntary sterilisation (Wray, 2006). Thus, in discourses of both white supremacy and white trash, the sexuality and reproductive rights of white women were policed in order to protect the interests of the dominant white males. Racism and sexism converge and construct interracial sex as the ultimate threat.

While it is acknowledged that for the most part whiteness is unmarked and unnamed (McDermott & Samson, 2005), and most whites do not talk about their whiteness (Frankenberg, 1993), Crenshaw (1997) vehemently argues that whiteness must be made visible and its silences must be overturned in order to resist racism. She analyses public political discourse from a critical ideological perspective to show how the rhetorical silence about whiteness sustains an ideology of white privilege, and how intersecting gendered discourses work to preserve this silence. In Crenshaw's (1997) analysis it is again illustrated how discourses of race and gender intersect. She shows how racist discourses utilise constructions of "pure white womanhood designed to prevent miscegenation and protect white racial purity" as well as racist sexual stereotypes of black women as prostitutes (Crenshaw, 1997, p. 268).

Roediger (1991) looks at race and at whiteness in particular, in terms of how race and class intersect with one another. W.E.B. Du Bois'(1935) ideas about 'the wages of whiteness' are heavily drawn upon by Roediger (1991). He discusses Du Bois' observations that oftentimes the wages of white American skilled workers were higher than those of black workers, and high compared to world standards; but more importantly that the "pleasures of whiteness could function as a 'wage' for white workers" (Roediger, 1991, p. 13). Du Bois (1935, as cited in

Roediger, 1991) argued that in the United States, white supremacy undermined working-class unity because the benefits of whiteness made white Southern workers forget their shared interests with the black poor. The 'bonus wage' conferred by whiteness was a belief in the innate racial superiority of whites over blacks. Roediger (1991) echoes Du Bois' view that the United States and the world would have been better and more class-conscious had the legacy of slavery and racism not led the working class to cherish whiteness as a prize (Roediger, 1991). Roediger (1991, p. 13) argues that "whiteness was a way in which white workers responded to a fear of dependency on wage labor and to the necessities of capitalist work discipline". He posits that working-class racism in the United States cannot wholly be explained by economics, but that it is sustained by a complex array of psychological and ideological apparatuses that strengthen racial stereotypes and consequently work to shape the (white) identities of white workers in opposition to blacks.

Steyn (2001) conducted research on the ways in which white South Africans constructed the meaning of their whiteness subsequent to the political change that took place in 1994. While Steyn's work is not beyond critique, her focus on the construction of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa is a topic of utmost importance. From her analysis of the questionnaires answered by fifty-nine white South Africans, Steyn (2001) identified five narratives on being white in South Africa. The first narrative she identified (*Still colonial after all these years*) constructs whiteness according to the old (unequal) power dynamics between whites and blacks in South Africa. It can be argued that Steyn's reference to colonialism in the first narrative is somewhat euphemistic as she errs on the side of caution, preferring to refer exclusively to the legacy of colonialism, while refraining from commenting on what could be construed as the more overtly racist aspects of the narrative.

The second narrative identified by Steyn (2001) also contains the notion of whiteness as the ideal, but sees whiteness as having been "disempowered" or "besieged" by "present circumstances" (p. 67). This narrative communicates the belief that the natural order has been overturned and as such Steyn (2001) calls the narrative, *This shouldn't happen to a white*. This narrative draws on ideas about 'reverse racism' and contains ideas about how whites have supposedly lost their rights and their privileges.

Don't think white, it's all right is the name of third narrative identified by Steyn (2001). This narrative is told by whites who see their whiteness as part of their core identity, but who are more pragmatic about their new position within South Africa (Steyn, 2001). In the two versions of this narrative delineated by Steyn (2001), whites either retreat to their cultural roots, or alternatively search for practical ways to ensure a continued white influence in post-apartheid South Africa.

The fourth narrative identified by Steyn (2001), *A whiter shade of white,* entails the denial of any implications of being white in South Africa. In this narrative issues of privilege and power are evaded, and any sense of responsibility for the past is negated. Furthermore, there is silence around whiteness and the notion of white as a racial category is firmly refuted.

Steyn's (2001) last narrative is named *Under African skies (or white, but not quite).* This narrative tells a tale of white South Africans seeking to forge a new identity built on a construction of whiteness that disassociates itself from the constructions of whiteness of the old South Africa. Steyn (2001) differentiates three versions of this narrative. The first version is about whites who support the new dispensation but who are struggling to negotiate a place for themselves. The second version is "an attempt to evade the pain of confronting whiteness, by appropriating blackness" (Steyn, 2001, p. 154). The third version of this narrative involves a hybridisation of whiteness and blackness or African-ness, with the narrators seeing themselves as (white) Africans.

Steyn (2001) concludes that white South Africans are drawing on a range of discourses to construct various versions of what it means to be white in the new South Africa. Some of the

narratives complement each other, whereas others are incompatible. However, two main points about the constructions emerge: firstly, there is not one unified construction of whiteness, and secondly, white South Africans have to contend with a new reality that resists the former master narrative of whiteness, that is, a narrative involving assumptions of whiteness as correlating with automatic superiority and entitlement (Steyn, 2001).

McDermott and Samson (2005) attribute the resurgence of interest in the study of whites as a racial group to the demographic changes of the racial composition of the American population. They feel that the increased number of Asians and Hispanics in the United States, resulting in a corresponding reduction of the relative size of the white population, has served to highlight "the existence of whites as a racial category rather than as a default identity" (McDermott & Samson, 2005, p. 245). This argument certainly does not seem to hold true for the South African context, as whites have always been in the numerical minority, and this has not resulted in a recognition of white as a racial category, at least not in any critical way. It can be argued that although whites were the numerical minority, due to apartheid legislation, and enforced segregation, they may have lived lives where their contact with people of colour was severely limited. Black South Africans have achieved more visibility in the domains previously reserved for 'slegs blankes /whites only', but this does not seem to have resulted in a general awareness of 'whiteness' by South African whites, nor has it resulted in a surge of study in the area. As there is a growing realisation that racism cannot be fully understood without engaging with the study of whiteness (McDermott & Samson, 2005), it is crucial that South African research addresses the paucity of studies and literature on whiteness in general, and South African whiteness in particular.

Much of the research on whiteness may be seen as 'holding whiteness at a distance'. Studies take the form of historical studies (Roediger, 1991; Wray, 2006), or focus on discrete subpopulations, such as white supremacist groups (Ferber, 1999) or 'white trash' (Wray, 2006). While a historical analysis provides a sound contextual foundation, and the study of discrete groups provides rich data, it may be argued that these studies may appear to be removed from daily life and as such prevent whites from engaging with their whiteness in a personal way. White scholars of whiteness may be seen as studying the phenomenon as removed from themselves. Studies on whiteness may also result in the re-centring of the 'white' experiences. Greater reflexivity is

called for. Additionally, research on whiteness could benefit from the inclusion of methodologies that address how whiteness plays itself out in the everyday lives of people, as daily life is indeed politicised.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the discourses relating to interracial intimate relationships in post-apartheid South Africa?
2. How do these discourses on interracial intimate relationships intersect with racist or antiracist discourses?

SAMPLE

The sample comprised of thirteen volunteer participants (one of whom participated in both focus groups). The sample was recruited by advertising for focus group participants by means of posters on the University of the Witwatersrand campus and e-mail advertisements to the mailing list of the Graduate School of the Humanities of the University of the Witwatersrand. Additionally, some participants said that friends had either e-mailed the advertisement to them or verbally informed them about the study. Postgraduate psychology students were addressed in class as a means of recruitment, but no participants were gained through this channel.

The participants ranged in age from 20 to 43 years, with most participants being in their twenties. The first focus group consisted of three female participants and the (female) interviewer/researcher. All four participants in the first focus groups came from different racial groups. The second focus group consisted of seven participants (3 male, 4 female), and the female interviewer/researcher as well as a female note-taker and co-interviewer. The second focus group was predominantly white, with only two participants identifying themselves as black, and the rest classifying themselves as white. Sophie, who was a member of both focus groups, elected not to answer the question regarding which racial group she belongs to, as she felt it was offensive and that she did not fit neatly into a racial group. Both couples that were interviewed were heterosexual. The one couple consisted of white female and a Chinese male, who had been in a relationship for five-and-a-half years, and were living together. The other couple consisted of a white female and a black male, who had been dating for eleven months. All data were collected between March and April of 2006.

Of the nine focus group participants, five were currently in interracial intimate relationships. Two-thirds of the nine focus group participants reported that they had previously been in one or more interracial relationships. This is interesting as the advertisements specifically mentioned that it was not necessary to have been in an interracial relationship in order to participate in the focus group discussions.

It is pertinent to note that of the thirteen participants, four were not of South African nationality. However, of these four individuals, three were resident in South Africa and had been so for many years, and only one was in the country temporarily. The effect of this 'international' component to the data is difficult to identify and extract, although it no doubt influenced the data. The fact that non-South Africans came forward to participate in the study can be taken to be indicative of their interest in interracial relationships. Indeed three of the four 'non-nationals' were in an interracial relationship, and the fourth was recovering from the ending of her interracial relationship, at the time of the interviews.

The sample size is appropriate for a qualitative study due to the richness of data derived from an in-depth discursive analysis. The sample is not representative of all South Africans, nor representative of all students; thus the results may not be generalisable to the population as a whole. However, this is not the intention of qualitative research.

PROCEDURE

Individuals interested in participating in the study contacted the researcher either telephonically or by e-mail. Despite the fact that the advertisements were for focus group participants, some participants expressed their desire to be interviewed as (interracial) couples. Although this was not the original aim of the study, it was decided to include the couple interviews in the data. It was thought that the couple interview transcripts would enrich the data, and their participation was welcome considering the degree of difficulty in recruiting focus group participants. After recruiting the participants, couple interviews or focus groups were set up. The researcher facilitated two focus groups on the topic of interracial intimate relationships. The first focus group consisted of four participants (including the researcher), and the second focus group consisted of nine participants (including the researcher and a co-facilitator/note-taker). The

primary role of the co-facilitator in the second focus group was to make notes, thus leaving the researcher more available to engage with the group and guide the discussion. Informed consent was obtained for the interviews and the audiotaping of the interviews. Focus group participants also signed a confidentiality agreement. Prior to commencing with the focus group discussions and the couple interviews the participants completed a brief demographic (including relationship history) questionnaire.

Focus groups are recommended when the researcher is looking for a range of views, ideas, or feelings about a topic; and when the purpose is to uncover factors that influence opinions and behaviours (Krueger & Casey, 2000, as cited in Greeff, 2002). The focus group can be regarded as a non-hierarchical approach to research whereby power and control is not exclusively held by the researcher (Wilkinson, 1999, as cited in Kiguwa, 2001). Kiguwa (2001) holds that in the focus group more control is afforded to the participants, although the researcher does exercise some control in terms of guiding the discussion and the length of time devoted to the issues raised. In light of these recommendations, the focus groups were well suited to the study.

All interviews lasted for between sixty and ninety minutes each. The interviews were conducted in venues at the University of the Witwatersrand, except for one couple interview which took place at the couple's home. The focus group and couple interview schedules were semi-structured and open-ended. The researcher had planned to generate focus group discussions by referring to an article on interracial relationships . However, reference to this article was minimal as participants tended to produce their own discussions spontaneously and the article did not seem to provoke much of a response.

All focus groups and couple interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of the participants and transcribed verbatim. Confidentiality of the participants' identities has been ensured by the use of pseudonyms and by disguising or excluding other identifying details. With regard to the use of pseudonyms, Painter and Baldwin's (2004) acknowledgement of the irony of their assigning anglicised pseudonyms to isiXhosa-speaking participants was heeded, and the attempt was made to assign pseudonyms that in some way were representative of the original language group or nationality of participants.

TRANSCRIPTION

Transcription itself is already a form of analysis (Ochs, 1979, as cited in Wetherell & Potter, 1992). The researcher decides how detailed transcription conventions should be, and hence gives certain factors importance over others. This study thus noted speech errors, (untimed) pauses, and gross changes in volume, emphasis, but ignored most features to do with speed, breathing and intonation (Wetherell & Potter, 1992). The transcription notation used in this study is taken from Painter and Baldwin (2004) [3], which is an adaptation from Wetherell and Potter (1992). The distinction between emphasis by the speaker (**bold**) and emphasis by the researcher (*italics*) (to facilitate the discussion of results) is an additional convention. A further addition to the transcription notation was degrees of sound stretch are marked by one or more colons, for example so:, so::.(Green & Kupferberg, 2000). It was felt that the researcher should personally transcribe the data as although painstaking, transcription is "the stuff of analysis itself, the 'unpacking' of structure that is essential to interpretation" (Riessman, 1993, p. 58). Although Riessman (1993) had narrative analysis in mind, it is argued that transcription remains the first step of analysis in any type of qualitative analysis that makes use of interviews. Where the data collected is extremely voluminous a researcher may not be able to personally transcribe the interviews, however, for the current study it was a manageable task. Although great care was taken to transcribe the interviews as accurately as possible, it is likely that errors still exist, possibly as a result of the influence of the views and expectations held by the transcriber/researcher.

REFLEXIVITY

The present study has situated itself within a critical psychological approach. The methodology of Thompson's (1990) depth hermeneutics, and critical discourse analysis as a component thereof (discussed below), are in keeping with this critical approach. What this approach also calls for is *reflexivity*. Gibson and Swartz (2004) define reflexivity as the act or process of directing critique or awareness back on oneself as a person, a psychologist, or a researcher.

[3] Transcription notation is as follows:
// Overlapping utterances
= An utterance that follows another without any interval, but without overlapping
(.) Untimed pause
… An indication that material is omitted
[ ] Transcriber's comments within an extract

Reflexivity entails a critical awareness that all human beings do their work and make life decisions for a range of complex reasons. Gibson and Swartz (2004) posit that even the most politically progressive and altruistic motives are informed by deeply personal investments. Furthermore, using a critical psychoanalytic approach, they suggest that how people choose their work and how they choose to do this work, tell us something about a range of personal issues, including the anxieties that people are attempting to keep at bay (Gibson & Swartz, 2004). This kind of critical awareness in no way lessens the value of the work that people do, but rather can enhance the work.

The researcher sought to be reflexive throughout the research process, although it is acknowledged that a willingness to engage in reflexivity does not necessarily equate to the necessary insight and self-awareness that would enable knowledge of one's underlying personal motivations. As someone nearing the end of her training as a community-based counselling psychologist, my studies have exposed me to a critical approach that has resonated within me. I have long been passionate about resisting all forms of social asymmetry, and I am well aware that racism in particular strikes a particular chord within me due to some of my personal affiliations. While my position as a white woman taking a stance against racism, no doubt provides ample grist for the mill of psychoanalytic interpretations, suffice to say that many white South Africans may be plagued by their complicity with apartheid, and accompanying guilt, and desire to make amends – and this may indeed form part of my motivation to carry out this study. Furthermore, psychology as a profession was complicit in apartheid (Duncan *et al*., 2004; Nicholas, 2001; Magwaza, 2001), and as such it is apposite that psychological research now seeks to make amends for the past. In light of this, while entering the field of psychology, I aspire to be associated with a socially conscious, politically progressive brand of psychology, and to distance myself from exclusive, elitist, and prejudiced manifestations of the discipline.

REFLEXIVITY IN INTERVIEWING AND TRANSCRIBING

It is acknowledged that interviews and the transcription thereof are not neutral tools, but rather are influenced by the subjective position of the researcher. All transcripts include the words of the researcher as it is held that to have transcribed only the participants' talk would have been to subscribe to the view of interviews as measuring tools (Wetherell & Potter, 1992). The interviews are rather viewed as conversations with all contributions being seen as important.

Furthermore, the influence of the researcher, her questions, and her comments cannot be discounted as the participants tell their stories and construct their narratives with the awareness of the researcher as audience, and possibly with some thought to the greater audience who may come into contact with the research findings. The interviewed couples spoke specifically to the researcher; their talk may have been constructed differently or taken another form if told to another audience. Thus, the subject positioning of the researcher as a young white woman would have influenced the talk of respondents. As Lee (1993) notes, the social characteristics of the interviewer may have a biasing effect on the results. Additionally, in the focus group discussions, the participants' talk may have been influenced by the audience of the other focus group participants. This mutual influence of participants relates to the dimension of discourse as "interaction in social situations" (van Dijk, 1997, p. 2). In light of these contextual variables, the study could have been improved by the use of researchers or co-researchers of a different subject positioning, for instance using a black researcher to facilitate or co-facilitate the interviews. Similarly, it would have been interesting to compare focus groups that consisted of one 'race' only as opposed to the 'mixed' groups, or to control for relationship status (i.e. whether currently in an interracial intimate relationship or not).

With regards to the power dynamics between the interviewer and the interviewees, Mishler (1986, as cited in Lee, 1993, p. 107) discusses the power dynamics solely in terms of the "status difference" between the interviewer and respondent. This simplistic conception of power begs further elaboration. In the current study it can be argued that the interviewer and the respondents were all very much alike in terms of status, in that they were generally all Humanities students at the same university. However, power differentials may exist according to the divide between undergraduate and postgraduate students, masters students and doctoral students, and so forth. Furthermore, demographic variables like age, gender, race, nationality, and socio-economic status, may influence the perceived status of respondents. Language ability may also have played a role in the power dynamics, with those who perceive themselves as well-spoken dominating the discussion, while those who feel inadequate in their English language abilities may have been more hesitant to speak.

Factors that may influence power differentials (that is, age, gender, 'race', nationality, socio-economic status, language ability, and level of study) seemed more apparent within the focus group interviews than in the couple interviews. This makes sense in that the focus groups were larger groups of people who were strangers to one another. Furthermore, the partners in the couples seemed to support one another, by voicing agreement with their partner's statements, even though this agreement may have contradicted the individuals' prior and later statements. In addressing the various aspects that may constitute power, the degree of power of the researcher is open to interpretation. As interviewer, I had power in that I could shape the form of the interaction. I was known to be a master's student, and as such may have seemed powerful to the undergraduate students, but perhaps less so to the doctoral students. The argument can be made that as 'white' I also may have been seen to be more powerful. Macleod (2004) notes that the position of 'whiteness' (of a researcher) may have paradoxical effects. On the one hand, whiteness may be construed as carrying "powerful legitimation in terms of scientific endeavours", due to it's historical association with descriptors of competence and education (Macleod, 2004, p. 532). On the other hand, whiteness may be seen to have fallen into disfavour in post-apartheid South Africa, and has strong connotations with imperialism, oppression, and racism. Just how these potential paradoxical effects of the researcher's position as a white woman played themselves out in the research is not known, but it is extremely likely that the effects thereof were both present and variable.

It was hypothesised that individuals with experience of interracial intimate relationships may claim power (based on knowledge and experience) over those who had not had interracial relationships; however, this was not evident in the interviews. Furthermore, within the focus groups participants were generally resistant to voicing their relationship status. Barely anyone admitted to being in an interracial intimate relationship, whereas the demographic questionnaires showed two-thirds of the participants to be in, or have a history of, such relationships.

An often-cited power differential between the researcher/interviewer and the participants relates to the "asymmetrical distribution of rights and obligations" (Lee, 1993, p. 108). As such, the interviewer may request disclosure from participants, but need not reveal anything in return. Within this study, this tension was felt, and as such the demographic questionnaires were only

seen by the researcher after the interviews had been held. During the interviews the participants were not asked direct questions by the researcher, and as such any disclosures were at the discretion of the participants. Interestingly, at the end of both focus groups, the researcher/interviewer was asked by a participant about her interest in the topic, and specifically whether she was in an interracial intimate relationship or not. In the interests of levelling the power differentials, the researcher chose to answer as honestly and as completely as possible. This transparency was made possible by the question having been posed at the end of the interview, as opposed to the beginning, so that the researcher's answer would not influence the results of the discussions.

While attention has been paid to the inherent power differentials in the research process, and attempts made to reduce these differences where possible, the researcher concurs with Shefer (1999, as cited in Macleod, 2004), that these dynamics of unequal power relations are inevitable (albeit undesirable):

> [W]hile I acknowledge the centrality of recognising power inequalities between researcher and participants, I find myself questioning the notion that it is possible to ever be anything but 'other' to the participants of one's research. … [T]he very moment I ask the question or the very moment I write the discourses on paper, without each of the participants present, constitutes a moment of representation, a moment of hiatus between 'me' and 'them'. This moment ultimately reflects one of unequal power between researcher and participants (Shefer, 1999, p. 157, as cited in Macleod, 2004, p. 534).

ANALYSIS

Thompson's (1990, p. 273) "general methodological framework for the analysis of symbolic forms" - depth hermeneutics- was employed to analyse the transcribed data. Depth hermeneutics comprises three main phases, which Thompson (1990, p. 280-281) describes as "analytically distinct dimensions of a complex interpretative process". The first phase of the depth-hermeneutical approach is social-historical analysis. This acknowledges the "historicity of human experience" and positions humans as part of the larger social-historical context (Thompson, 1990, p. 277). This is especially relevant to the South African context with its unique history of apartheid and subsequent democracy. The social-historical context is also pertinent to the research to be conducted as the history and attitudes surrounding interracial

intimate relationships are embedded in the personal and political history of the country and its citizens.

The literature review of the study contributes to this phase of socio-historical analysis. However, the socio-historical context formed an integral point of discussion in all research interviews and additionally was actively borne in mind by the researcher during the analysis of the data. A socio-historical perspective was also included in the discussion of the results.

The second phase of the depth-hermeneutical approach may be described as "formal or discursive analysis" (Thompson, 1990, p. 284). This phase analyses the structural features of the data. The researcher made use of critical discourse analysis at this point (van Dijk, 1997). Critical discourse analysts focus on social problems, particularly social inequality. They aim to be agents of change and as such make their social and political position explicit (van Dijk, 1997). Hence the researcher undertook the current study as a critical discourse analyst, aiming to uncover racism in discourses of opposition to interracial intimate relationships, and therefore be an agent of social change in the fight against racism.

Fairclough and Wodak (1997) present a version of critical discourse analysis (CDA) based on eight principles of theory or method. The eight principles are as follows: 1) CDA addresses social problems, 2) power relations are discursive, 3) discourse constitutes society and culture, 4) discourse does ideological work, 5) discourse is historical, 6) the link between text and society is mediated, 7) discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory, and 8) discourse is a form of social action. These eight principles guided the analysis of the study. The seventh principle is in keeping with the third phase of Thompson's (1990) depth-hermeneutics.

It must be stressed that the phases of the critical discourse analysis were not so much linear or sequential as much as they were cyclical. However, for the sake of clarity, a linear outline of the process will follow. The first step in the analysis of the material was to sort the text into a number of themes (Wetherell & Potter, 1992; Macleod, 2002). The material was read and re-read and thematic notes were made, giving each theme a key (e.g. 1a, 1b, 2a and 2b). Some of the themes arose from the concerns that had stimulated the research study and related to the research

questions, whereas other themes evolved out of the individual transcripts. Following Wetherell and Potter (1992), the selection was inclusive, that is, sections of talk could be seen to correspond with more than one theme.

The discursive themes are then labelled by the researcher. Parker (1992) calls for reflection on the term used to describe the discourse, as this naming or labelling involves moral and political choices on the part of the analyst. As this research is firmly situated in a critical social psychology that seeks to work for social change, as the researcher, I took an explicit stance against racism and this is observable in the manner in which I carried out the analysis, including the naming of discursive themes. The discursive analysis looked broadly at themes or topics, as well as attending to a closer textual analysis of conversational moves, and rhetorical and semantic devices (van Dijk, 1983, 1989, 1992). This closer textual analysis was not incorporated consistently throughout the texts as this would have yielded an analysis much too large for the scope of this report. The purpose of identifying thematic and rhetorical strategies lies in their function. Explicating the functions of the discourses and strategies used relates to Thompson's (1990) third phase.

The third and final phase of depth-hermeneutics is what Thompson (1990) calls interpretation/re-interpretation. This phase builds on the first two stages and then goes on to offer an "interpretative explication of what is represented or what is said" (Thompson, 1990, p. 289). This phase refers to both interpretation and re-interpretation because it is believed that the subjects who constitute the social-historical world have already interpreted the objects of interpretation. To a certain extent, the discussion accompanying the analysis in Chapter 4 includes this phase of interpretation/reinterpretation, however, this is supplemented by Chapter 5, a penultimate chapter discussing and linking theory with the results.

REFLEXIVITY IN ANALYSIS

Thompson (1990) warns that the process of interpretation is inevitably open to dispute, and an intrinsically conflict-laden affair. It is argued that the entire analysis, all three phases of Thompson's (1990) depth hermeneutics, is open to dispute and alternative interpretations. As a response to this warning, as an acknowledgement of the researcher's reflexivity, and as a guard

against a overly subjective analysis, the analytical component of the research study was, in addition to being subject to close supervision, additionally subjected to critique by a panel of academics with expertise related to the topic of study.

As discussed above, issues of reflexivity were engaged with throughout the research process, and power relations were borne in mind. This reflexivity and concern with power differentials between the researcher and the research participants extends to the analysis as well. Not only were the words of the researcher included in the transcripts as explained above, but additionally, the talk of the researcher was included in the critical discourse analysis. In line with this, the researcher was called by her first name in the transcripts and the analysis. This decision was taken so as to acknowledge the position of the researcher, as 'Claire', a white, English-speaking, South African woman in her late twenties. It was felt that referring to the researcher as 'interviewer' or 'researcher', veils her identity, and contributes to positioning her as more powerful than the participants. Although it is acknowledged that the research process inherently contains power inequalities, attempts were made to lessen these inequalities where possible, by for example, including the researcher in the analysis, and calling her by her first name. Admittedly, the inclusion of the researcher's talk in the analysis is not without problems, for instance, the analysis of one's own words may be marred by potential pitfalls of lack of distance and possibly a self-serving bias. This said, self-critique remains an important part of any research or academic endeavour, and the intrinsic difficulties thereof, do not provide sufficient justification for neglecting to attempt such an undertaking.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations included the guarantee of confidentiality to the participants and issues of informed consent. Confidentiality was ensured by the use of codes in lieu of names on all consent forms, questionnaires, and other paperwork. Efforts were made to remove identifying details from transcripts and this research report, and the raw materials (audiotapes) were destroyed at the completion of the research. Only the researcher had access to the audiotapes (which may have contained identifying details), as the researcher personally carried out all transcriptions. The names of the respondents, names of their family members, place names and

so on were removed from the dialogue in the interview transcripts to protect the identity of the respondents.

Confidentiality was guaranteed by the researcher, but could not be guaranteed on behalf of the focus group members, although it was requested, encouraged, and participants signed agreements to this effect. Anonymity could not be guaranteed. The participants were required to give their informed consent to participate in the study. Their informed consent was also required to obtain permission from them to audiotape the interviews. The subjects were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time, that they could decline to answer any questions, and that if they preferred not to be audiotaped, they would not be required to participate in the study. The participants were informed that the findings of the study would be shared with them if they so wish. Participants were told that the interviews could elicit emotions, and they were given referral contact numbers of organisations that offered counselling services (free and otherwise) should they have wished to speak to someone after participating in the study.

A DOMAIN OF THE PRIVILEGED?

The current study responds to the issues raised by both Marx and Feltham-King (2006) and Dixon and Tredoux (2006) in that it acknowledges its positioning within the privileged space of a Master of Arts research project conducted within a university setting. Furthermore, it occupies a privileged space in that the participants were all students, and mostly postgraduate students at that. It can also be predicted that the research product, as research report and potential journal articles, will also occupy a privileged position and as such, for the most part, will be accessed by privileged individuals. Macleod (2004) highlights some of the tensions related to the dissemination of knowledge, such as whether to publish in progressive publications and 'preach to the converted', or to publish in more mainstream publications, and risk losing the critical edge of the research. While decisions such as these remain to be made, the discomfort of producing research that may only reach a handful of academic elite (with access to scientific journals, and university libraries) persists.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

As indicated earlier, an inherent tension in research dealing with the topic of racism is that in order to expose and fight racism, it is necessary to use language that refers to race. Hence, the contradiction exists that in anti-racist endeavours to write about race and racism, it is possible to unintentionally re-inscribe racialised subjects, categories and asymmetries (Stevens, Franchi, & Swart, 2006). Similarly, in conducting research interviews for this study, the language of race was utilised in order to discuss interracial intimate relationships. The use of language implying the existence of various racial groups as per the discourse of the Apartheid State was inherent in the study, from the research proposal to the advertisements for participants, the demographic questionnaire, and the questions asked in the research interviews. Therefore, it is perhaps not surprising that the existence of race for the most part appeared to be uncritically accepted by the participants in this study. Race was however constructed in various ways.

RACE

The following extract from a focus group discussion illustrates the ways in which the participants grappled with the concept of race.

Extract 1:

Sophie:	Maybe the first thing is to give a definition of what race is…because it seems like years and years ago that there were lots of theories about race. [Inaudible] levels, cultural:, ethnic:., whatever. So we don't really know if we're talking about the same thing when we say race.
Claire:	What would people's definitions of race be? (.). Anyone care to have to a go?
Peter:	My **immediate** thing is colour. That's what comes to me. What that's based on I presume is just kind of my **upbringing**. That's what I attach race to, colour.
Brett:	Where do they use 'race' anywhere else as much as in South Africa? As they used to. Are there any other places where it's done as much? (.) America? (.) France? Ethnic groups rather?
Sophie:	Cultural or ethnic groups.
Brett:	Cultural or ethnic.
Sophie:	Race is very, *uh uh*. You don't say the word.
Brett:	It's un-PC. Yeah.
Sophie:	It's very **rude** to use that word. It's completely [inaudible].
Brett:	I suppose because of its association with political projects. Like the **Super Race**, and so on, the **Aryan Race**. Its just been slightly reformulated in the South African context to refer specifically to colour differences. Because the, there was no Aryan Race in South Africa. There was a white race, or the Afrikaner race.
Claire:	Mmm. But I think that notion of the 'perfect race' was still there.
Brett:	It was still there, yah.

Claire: The Volk, that they were trying to promote.

Brett: And later on, when they changed in South Africa, from **race** to **ethnic groups**, they tried to separate people out into believing they had identities within a cultural sphere, that was based on ethnic groups, like as Xhosa or Zulu and so on. But often its been argued that those don't even exist anyway. Cause there's been theories about how people have joined up. I think it comes from the French word, it means temporary breeding population, an ethnic group.

Claire: Yoh. [laughs]. Okay.

Brett: You can see how that is ideologically loaded.

Claire: Mmm. Definitely. (.). Alright, so there are different definitions of race, and whether it's a purely superficial thing about judging by skin colour and apartheid notions of hair and all the [inaudible] things they did, versus something that's socially constructed and more rich, but then we may choose another term rather than race. Culture, ethnic group, tribal group. Or possibly we may then be describing something that's more unique to a person, or a family, or something. That you say race would be the *wrong* word to use for that.

Sophie: Race is um, an ideological construct that was created to divide people, and to, to, create some kind of um (.).

Brett: Order.

Sophie: Yah, that's it I think. For me race is only about that. And um, the only reason why people still talk about race, and think that it still exists is because we see different colours:, different hair. So for me it's important to, well my definition race is something **made up**, and it's not a reality, but it doesn't mean we're not different. There are lots of differences. But, um, (.), I wouldn't say that there's the human race. [Inaudible] different categories. For me it's very strange when here are people saying 'I belong to this race', 'I belong to that race'. Because I'm French, I think. [Inaudible] French but also because I'm of mixed (.) um parentage.

In Extract 1 above, various themes connected with 'race' emerge. The five themes that stand out are 1) the intersection of race and racism with ethnicity and culture, 2) race as an ideological construct, 3) race as visible, 4) race as a legacy of apartheid, and 5) race as linked to eugenics. These five themes are not separate from one another but rather intersect at various points and participants freely jump from one theme to another. The enmeshed nature of the themes and how the participants use them makes a linear analysis and discussion difficult. Consequently in discussing one theme, reference is made to one or more of the other themes. Furthermore, the themes are oftentimes evident throughout the data collected for the study, and where relevant, further illustrative examples are provided.

The intersection of race and racism with ethnicity and culture

Sophie states that in France you would replace the word "race" with "cultural or ethnic group" because "it's very *rude* to use that word" [race]. Brett agrees that it is "un-PC", that is, not politically correct, to use the word 'race'. Race is then equated with ethnic groups. Brett is somewhat critical of this shift of terminology from "race" to "ethnic group", ascribing this

change to an act by "them", presumably a reference to the Nationalist government of the old South Africa:

Brett: And later on, when *they* changed in South Africa, from **race** to **ethnic groups**, *they* tried to separate people out into believing they had identities within a cultural sphere, that was based on ethnic groups, like as Xhosa or Zulu and so on.

In this way Brett seems to acknowledge that this change in terminology was no less ideologically loaded, and the terminology, whether "race" or "ethnic groups", was a socially constructed political strategy in the service of institutionalised racism in the form of apartheid. This is congruent with the observation of Stevens *et al*. (2006, p. 61) that "[e]thnic or cultural differences essentially come to mean racial differences, but reflect more socially desirable articulations thereof". Claire distinguishes between the definition of race that is "superficial", that is based on "skin colour and apartheid notions of hair", and a definition that is "socially constructed". She refers to the latter conception of race as more in keeping with terms like "[c]ulture, ethnic group, tribal group". However, she fails to acknowledge that *both* these conceptions of race are socially constructed. In the history of South Africa, as well as in the present day, the "discursively engineered association between the category of ethnicity-culture and the debunked category of race allows for a re-inscription of race in public discourses, and indeed the further reinforcement of the category" (Stevens *et al*., 2006, p. 65).

Culture

Culture is a nebulous and contested term, and oftentimes the lexical items 'culture' or 'ethnicity' simply take the place of the term 'race'. While 'culture' or 'ethnicity' may be seen as more 'politically-correct', these terms are nonetheless essentialist in their communication of the belief of the superiority of one race/culture/ethnic group over another, primarily that of the superiority of white people over black people. The following extract shows how 'culture' is used as a euphemism for 'race', with 'culture' being equated to 'colour':

Extract 2:

Peter: I was kind of wondering, I haven't really thought it through, but somewhere, kind of being willing to **entertain** a *cross-cultural* relationship, somewhere says something to me about feeling less threatened. About an identity of somekind. Your whiteness, your blackness, or your Indianness or whatever. Um, but haven't got more to say. The less threatened you feel in that colour identity, I guess, the more open you are to explore **other** cultures, other *colours*.

In terms of 'culture', black, Indian, Italian, Greek, and Portuguese cultures were portrayed as "strong" or rich, whereas white "Anglo-Saxon" South African culture was portrayed as less "strong". This provides support for Steyn's (2001) research on whiteness in South Africa in which one of her participants said, "[w]hiteness is boring- superficial and very thin in comparison with the black/brown spirit – rhythm, joy, love, kindness, simplicity – and everything that counts a great deal" (p. 122). Furthermore, Steyn's (200, p. 122) participants spoke of "the poverty in the white culture".

In the extract below, Susan describes white "Anglo-Saxon" South Africans as being "wishy-washy", almost culture-less. This ties in with the idea of the privileged dominant group being defined by an absence or a 'normalness' that is not seen; if you are white you are devoid of race, devoid of culture (McDermott & Samson, 2005). This will be explored more fully in the section on 'whiteness'.

Extract 3:

Claire:	Okay. So we've been speaking quite a lot about Paul's culture. Do you feel that you come with a culture of your own Susan?
Susan:	It's hard to say, I think, like a lot of, I'm sure I'm not the only white person who kinda, the blacks have such a strong heritage, and the Chinese such a strong heritage, Indian, like white – I don't know, so mixed. I guess we have the normal Anglo-Saxon traditions where we were growing up. At Christmas we'd have a turkey, Easter we'd have an Easter hunt:.
Claire:	Mmm hmm
Susan:	But you know, nothing really distinct. Maybe just white South African or Anglo-Saxon. No not really. Like I said, my mother raised us to go to church, but when I became a teenager I pretty much decided to stop going. Other than that, nothing. I don't know, I guess I feel South-African. I don't know how you can define that.
Claire:	Okay. And would you tend to agree with that Paul, that as white South Africans, people tend to feel a bit// culture-less?
Susan:	// wishy washy [laughs]
Paul:	I think Anglo-Saxon, ja. But if the person is Italian or Greek, or Portuguese, the culture is a lot stronger. I think even Afrikaans people, have got a lot stronger culture than Anglo-Saxon people. I think there is a culture there, but it's difficult to define. It's very very subtle. But there is a difference and there is a culture there. Just very difficult to define.

The belief that African indigenous culture is inferior to the Westernised culture of white South Africans is expressed by Steve Biko (1998, p. 26, as cited in Hook, 2004, p. 107): "To justify its exploitative basis the Anglo-Boer culture has at all times been directed at bestowing an inferior

status on all cultural aspects of the indigenous people". Undertones of cultural racism, which refers to the 'degradation of and assault on another race's culture, their history, language, arts, their modes of expression, their traditional values and ideals as inferior or worthless" (Duncan *et al*., 2004, p. 384), are inherent in the ways participants spoke about African culture compared to white, Westernised cultures.

Extract 4:

Claire:	Okay. Alright. And so you guys have spoken a bit about getting introduced to each other's different cultures and traditions and stuff. Sounds like you are learning a bit more about it?
Julie:	[laughs]. It's more me being introduced to his culture, cause they're very like traditional, like they sacrifice cows and stuff. Which means that if he and I eventually got married I would have to like //
Tshepo:	// [gasps]
Julie:	// cook the blood and stuff like that.
Claire:	Mm hmm
Julie:	And at first when he told me that they do this kind of thing I was shocked because I thought they only do this kind of thing in like *rural rural* Africa.
Claire:	You were like ' but you're modern people!'
Julie:	[laughs]. Seriously.
Claire:	Okay, so that was a big shock for you.
Julie:	And he went and told all his friends how shocked I was.
Tshepo:	This is like one of the priceless, [her] face. You tell her this, and nothing else exists in her head except this little sentence you just told her. She's like 'what? Shit!' I think she's never paid so much attention. She's like 'seriously?' You're like 'Yes. It does happen'. And then she hears stuff about like tradition and stuff, like the girl having to start coming to the boyfriend's house, she has to start showing the mother-in-law she can actually do things, she doesn't just come visit and lay around. She must always offer 'Ma'am would you like some tea' and stuff. She heard about that. And I'm like 'no way. If my mom's like 'give me a hand', give her a hand'. The other girls at school telling her she has to do this for her boyfriend's mother. And then she comes 'Baby, do I have to do this every time?' She comes to check with me.
Julie:	Cause I don't know any better.

In Extract 4 Julie says that "[I]t's more [her] being introduced to [her partner's] culture" than him being introduced to her culture. This conveys the idea that her (white, Western) culture requires no introduction, it is the norm. Tshepo's African culture is depicted as somewhat barbaric with the references to "sacrifice cows and stuff" and "cook the blood and stuff". Tshepo gasps as Julie mentions cooking the blood. This serves to communicate that he too on some level finds it shocking, but also subverts this by mocking her. Another rhetorical device used by Julie is her use of the pronoun "they", referring to Tshepo's cultural group, or Africans in general,

setting up an 'us' versus 'them' dichotomy. The use of repetition and emphasis in "*rural rural* Africa", also serves to highlight the uncivilised nature of "this kind of thing" that "they" do in "*rural rural* Africa". Julie's end remark that she "[doesn't] know any better", reiterates how she is necessarily ignorant of the ways of Tshepo's culture. Julie proceeds to talk about how Tshepo's cultural practices were "a big shock":

Extract 5:

Julie: So it was just a big shock. I didn't think people still did that kind of thing. And knowing that I have to participate as well. It was 'ok', but I love him more, so I'll do it. I'll suck it up…. Cause our traditions are really not that hectic. It's just like Christmas, we all get chocolate. Saint Nicholas. It's more like children's traditions that we all do. It's not like killing an animal. [laughs]

In Extract 5 Julie's cultural racism is apparent. Her comment that "I didn't think people still did that kind of thing" positions the cultural practice of slaughtering as primitive. Her willingness to "participate" is constructed as evidence of her love for him: "I love him more, so I'll do it. I'll suck it up". Julie then contrasts her traditions with Tshepo's traditions. Hers are said to be "not that hectic" and "like children's traditions", far removed from "killing an animal". In this way Western traditions are innocent ("like children"), as opposed to the barbarism of killing animals.

Kwezi also comments on traditions and slaughtering:

Extract 6:

Kwezi: Now you wanna be model C::, now you wanna come here with your accent [laughter]. They'd say you wanna turn away from your traditions. They'd say you have to get married according to our way. And what I've noticed, white people, they love that. Cause I had a friend, she's coloured, her mother is black and then her father's white. Whenever they slaughter, you know we like slaughtering cows and all, the guy's always happy, he'd bring his friends. If you were to be engaged with black people, *you'd get used to it and see there's nothing wrong with it*. We like sitting in a circle, on top of stones, like they'd be sitting there having fun, eating whatever's being eaten. So I say it depends on how

Claire: Okay, they can take on the black culture as well.

Kwezi remarks "you'd get used to it and see there's nothing wrong with it". However, in this remark she conveys her feelings that white people are likely to see that there is something wrong with slaughtering, and that they need to be convinced otherwise. In order to convince her audience of this fact she relates a story about a white man who is happy when the family slaughters and brings all of his friends to the event.

The discursive strategy of racism being (poorly) disguised as concerns about one's culture is dealt with under the section 'The denial, negation, and justification of racism'.

Race as an ideological construct

Returning to Extract 1, Sophie attempts to introduce a more critical conception of "race", declaring it an "ideological construct that was created to divide people" (line 40). Brett completes Sophie's utterance by saying that 'race' was constructed so as to create "order". However, this idea of creating order is ambiguous. It can be assumed that Brett means that the ideology of race and racism acts to create social hierarchies and establish a social order based on the privilege of the ruling classes. There is also however a racist undertone of meaning which taps into the discourse of order needing to be established by the white ruling classes with the purpose of supposedly saving the black natives from the uncivilised chaos that would otherwise ensue.

It is pertinent to note that Sophie, who is at pains to expose 'race' as an ideological construct in the service of racism and social asymmetry, returns to the idea of physical differences between people of different 'races'. In her attempts to negate the existence of race, she re-inscribes the notion of race as a biological marker, observable by appearance. Her difficulty in overcoming dominant essentialist and binary discourses on race is also evident by the contradiction in her saying that she finds it strange when people claim membership to a racial group (because for her race is "made-up"), but she then refers to her own "mixed parentage", and in so doing asserts the binary existence of races and her exclusion from and/or mixture of these racial categories.

Later on in the same focus group discussion Sophie returns to the definition of race as an ideological concept, but once again in her attempt to refute the essentialism associated with the concept, she contradicts herself by reinforcing the essentialist notion of race as a real directly observable entity:

Extract 7:

Sophie: = Yes! Because race is a concept, I think. And, it's not something natural.
Claire: Something manmade.
Sophie: yes! I think //
Kwezi: //It doesn't matter at all I think

Sophie: = Yes because I think we can make a parallel between sex/gender and race/culture. Something like that. People, um, you can tell that someone is a man or a woman because physically you can see, you know, appearance, and about race, you would say that someone is black or white or Asian because you see it. But um (.) it doesn't mean that it should define you as an individual, I think, even if you're sexually a man or a woman, it doesn't mean you have, well society tells you so, but doesn't mean that your gender must be, stick to your. For instance in France you can be black, but be French//

Kwezi: // At the same time

Sophie begins by negating that 'race' is "natural" and concurs with Claire's statement that race is manmade. In Sophie's likening of the relationship between sex and gender to that between race and culture, she constructs race as natural. She posits that like being born with sexual organs associated with the female or male sex, one is also born with physical characteristics of a certain race group ("black or white or Asian"). She then goes on to say that just because individuals are born a woman or a man, they should not be forced by society to conform to stereotypical gender roles. The implication is that people can choose their sexual orientation and the way in which they perform their gender identity. Applying this argument to the race/culture relationship results in the idea that individuals are born into a certain racial group, but that they can choose how to live out that racial identity by choosing a 'cultural' preference. This is illustrated by the example of being "black, but…French". So despite Sophie's introductory statement that race is not natural, her argument serves to show how it is indeed natural. As 'natural' as it is to be born male or female, one is born black or white. Although Sophie asserts that people are presented with choices in terms of how they live out their gender or sexuality, for instance you could be a masculine woman or a feminine man, the physical attributes still determine people's sex, whether they are indeed a woman or a man. In terms of race then, this discourse posits that your race is determined by your physical attributes, but that you may choose which 'cultural' group you claim membership to, that is, for example, as a black person living in France you could claim a French or an African cultural identity. However, whether French or African, you cannot escape that 'blackness', the essential characteristic of race is predetermined. Essentialism continues to reappear, because in choosing your cultural affiliation, a cultural essentialism is communicated. Thus, there is an essentialist notion of what it means to be 'French' or any other cultural or national group.

As discussed above, Sophie's initial statement that race is not natural, is followed by an argument that ironically supports the idea that race is in actual fact 'natural'- that people are born into a racial group. Kwezi expresses how she finds racial classifications "natural":

Extract 8:

Kwezi: [inaudible]. I find it [race classifications of self and others] natural I think, cause I've never travelled, I've never been outside South Africa. So I've never had like the examples like you guys had now. Classifications, I find them normal. I think its normal. They ask you all the time.
Claire: You don't find them offensive?
Kwezi: No I don't find them offensive at all.
Claire: And when you see people kind of automatically put them into a category?
Kwezi: I'd say, ja::. The different races: black, white, Indian, coloured. I think its cause South Africa has those categories.

Race as visible

A recurring theme in the focus groups and couple interviews was the notion of race being based on physical features, such as skin colour and tone, type of hair and shape and colour of eyes. The following extracts are exemplars of the belief in race as linked to physical appearance:

Extract 9:

Claire: What would people's definitions of race be? (.). Anyone care to have to a go?
Peter: My *immediate* thing is colour. That's what comes to me… That's what I attach race to, colour.

Extract 10:

Sophie: …Black people will call me maybe white because of my eyes.

Extract 11:

Lotus: …'Ag, but you all look the same". [All Asians look the same]

Extract 12:

Sophie: So, my grandmother, she's got Indian ancestors, so she would be called a 'coolie'. So she's dark but her hair is (.)
Lotus: Straight
Sophie: Straight. And one of my uncles has got eyes, like how do you say it?
Lotus: Almond shaped
Sophie: Almond shaped.

Extract 13:

Sophie: …. . And um, the only reason why people still talk about race, and think that it still exists is because we see different colours:, different hair….

In Extract 13 above, the statement by Sophie seems to imply that although race is an ideological construct (Miles, 1999), it's existence is justified by physical differences ("we see different colours:, different hair") . This suggests that if it were not for the physical differences in appearance by people from different races, then the existence of race would be shown to be false. This is essentialism in the extreme, communicating the idea that if people could look the same, they would be the same. If 'race' were not visible, it would cease to exist. This is in keeping with Australia and New Zealand's attempts to eradicate people of colour by intermarriage and in so doing, solve the 'race problem' (Grimshaw, 2002). The idea that problems related to race can be erased by creating societies that are homogenous in appearance flies in the face of the reality of South Africa. Although race may be socially constructed term, it has come to have a very real meaning, as manifested in the vast social inequalities that exist between the poor have-nots, and the rich elite, with the former being overwhelmingly situated in the black majority, and the latter in the white minority (Terre Blanche, 2006). A literal whitening of skin or straightening of hair to lessen differences in appearance will in no way contribute to closing the gap between the poor (blacks) and rich (whites). This focus on the physical markers of race is well documented in literature, from how social hierarchies are based on skin tone and hair texture (Fanon, 1967; Henriques, 1968), to how discourses on white supremacy rely heavily on references to physical differences as indicative of deeper underlying differences (Ferber, 1999).

Race as a legacy of apartheid

Returning to Extract 1 and the themes that emerged in connection with race, the first three themes identified, namely 1) the intersection of race and racism with ethnicity and culture, 2) race as an ideological construct, and 3) race as made visible in appearance, have been discussed above. The discussion now turns to the fourth identified theme, race as a legacy of apartheid. An excerpt from Extract 1 is presented below as it illustrates the discursive theme of 'race' as a legacy of apartheid.

Excerpt from Extract 1:

Claire: What would people's definitions of race be? (.). Anyone care to have to a go?
Peter: My **immediate** thing is colour. That's what comes to me. What that's based on I presume is just kind of my **upbringing**. That's what I attach race to, colour.
Brett: *Where do they use 'race' anywhere else as much as in South Africa?* As they used to.

Brett's words "as they used to" clearly refer to a pre-democratic South Africa and the apartheid state. Peter associates race with "colour", which has been discussed above. However, he explains that he bases this definition of race on his "upbringing". This may be seen to be referring to his parents and their beliefs, which they may have instilled in Peter, but it seems to more explicitly be a reference to growing up during apartheid.

The following extracts are additional examples of the theme of race as a legacy of apartheid:

Extract 33:

Sophie: …So I think that I came to South Africa because maybe, first it was important for me to come to Africa because of my history, and also to go to a country where race is something conscious, even if it was for bad reasons. Because of apartheid.

Extract 34:

Sophie: I have a question. Coming from abroad, I'm French, I wonder when looking at interracial relationships, do you define race as under apartheid or [inaudible]?
Claire: Would anyone like to answer?
Peter: *Ja. I think under apartheid it was white, black, Indian, coloured. I think it's still the same questions. Now.*
Debbie: Sort of like those words though, lost, people have adopted them. Like I don't think 'black' is such a **loaded** word, what do you think? They don't have the same **weight** that they had *in the past*.
Peter: Same negative connotation. Ja.

Extract 35:

Susan: That's interesting, it's almost as if the whole legislature apartheid grading system got kind of mirrored, in like you know, into the mindsets of white is best, black is the worst. I wonder if it's just a South African thing. Maybe it's a universal thing?

Extract 36:

Claire: …do you feel there has been any change in South Africa since the end of apartheid really? You're probably too young to really say.
Paul: Uh (.), I think there definitely has been. There is still some underlying racism.
Susan: The airport hey?
Paul: Ja, it's still there, in many people, *especially the older people, it's entrenched, and I don't think you gonna get away from it.* But I do think it's, you can say it's a good thing or a

> bad thing, but now what people do is, it is kept under check. Which I do think it's a good thing. Okay, you still a racist, but it's not as blatant.

In Extract 33 Sophie asserts that in South Africa, "race is something conscious"…"[b]*ecause of apartheid"*. She says that although the reason why race is conscious is "bad", that is, apartheid is "bad", the fact that race is "conscious" held appeal, she felt it was important for her to travel to South Africa to experience this.

Peter explains to Sophie that 'race' under apartheid was delineated into "white, black, Indian, coloured" (Extract 34). He goes on to say "I think it's still the same questions. Now." It is unclear what he means by "questions", but what is clearly communicated is that in present day South Africa 'race' still translates into apartheid categories of "white, black, Indian, coloured". Debbie argues that "people have adopted" the racial terms and that they are no longer such "loaded" words, "[t]hey don't have the same weight that they had in the past". It is pertinent to note that Debbie is white, and as such it is debatable as whether she can claim that "black" is no longer a loaded word in South Africa. In their position as privileged white South Africans it is easy for Debbie and Peter to assert that racial markers no longer carry the weight they bore "in the past". Peter's utterance of "[s]ame negative connotation" is ambiguous as it is uncertain whether he is saying that race continues to have a "negative connotation" or whether he feels race is now devoid of these connotations.

Constructing race as a legacy of apartheid explains its continuing presence in South African social landscape. A continued focus on race is oftentimes necessary in order to redress the inequities of the past, however the uncritical and unreflexive use of these categories is problematic. Terre Blanche's (2006) argument that the legacy of apartheid discourse "continues to be used to position government as an unwilling heir to, and therefore not responsible for, economic disparities" (p. 81), holds parallels with the use of the legacy of apartheid discourse in talk on race, racism, and interracial intimate relationships in the current study. The discursive strategy of race as legacy of apartheid has the effect of discursively neutralising race and racial categories. Race is said to be a legacy of apartheid in that it lives on, and its presence is thus said to be understandable, almost justified. Susan sees race as a legacy of apartheid as living on in

people's mindsets: " the whole legislature apartheid grading system got kind of mirrored, in like you know, into the mindsets of white is best, black is the worst" (Extract 35).

The 'race is a legacy of apartheid' discursive theme results in an unquestioning acceptance of the continuing existence of racial categories and racism. Racism is said to "entrenched", "especially [in] the older people" and it is here to stay ("don't think you gonna get away from it") (Extract 36). Furthermore, this racism is almost excused by virtue of it being so "entrenched" or "ingrained" in the words and actions of white racists. This kind of racism is hence almost naturalised or normalised, an 'unintentional' racism. Extract 37 presented below, is representative of this 'unintentional racism' discourse. This unintentional racism as a result of being brought up in the apartheid era even "comes across" within interracial intimate relationships, as expressed by Caroline.

Extract 37:

Caroline:	Um, (.) I'm not quite sure really. My partner is saying that all people are racist, in some form. Even if they're not outright racist. [Inaudible]. *Things that they grew up with, they might think black people are like this,* so that comes across in the relationship. He might say something, and might not realise that he's being racist. I don't know if that makes sense?
Claire:	That it is so ingrained. People don't realise that what they're saying is actually racist.
Caroline:	Yah.
Sophie:	Especially the [inaudible]. Education.
Claire:	Ja. People are referring a lot to upbringing. Especially being brought up in apartheid almost.
Denise:	You see it all the time. The way people **react** and **respond** to other people. They **often** don't even **realise** that they behave differently, they speak differently [towards people of other races]. *It's so ingrained. And it's quite hard I think to help somebody become aware of that, if they're unaware.*

<u>Apartheid is over, hence racism is dead</u>

The discursive theme of race (and racism) as a legacy of apartheid explains and even justifies why race and racism persist in post-apartheid South Africa. Standing in opposition to this, is the discourse that 'apartheid is over, hence racism is dead'. In Extract 37, Kwezi's remarks link to this discursive theme that 'apartheid is over, hence racism is dead'. She said: "*it's more of way **then*** [apartheid era], Afrikaners were the ones who were oppressing black people. So maybe I have that mentality that, even though it is democratic now". This discursive theme results in Kwezi chastising herself for feeling that racism still exists. Because "it is democratic now" she

feels that she may no longer have the "mentality" that people discriminate against her because she is black. She feels guilty for going against the popular discourse that apartheid and racism are dead and buried, as evidenced in her statement that "I feel like I'm making up an excuse". She is reluctant to admit that she is not in fact making up excuses, but that her current life experience shows racism to be alive and well. Kwezi almost blames herself for this, and feels the burden of somehow disproving the continuing existence of racism ("*Even though I'm trying hard to disregard it. I'm trying to prove myself otherwise*"). Kwezi appears to feel so bad about contradicting the 'apartheid is over, so racism is dead' popular discourse that she feels that the burden of proof to show that she is wrong, racism is dead, rests on her, even as victim of racism.

Extract 38:

Kwezi: You know when it comes to Afrikaners, I have this opinion that I feel they don't like blacks at all. I can't even explain this, I feel like I'm making up an excuse
…They don't hide it [racism] there. Those Afrikaners. I don't see myself dating an Afrikaner guy. [inaudible]. *Maybe they don't have it [racism], it's more of way then [apartheid era], Afrikaners were the ones who were oppressing black people. So maybe I have that mentality that, even though it is democratic now…*

Claire: So do you think your current experiences continue to prove that [Afrikaners are racist]?

Kwezi: Mmm hmm. *Even though I'm trying hard to disregard it. I'm trying to prove myself otherwise.*

Although the 'legacy of apartheid' discourse blames apartheid for the racial disparities and inequalities, (and rightly so), it is acknowledged that the ending of apartheid does not magically erase the racial disparities. In the extract below Paul talks about how the system of apartheid and its institutionalised racism led him to feel ashamed of not being white. He goes on to say that now he is starting to feel proud of his Chinese culture and roots, however, he says this is not "a post-apartheid thing" but rather has "to do with getting [older], maturing. And being more comfortable with yourself".

Extract 39:

Paul: …The older we've gotten, especially maybe after about 22 23, you start looking back at where you come from and your culture and your roots. You still consider yourself South African but you also want to start finding out a bit more, and you start being more proud of that. Because I think, growing up, I think maybe what apartheid has done, is that if you're not white, you almost feel ashamed….And I think, and I don't know if it's necessarily a post-apartheid thing, I do also think it has to do with getting, maturing. And being more comfortable with yourself…

Race as linked to eugenics

Having discussed the first four themes connected with race, namely, 1) the intersection of race and racism with ethnicity and culture, 2) race as an ideological construct, 3) race as visible, and 4) race as a legacy of apartheid, the discussion of the fifth identified theme, 5) race as linked to eugenics, follows. Returning to Extract 1, the concept race is linked with ideas about the "Super Race" or "Aryan Race", bringing Hitler and Eugenics to mind. This is then linked with the South African notion of 'Die Volk' as a super race. (This notion of a white super race will be further discussed in the section on 'Whiteness'). Despite the fact that only one explicit comment is articulated in respect of the theme of 'race as linked to eugenics', this topic nonetheless underlies many of the other themes identified in the corpus of texts analysed. The eugenics movement continues to exert an extremely significant influence on contemporary racism (Ferber, 1999) and cannot be ignored.

Excerpt from Extract 1:

Sophie:	Race is very, **uh uh**. You don't say the word.
Brett:	It's un-PC. Yeah.
Sophie:	It's very **rude** to use that word. It's completely [inaudible].
Brett:	I suppose because of its association with political projects. Like the **Super Race**, and so on, the **Aryan Race**. Its just been slightly reformulated in the South African context to refer specifically to colour differences. Because the, there was no Aryan Race in South Africa. There was a white race, or the Afrikaner race.
Claire:	Mmm. But I think that notion of the 'perfect race' was still there.
Brett:	It was still there, yah.
Claire:	The Volk, that they were trying to promote.

In the excerpt above, the Super Race, or the Aryan Race is said to have the South African equivalents of the South African "white race" or the "Afrikaner race". This notion of the Afrikaners being a white super race, with the name of "Die Volk" is paralleled with the Nazi discourse of World War Two and their desire to create a "perfect race". In both cases white supremacy is presupposed, and hence the inferiority of 'non-whites', be it people of colour or Jews. The association of whiteness with the 'Afrikaner race' was also made in discourses on whiteness in South Africa. Indeed, Steyn (2001) emphasises that there is a marked division between English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking white South Africans, and that this manifests in different constructions of whiteness.

WHITENESS

The 'invisibility' of whiteness in the discursive themes on race

Although whiteness is not explicitly mentioned in the discursive themes of race previously analysed and discussed, bar the naming of the Afrikaner white (perfect) race in the excerpt above associating race with eugenics, whiteness is implicit in the talk about race and racism. In the five themes identified as relating to talk on the subject of race, that is, 1) the intersection of race and racism with ethnicity and culture, 2) race as an ideological construct, 3) race as made visible in appearance, 4) race as a legacy of apartheid, and 5) race as linked to eugenics, whiteness did not arise as an overt theme, however, its absence reinforces how whiteness is intrinsically connected to discourses on race.

In the theme of the intersection of race with ethnicity and culture, 'non-white' cultures were portrayed as "strong" or rich, whereas 'white' cultures were portrayed as less "strong". Susan even described white "Anglo-Saxon" South Africans as being "wishy-washy", almost culture-less (Extract 3). This ties in with the idea of the privileged dominant group being defined by an absence or a 'normalness' that is not seen; if you are white you are supposedly devoid of race, devoid of culture (McDermott & Samson, 2005). Although the South African population is overwhelmingly black, with whites in the numerical minority, 'white culture' is still the norm, with whites still being dominant over blacks in many ways, and whiteness asserting its dominance and superiority over blackness. Sonn (2006) writes that those in the dominant (white) group do not reflect on their cultural identities because their culture is the 'norm'. Thus, whiteness is often invisible (Sonn, 2006), with whites being unreflexive about their privileged position as whites. This may explain why Susan does not even recognise her culture as existing – it is "wishy-washy" and "culture-less". Julie also sees her 'white' culture as almost invisible, and certainly sanitised in comparison with the black African culture of her partner.

In the first theme discussed, the invisibility of whiteness coincided with cultural racism whereby 'white' culture was seen as superior to non-white culture. For an instance of this recall Julie's words that " [i]t's more like children's traditions that we all do. It's not like killing an animal" (Extract 5) alluding to the innocence of 'white' traditions as opposed to the barbaric nature of 'black' traditions, such as slaughtering.

The second identified theme addressed 'race' as an ideological construct (Miles, 1999). This discursive theme involved conceptualising race as an ideological construct that was "created to divide people", and to "create order" (Extract 1). The notion of whiteness is implicit in that it was whites as the dominant group who have created 'race' in order to assert and maintain their privileged position in society. Paradoxically, in Sophie's attempt to support her argument for race as socially constructed and ideologically loaded, she made strong reference to physical markers of race, which is the next theme connected to race.

The discursive theme of race as made visible by appearance draws on old-fashioned essential racism that states that race is directly observable (Ferber, 1999). The implication is furthermore that these differences in appearance are indicative of differences that position whites as superior to blacks. Whiteness is again said to be the norm, and blackness the deviation. The implicit value judgement is that a 'white' appearance is prized over a 'black' appearance, that is, straight hair is better than ethnic hair, the paler the skin the better, and so forth (Fanon, 1967; Henriques, 1968).

The notion of the exotic Other and of racialised stereotypes are set up in relation to whiteness. In Extract 24 Matthew talks about the "ideal image" of the white man, or indeed the white male lover. Again whiteness is the invisible norm, and racialised sexual stereotypes of other racial groups are positioned as deviating from this white norm - for instance, the hypersexuality of black females (see Extract 40 below) and the submissiveness of Asian females (see excerpt from Extract 27 below). There is no mention of the sexuality of white females, as this is accepted as 'normal' and hence requires neither comment nor explanation; whiteness as the privileged position is once again implicit but invisible. However, what is taken to be the 'normal' sexuality of white women no doubt relies on the stereotypes of the white woman as chaste, pure, and virginal, and in need of protection from the stereotypical brutal black male rapist (Childs, 2005; hooks, 1990).

Extract 40:

Susan: …They has this programme on the other day, and something about in terms of black and white, there's more relationships with black men and white women than the other way around because the black women are always perceived as like prostitutes, something like that.

Excerpt from Extract 27:

Lotus: = I'm not your stereotypical Asian woman **at all**. If you think I'm gonna be quiet and submissive and wash you off after sex, forget it. But those are the images that exist of a lot of Asian women. And **a lot of** white guys, and probably some black guys in America, walk around with those, and will only date um Asian women.

In the fourth discursive theme, race as a legacy of apartheid, racial categories are truthfully recognised as being hand-me-downs of apartheid. Hence whiteness is again implicitly implicated, as it was the white government that created race and institutionalised racism. Furthermore, this racism is almost excused by virtue of it being so "entrenched" or "ingrained" in the words and actions of white racists.

The last theme identified in relation to race, is that of the association between race and eugenics. This theme explicitly refers to the superiority of whiteness over non-whiteness. Whiteness in the context of South Africa is also strongly linked with Afrikaners (see Extract 1).

To be considered white is a slap in the face (because whites are the enemy)

In keeping with the above-mentioned references to apartheid and the white Nationalist government, discourses on whiteness included the theme of whites as the enemy. In the extract below Lotus talks about how horrified she was to be classified as white, because she did not want to be seen as "the enemy".

Extract 41:

Lotus: …I was just saying my first experience working in [area in South Africa] in a rural area, I was viewed as white, which came as a huge shock to me.
Kwezi: [inaudible – if you're Asian you are classified as white]
Claire: So how did you feel about that Lotus?
Lotus: *I was horrified*. [All laugh]
Lotus: *Cause I'd grown up, my politicisation process was very much as a person of colour.*
Claire: Okay
Lotus: *= so to be considered white was a slap in the face you know. I'm not the enemy* [humorous] [all laugh (a lot)]
Lotus: *= Not me. I'm one of **you***. Don't you understand? It was actually really interesting cause at the time I was running a training programme…and so I needed everyone to feel comfortable with me. And clearly *if they saw me as white there would be a huge gap and they wouldn't be able to relate*. So I actually stopped whatever I was doing and I spent an **hour** talking about myself.
Claire: Mmm hmm

Lotus: = Where I came from and what my experience was…. And that *I was under no circumstances, my own estimation,* ***white.***

In the above extract being white is equated to being the "enemy". Lotus utilises the 'us versus them' strategy when she says "[n]ot me. I'm one of **you**". She contends that she needed the members of this rural community to feel comfortable with her. The stated belief is that her being classified as white would prevent the community members from feeling comfortable with her. She explains that "if they saw [her] as white there would be a huge gap and they wouldn't be able to relate". In this way whiteness is constructed as a barrier that closes a door to interpersonal relating. Interestingly, Lotus places the onus on the community members to relate to her, and not the other way around, that is, if *they* saw her as white, *they* would not be able to relate. One wonders perhaps whether Lotus felt that if she saw herself as white she would not be able to relate to the community? She strongly felt the need to identify as " a person of colour", in order to close the "gap" and to not be seen as "the enemy". (Also see Extract 45 for another example of the discourse of white as enemy). In order to clarify whether she is white or not, Lotus draws on race as defined by "[w]here [people] come from and what [their] experience was". From Lotus' account, it is suggested that 'race as made visible by appearance' is more prominent and accessible discourse than race as determined by 'where you come from and what your experience is'. She looked white to the community members, and to convince them otherwise Lotus "spent an hour talking about [her]self". Lotus emphasises her distance from whiteness by using the absolute phrase "under no circumstances" ("I was under no circumstances, my own estimation, **white**").

Sophie also expressed how she was offended by being called white:

Extract 42:

Sophie: Sometimes, actually I get offended when black people call me white. Because in France I would be more related to, cause my ancestors are West Indian, so people always see me as black or non-white. So it's very disturbing for me, but also its very interesting, because I want to define myself, so I don't want French people to say I'm black and I don't want South African people to say I'm white. So it's also, okay, I'm the only one who can tell you who I am…

Interestingly Sophie says she gets "offended when black people call [her] white". This implies that she, like Lotus, wishes to be seen to belong to the black population in South Africa. It is particularly important for her to not be called white by "South African people". Thus to be called white in South Africa is offensive as whiteness has negative connotations, presumably in relation to apartheid, and ostensibly current day racism as well.

Mind the 'gap' created by whiteness

In Extract 41 above, Lotus said that if black South Africans saw her as white, "there would be a huge gap" and they would not be able to relate to her. The direction of this relatedness is questionable, that is, would they not be able to relate to her, or her to them? What is significant at this point is that she felt the perceived whiteness would create a "gap". The following extract by Sophie also coveys the notion that whiteness creates boundaries that cannot be overcome.

Extract 43:

Sophie: I've always been brought up in a very conscious, my mother is very, you know, about race, blackness. My mother I think realised a year ago that we experience racism and that she couldn't feel the same way as we did about that. Because she's my mother. Me, my brother and my father [experienced racism]. And she felt she could understand everything because she's part of the family. *But she's a white woman. So there are things that she can't understand*. Yah, it was actually two weeks ago, that actually, we were talking, we are always talking about it, but then that she felt that '*okay, I can't understand. I love you, but this I won't, I've never experienced that'*.

Sophie explains that although her mother is very conscious of race and of blackness, and is a part of a family of people of colour, she can never fully experience racism nor understand it. Because Sophie's mother is " a white woman…there are things that she can't understand". The extract asserts that no matter how much Sophie's mother loves her husband and her children, a certain world of experience, that of what it is like to not be white, will always be closed to her. Sophie seems to suggest that in spite of family bonds, "[t]he white man (sic) is sealed in his whiteness. The black man (sic) in his blackness" (Fanon, 1967, p. 9). In light of the supposed impassability of the barrier created by whiteness, it is apt to question whether Sophie (and possibly all the black participants in the study) felt that the researcher, as a white woman, is also unable to fully understand the phenomenon of racism?

Whiteness and privilege

Whiteness was associated with privilege in many ways, some of which are 'unseen'. This receives strong support in the literature on whiteness (McDermott & Samson, 2005; Roediger, 1991; Wray, 2006). Whites were constructed as rich, the 'haves', contrasted against the black 'have-nots' (Extracts 44 and 45). Furthermore whites were depicted as materialistic. In terms of interracial intimate relationships, it was said that in order to attract a white mate you need to have money and a car (Extract 44). This precondition of interracial relationships also was said to apply to friendships ("if I have it [money] then that will be easier for me to be friends"). Kwezi contrasted this precondition with black-black friendships where the friend with money would pay for the less wealthy friend to go out ("If she doesn't have money I can take her out when I have money"). This agreement was said to exist because they "understand each other", and presumably both parties understand what it is like to not always have money.

Extract 44:

Kwezi: So they decided if you have money, you can date a white person, that's what they usually say. If you don't have money she won't even look at you. And I'd say even cars. If you have a car, they say, "I think I can get her cause I have a car". If you don't have it they like "Uh oh she won't want to walk with me". Those are just perceptions cause I don't think all white people are like that, that is what I've noticed through socialising with them. If you have money that will be [inaudible], if I have it then that will be easier for me to be friends. Cause always wanting to go out. And you say no, like, making excuses. If I call my friend and the she's like "I can't come" I'm gonna stop calling her cause if she doesn't want to go out. I understand her. If she doesn't have money I can take her out when I have money. It's more of we understand each other than [inaudible].

Extract 45:

Kwezi: Some of them get this excitement, you know white person came, chances are you wanna tell them something nice, or maybe you might give them something nice, clothes, maybe she has some clothes for us, then they'd love you for that. And then some boys would think "she probably has a car, we're gonna wait somewhere for her. We wanna take that car". "She probably has a phone, we wanna take that phone"; cause it's more of a revenge sort of, cause they did that to us and now it's payback time".

In Extract 45 above the "white person" is constructed as benevolent ("chances are you wanna tell them something nice, or maybe you might give them something nice, clothes, maybe she has some clothes for us, then they'd love you for that"). What is interesting to note is how the speaker Kwezi makes use of pronouns, alternating between "them" and "us" in reference to the

black people in the township who "get this excitement" when a white person enters the area. This may be indicative of Kwezi's dual identification with both the poor township people as well as the more affluent suburban whites. Kwezi speaks about her straddling both worlds, by being from the township, but now becoming distanced from it by virtue of her university education and social mixing with people from different racial and socio-economic groups. Kwezi goes on to construct crime perpetrated by blacks against whites as "revenge" and "payback time". When she talks about this notion of revenge crimes for the oppression black people suffered under the apartheid regime, her pronouns identify herself as on the side of the black avengers ("cause they did that to us and now its payback time"). This also ties in with the theme above of whites as the "enemy" (Extract 41).

The above extracts clearly show that the material privileges of being born white in South Africa, both during apartheid and currently, are obvious to those who were and are denied such privileges as a direct or indirect result of their non-whiteness. Despite the emergence of a new black elite, the overwhelming majority of South Africa's poor continues to be black (Everatt, 2003, as cited in Bowman, Seedat, Duncan & Burrows, 2006). Although the privileges of whiteness are clearly visible to those in the non-white out-group, for the members of the dominant white in-group, many of the privileges remain 'invisible' as they (the whites) are blissfully unaware of many ways in which their whiteness makes life easier for them. Take for example Extract 46 below:

Extract 46:

Claire: (.) I think growing up in South Africa, you get used to being classified. But um, ja. *I guess it's easy for me. I fit into a group*. But what I don't like is for instance when you fill in a form and it's got European or Caucasian. And I'm not European. I'm just not European. What you'd like to say is African. And there's this debate, whether white South Africans can call themselves African.

Extract 47:

Debbie: It's weird at the same time as comfortable, like I wrote white and then thought 'Ah, I should have write Caucasian' [laughter] You do still, you know, you're aware of it.

Peter: Sensitive to it.

In Extract 46 Claire states that "it's easy for [her. [She] fit[s] into a group". This easiness is contrasted against the difficulty of non-whites identifying with a racial group as per the apartheid

classification system. It is “easy” to identify as “white”, there are no negative consequences, rather only positive consequences of non-discrimination and advantage. It is much less easy to choose between being identified as Indian, coloured, or black, as each of these categories came to be ideologically loaded as well as occupy different places in the hierarchy of race in apartheid South Africa. Furthermore, generally the choice was not up to individuals to make, but rather was enforced by officialdom. When Claire says she fits into a group, this is also in reference to Sophie’s argument that she does not fit into a group as she is of mixed parentage. Thus whiteness is once again implicitly positioned as the norm, with other racial identities constructed as deviant from this norm. Although in binary notions of race (white/non-white or white/black) the opposite end of the dichotomy still occupies a place, the racially ‘mixed’ person challenges this dichotomy, and does not “fit into a group”.

Due to the ‘invisible’ privilege of whiteness, many whites do not even question their categorisation of ‘white’ (McDermott & Samson, 2005). They only comment on the different synonyms for whiteness: “Caucasian”, “European” and “white” (Extracts 46 and 47). Although Claire says she would like to call herself “African”, she follows this statement with reference to “white South Africans” wanting to call themselves “African”, hence implying the notion of the *white* African. Steyn’s (2001) research on the construction of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa also identified a discursive theme relating to construction of the ‘white African’.

Debbie’s comment that she should rather have written “Caucasian” as opposed to “white” is without further explanation or clarification by her (Extract 47). Goldstein (1999, as cited in McDermott & Samson, 2005) notes that the term ‘Caucasian’ is often preferred by more educated respondents, and that this may be indicative of a desire to “disassociate themselves from the associations of whiteness with social dominance” (McDermott & Samson, 2005, p. 247). Peter agrees that he is also “sensitive to it” – the “it” being whiteness, or how their whiteness is portrayed or named. If whiteness is associated with being the “enemy”, or responsible for a “gap” that separates whites from non-whites, then the term ‘Caucasian’ may indeed be employed as a distance marker from whiteness, and the negative connotations of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa.

Another example of the invisible privilege of whiteness can be seen in the extract below where Debbie, as a white woman, prioritises gender over race, or at least questions why race is "so much more loaded than gender?" It can be argued that it is easy for Debbie to prioritise gender over race in her identity, as her race is the 'normal', dominant group, whereas women are constructed as inferior to men. Debbie's likening of sexual preference ("I only like men") to racial preference ("'Oh, I only like blacks' or 'I only like whites'") is interesting for various reasons. As whiteness occupies the dominant position in the racist racial hierarchy, so too does heterosexuality occupy the dominant position in the heterosexist hierarchy of sexual orientation. Whiteness and heterosexuality are the normalised standards against which blackness and homosexuality (and other forms of sexuality) are found deviant and 'less-than'.

Extract 48:

Debbie: Yah, but I guess you could do the same thing with gender, to make it more controversial. Does he like me 'cause I'm a woman? **Would** this person like me as much if I were a man? So for some people there might be a strong preference, that they **wouldn't** like me so much if I were. So why is race so much more loaded than gender? And we're comfortable to say 'Oh, I only like men' but we're not comfortable to say 'Oh, I only like blacks' or 'I only like whites'.

"You wanna be white"

In keeping with discourses on whiteness that position whiteness as superior to other racialised identity categories, Paul expressed how "if you're not white, you feel ashamed". In Extract 49 he talks about being "ashamed of your own culture". Cultural racism has already been discussed in the section on 'the intersection of race and racism with ethnicity and culture'; and this extract may suggest that Paul has to some extent internalised this cultural racism. Susan recalls that a few years ago Paul had said that he felt "it would be so much easier if [he] were white". The interviewer assumed that this was specifically related to Susan and Paul's relationship, that is, the relationship would be easier if he were white. However, Paul corrects the interviewer by clarifying that he felt it would be easier if he were white " [i]n life in general". Paul agrees with Susan that he no longer has the same "attitude" about this, and he attributes this to "maturing" and "being more proud" of his "culture" and "roots". However, Paul's argument that he no longer wishes he were white is not totally convincing. His declaration, "[y]ou wanna be white", is not in the past tense, and his statement that, "[y]ou always think white is better" conveys that

he still feels this way, as evidenced by the "always". Furthermore, Paul only says he no longer feels that "it would be so much easier if [he] were white" in response to his partner Susan's leading question to that effect (Extract 49).

Extract 39:

Paul: …The older we've gotten, especially maybe after about 22 23, you start looking back at where you come from and your culture and your roots. You still consider yourself South African but you also want to start finding out a bit more, and you start being more proud of that. Because I think, growing up, I think maybe what apartheid has done, is that if you're not white, you almost feel ashamed. You wanna be white. You always think that white is better. And that you're almost ashamed of your own culture. And I think, and I don't know if it's necessarily a post-apartheid thing, I do also think it has to do with getting, maturing. And being more comfortable with yourself…

Extract 49 (follows on from Extract 39 above):

Claire: =Okay
Susan: = I remember when we first started going out, and you [Paul] said something like it would be so much easier if you were white
Paul: //umm
Susan: But now I don't know if you have the same (.) attitude
Paul: = No I don't.
Susan: = ja. And that's been a matter of [inaudible] [the last few/five years]
Claire: *So you said it would be easier if you were white*? [to Paul]
Paul: *Ja.*
Claire: *= Okay. You mean, just in terms of you guys' relationship*?
Paul: *No, no, no. I was just talking about in general. In life in general. Ja.*

The sentiment expressed above by Paul may be seen as echoing the words of Frantz Fanon: "The black man wants to be white" (1967, p. 9). However, Paul expresses the view that in many ways life may have been easier if he were white, but this speaks of the racism of society, rather than any real superiority of whites. The only reason Fanon's (1967) black man wants to be white is because of the psychological and material privileges of being white in a racist society.

DISCOURSES ON INTERRACIAL INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

"[C]olours have to match"

In keeping with the construction of race 'as visible' discussed above, the notion of race as directly observable in physical characteristics was also related to talk about interracial intimate relationships:

Extract 14:

Susan: … and she said even John my brother and his wife Zuraida, she just didn't like it cause she's so dark, cause she's very dark, and he's white. And I said what about Paul and I? No, Paul's light, it's not a problem. But as soon as the skin colour goes darker, it's just purely physiological.
Claire: Okay
Susan: = She didn't like the idea… and she has a set idea that colours have to match. So she has no problem with Paul and I, but Zuraida and John she's still not quite sure.
Claire: Okay. And if your sister-in-law was, you know, paler, it would be okay?
Susan: = It would be fine.
Claire: = She's just too dark
Susan: She's just too dark. Ja. [laugh]
Claire: So literally about the skin colour
Susan: Ja. Which I found really funny [laugh]

Extract 15:

Lotus: [My husband's] parent's had a harder time, which is interesting, because [his] mom is black, but she's lighter than I am, and she goes to a white hair salon cause she has, it's kind of wavy.

In Extract 15 Lotus is relating how her husband's parents were more troubled by the difference in race between her and her husband than her parents were. Lotus expresses her puzzlement that her mother-in-law felt opposition to having her as a daughter-in-law because Lotus is not black. Lotus is puzzled about this because although her mother-in-law is black, she is literally paler than Lotus (who is Korean), and has 'white' hair. Lotus is negating the "blackness" of her mother-in-law based on her skin tone and hair texture. Hence Lotus is defining race as physical appearance, and is saying that in terms of skin colour she is 'blacker' than her mother-in-law, and so could not understand the opposition to her marrying her black spouse. It can be deduced that for Lotus' mother-in-law, being 'black' was not about literal skin colour; however, this notion of blackness as not dependent on physical characteristics seems to elude Lotus.

Drawn to difference

The idea of sexual attraction based on physical appearance and racial characteristics also found expression in the talk of participants. Extracts 16,17, and 18 illustrate how participants freely spoke about how they are attracted to people based on race. Susan tells how she has always been attracted to "different races" (Extract 16), and how the fact that her partner is Chinese is "the very first thing that attracted [her to him] and it will continue to attract [her]" (Extract 17). In

Extract 18 Kwezi speaks of her attraction to a male classmate based purely on his typically 'white' feature of being blue-eyed.

Extract 16:

Susan: …So, um, and funny enough I've always seemed to be attracted to, opposite, to different races. I've been out, nothing serious, but little short one to three month little dating stints with a Jordanian guy, a guy from, black South African, Indian South African. Um, Ja, just completely, I don't know for some reason, it's always been, it's probably what actually first attracted me to Paul. That was the initial attraction….

Extract 17:

Susan: So, obviously I'm cognisant that Paul is Chinese, obviously it was the very first thing that attracted me and it will continue to attract me. I kind of really admire it and I'm fascinated by it and it's really part of him that I love. Like when I went to China with [family relative] and Paul wasn't there, it was like "Oh! This is so amazing". And everything just reminded me of Paul.

Claire: Made you miss him.

Susan: Ja, it did. I can't say that I ignore it, obviously I forget that he is [Chinese], but these things are still very important, and they're still very much part of what I love about Paul.

Extract 18:

Kwezi: ... Okay, like in my class, thank God there's no one from my class here, okay in my class there's this guy and he's tall and he has blue eyes, and he's built. I'm attracted to him because of these features.

Experimentation

Interracial intimate relationships were said to be "experimentation". Brett introduces the idea of interracial intimate relationships as experimentation in Extract 19 below. He qualifies it by saying that he only uses "experimentation" "for want of a better word". This "experimentation" is portrayed as a luxury of the upper socio-economic groups. Intimate interracial relationships are said to unusual, but once other people are doing it, "suddenly it becomes, there's an okayishness about it, an acceptability". Peter's use of the word "okayishness" implies that it may become accepted by society, but it certainly remains abnormal. It is not okay, but only "okay-ish". The suffix of "ish" can be taken to mean that it is somewhat okay, but not entirely. Furthermore, the use of the word "pioneer" constructs the white person entering into a sexual relationship with the black exotic Other as an explorer. This notion of being a "pioneer" could be seen in a more positive light of showing the way forward, where one's choice of mate transcends the socially constructed notion of race; but the idea of "pioneer" as conqueror or colonist seems to

overshadow the former notion, based on the history of colonialism and race relations in South Africa and in the rest of the world.

Extract 19:

Brett: Maybe the lower socio-economic groups, there's not as much room for, for want of a better word, experimentation. Um. That you might just not get the opportunity to interact at that kind of level, with people of different race groups because of your station in life, or what you do.

Peter: And you know what that kind of ties into as well, cause other people don't see it happening. Cause when you're exposed to it and you *see* other people doing it, suddenly it becomes, there's an okayishness about it, an acceptability. But if no one ever does it for whatever reasons, it is so much more difficult to break into it. Because you don't want to be a pioneer in that kind of field. So it kind of ties together.

Another extract further illustrates the discourse of interracial intimate relationships as "experimentation". In Extract 20 below Matthew concurs with the notion of experimentation by calling interracial relationships "project[s]".

Extract 20:

Matthew: I think there is something in that. When you have mixed relationship, there's always there's aspiration, it is something different now, because it is a mixed relationship. Beyond your ordinary. I think it can be almost like a project. More of a project. If it doesn't work out, it is a failure of this project. So I think there can be this pressure. Because you draw much more attention.

Following on from Extract 19 above, a few moments later in the same focus group, the interviewer attempts to bring the discussion back to the concept of "experimentation". See Extract 21 below.

Extract 21:

Claire: Brett, you also mentioned *experimentation*?
Brett: Ja.
Claire: So do you think that's what it is? Curiosity about someone different?
Brett: I think so, yah.
Claire: Ja. Any comments on that? The notion of it being experimentation.
Peter: *Interesting.*
Claire: Mmm.
Debbie: Ja, //curiosity.
Peter: //But I also kind of wonder (.) ja, what happens if, because if I go out with a white girl then I'm not *experimenting*, so kind of *why* if I go out with someone of a different *colour*? And I wasn't attacking, like you said, it just kind of struck me as kind of, somehow we make *sense* of of of it, by, okay he's interested in her culture, she's

interested in his culture. Other than 'I don't know, shit, I just really like that girl!' You know what I'm saying? But I don't know. It could be.

Brett: Yeah, I think it was more, not so much experimenting, it's just the, I had to think of a word , to make the, to say what I was trying to say.

…

Brett: But I think//

Lesego: // I just think. I don't think it's the word experimentation, but you don't necessarily *go* into a relationship (.), if a, I don't know how to say this, um, based on (.) based on race or whatever. People go into a relationship because you find something *interesting* about the person. So if a black and a white couple go out, right? It's about finding out about, I don't know, it's not finding out (.), okay, let me think about it and I'll come back to you.

Brett: It might be a bit *crude*. You don't go into the whole thing with the thought that 'I'm experimenting'.

Claire: =Mmm

Brett: = But at a deeper level, maybe it *is* there.

Claire: At an unconscious level

Brett: At an unconscious level, maybe you *are*

Peter: =Probably both *and* ja

Brett: =You'll never like to admit to yourself that you go in with such a modus operandi into a relationship. 'Well I'm going to go, I think that girl's interesting'. 'Um, and this is why'. As you say on an unconscious level it might be there. That's why you were attracted to them. Cause certain things are new to you in your eyes, whether they are there or not objectively.

Claire: = Mmm

Brett: = For everyone else to see. It might be in your mind. It might be. You might not realise how interested you are in a certain aspect of that person.

The group seems reluctant to expand on the idea, as shown by Peter and Debbie's one-word responses of "interesting" and "curiosity". These abrupt responses seem to indicate their disagreement with the idea of interracial intimate relationships as "experimentation". Peter indeed goes on to challenge the idea of "experimentation". However, it is interesting that he does this, as his prior statement in Extract 19, with his reference to being a "pioneer" seemed to concur with and expand on the experimentation theme. Peter utilises various conversational strategies highlighted by van Dijk (1983, 1989, 1990, 1992). Peter says, "And I wasn't attacking" in a pre-emptive strategy to defend himself. What this utterance does though, is paradoxically imply that he is indeed attacking Brett's notion of "experimentation". By challenging the 'experimentation' theme Peter distances himself from Brett, and also mitigates his earlier comment in Extract 19 above. Peter seems eager to avoid looking like a racist and so challenges the notion of "experimentation". He also replaces racial terms with "culture" ("okay he's interested in her culture, she's interested in his culture"), presumably because he feels this is more acceptable and politically correct. However, Peter is also anxious not to cause dissent in the

focus group, and so ends his statement with, “But I don’t know. It could be”. Brett immediately retracts his notion of “experimentation”.

When Lesego enters the interaction she begins to voice her disagreement with the idea that interracial relationships are “experiments”. Her interrupting Brett may indicate that she feels strongly about the issue at hand, however, she loses confidence and does not complete her argument, ending with “I don’t know, it’s not finding out (.), okay, let me think about it and I’ll come back to you”. It is pertinent to note that the main speakers at this point have all been white (Brett and Peter) and somewhat older than Lesego, who is a young black female.

Responding to Lesego, Brett continues trying to save face and represent himself positively (i.e. as not a racist) by an apparent admission that yes, it “might” be “crude” to think of interracial intimate relationships as “experimentation”. He then makes use of denial, saying, “you don’t go into the whole thing with the thought that ‘I’m experimenting’”, but concedes that it may be the case “at a deeper level” or an “unconscious” level. To refer back to Brett’s explanation:

Brett:	As you say on an unconscious level it might be there. That’s why you were attracted to them. Cause certain things are new to you in your eyes, whether they are there or not objectively.
Claire:	= Mmm
Brett:	= For everyone else to see. It might be in your mind. It might be. You might not realise how interested you are in a certain aspect of that person.

The references to a “deeper” “unconscious” level, may be said to suggest that an attraction to people from a different racial group, and we can infer, more specifically the attraction of white men to black women (based on the speaker, Brett’s demographics) may be connected to unconscious libidinal urges (Hook, 2006a). Although euphemistically stated, the “certain things” and “ a certain aspect of that person” may allude to racialised sexual stereotypes and the exotic Other. Brett again uses strategies of face saving and positive self-presentation. Firstly, by attributing the desire to “experiment”, and the attraction based on racial sexual stereotypes to the “unconscious” he simultaneously constructs it as natural, but also as beyond one’s control[4]. Secondly, he utilises the second person pronoun “you”, for example “*You* might not realise how

[4] (See Hook 2006a and 2006b for a discussion of the psychoanalytic concepts of the racial Other, abjection, racial stereotypes and fetishism).

interested *you* are in a certain aspect of that person" as opposed to '*I* may not realise…'. Thirdly, Brett negates the validity of the implied sexual stereotype or attraction to the exotic Other by suggesting that it is not objective reality ("whether they are there or not objectively for everyone else to see") and that "it might be in your mind". However, he is non-committal by using the terms "whether" and "might" (repeated thrice in quick succession), communicating uncertainty or a resistance to unequivocally state his view.

Later on in the same focus group discussion Brett talks about "exoticism" more openly (see Extract 22 below). He may have felt more comfortable doing so as Matthew had already mentioned "exoticism" and Brett could therefore attribute the term to someone else. Brett uses the term "always" twice. This has the effect of supposedly normalising what he is saying. He is trying to impress upon the listener that it "always" happens that one is attracted to some "exotic" element of difference in a potential partner. He equates these notions of difference as "idealised positive notion[s]" of what people "are". The idea that people "are" a certain way based on race or gender is pure essentialism.

Extract 22:

Brett: It's what you [Matthew] said, exoticism. That's what it is. Experimenting. But you have where there's any kind of differences. Whether its gender:, racial:, whatever. There's always some element of the exotic. You always go into a relationship with someone else, thinking, having an idealised positive notion of what they are. So, it's just a matter of, it doesn't live up to the reality maybe, of whether it works or not.

There are various examples of racialised sexual stereotypes being characterised as "positive" or "ideal". The following extracts depict talk about racialised sexual stereotypes. In Extract 23 Brett states how you could (or would) have a "bias" for black partners once you have had one black partner. Although his understanding of "bias" is supposedly in the sense of a positive bias, he uses the adage, "Once you've tasted black you never go back" to support this claim. It can be argued that this adage is explicitly racist. Furthermore, he says that a "barrier" needs to be broken before a white person can be in a sexual relationship with a black person. It is unclear what the "barrier" refers to, but it can be constructed to carry racist undertones.

Extract 23:

Brett: Yah. There's also that saying, that uh, how does it go? I heard it a long time ago. Once you've tasted black you never go back. And there's always some sort of truth to those things. It's like once you've broken through that **barrier**, then maybe you are, you don't, necessarily look at white women, as these are the people I should go for. It's more open. And you might even tend to start to have a *bias* for black people.

Extract 24:

Matthew: I think it is a quite a difficult question because you know sometimes [clears throat], I also talk to some black people, and then ask them do they think they want to go out with a white man. It's like, they have an *ideal image*, that is white man. He's going to bring me flowers:, and he's going to be very nice. This sort of exoticism. Sort of an ideal thing. Now is it racist? Cause it is a preconceived idea of how this man is going to be. Just because he's white.

Extract 25:

Debbie: We started that conversation saying is it racism? The idea that maybe the white man is going to bring flowers. I was thinking is that racial sentiment as opposed to racism?
Claire: So if it's positive its racial sentiment, but if it's negative// its racism?
Debbie: // discriminatory yah. Is there such a distinction or not? I don't know.

In Extracts 24 and 25 above, it is questioned whether all stereotypes are racist, regardless of whether they are 'positive' or negative'. It is put forward by Debbie that positive racial stereotypes are not racism but merely expressions of "racial sentiment". It seems that this was the implicit equation in the above extracts, that is, if the racialised stereotype is positive, then it is not racist, and the individuals voicing the stereotypes cannot be accused of racism. The act of evaluating the stereotypical and essentialist notions of people as "positive" or "ideal" could perhaps be seen as strategy of denying racism.

Sophie states her view that prejudices may be "good or bad", but that either way they heavily influence why people are attracted to one another. Although she emphasises that she is attracted to her black boyfriend primarily because of his personhood, by her saying "he's a person first", she suggests that first she is attracted to him as a person, but thereafter all the sexual stereotypes come into play.

Extract 26:

Sophie: I've already thought about that question because I think the reason why you're attracted to someone is possibly linked to your prejudices that you have about them, *even if they're*

good, well no matter if they're good or bad. Mmm, I don't know because, I've never been with a black man before, and well I've just, I have kind of a relationship with a black man now…And I've thought about it. I've thought why? Well I know that I'm attracted to him because he's a person first

Claire: Mmm hmm

Sophie: = But I know I also have these images, especially [clears throat] when you talk about desire. Desire is built on, I think, images. Like memories:, films, pictures, dreams whatever. So you never really know why.

Claire: Okay, that people aren't actually aware of why you are attracted to somebody.

Sophie: Sometimes you imagine…All the prejudices that you have, especially linked to sexuality. Like, you know, the idea that you have about black women:, Asian: women:, white women:, the way that they deal with their sexuality and all this. All the images that we have.

Contesting racialised sexual stereotypes

In Extract 26 above, Sophie alluded to the sexual stereotypes of women based on race. Lotus most explicitly speaks about these stereotypes, particularly the sexual stereotypes of Asian women (see Extract 27). Although the extracts above are representative of an uncritical acceptance of these stereotypes, the extracts below (27-32) counteract this with participants voicing their scepticism of attraction based on racialised sexual stereotypes.

Extract 27:

Lotus: I would run as fast as I could away from a guy//

Claire: // mmm

Lotus: // if I knew that he only dated Asian women. Because I'm always highly suspicious, because to me it indicates that they have some kind of preconceived notion //

Claire: // Ja

Kwezi: //Ja

Lotus: //of about what Asian women are gonna be like. And in the first place I'm not that.

Claire: = Ja

Lotus: = I'm not your stereotypical Asian woman at all. If you think I'm gonna be quiet and submissive and wash you off after sex, forget it. But those are the images that exist of a lot of Asian women. And a lot of white guys, and probably some black guys in America, walk around with those, and will only date um Asian women. And they can say well this is what I'm attracted to, but I think you really need to question why. And sometimes it's just weird and freaky and inappropriate and based on some prejudices and stereotypes

Claire: = Almost a fetish thing

Lotus: = Ja ja.

Extract: 28:

Peter: I suppose we could go one step earlier. I would be suspicious of someone who had a pattern of consistently choosing the opposite race. Or a different, not the opposite. Because what's that about? Are they looking for skin colour or or? Or the culture? Or are they looking for the person? Cause I think okay they're not looking for the person,

they're looking for the physical attribute if that seems to be the pattern. It is a bit of a generalization. But I kind of wonder.

Extract 29:

Debbie: I would resent that. If somebody asked me out cause I was white. If I were reduced to that, I find it very unromantic.

Extract 30:

Lesego: // I just think. I don't think it's the word experimentation, but you don't necessarily *go* into a relationship (.), if a, I don't know how to say this, um, based on (.) based on race or whatever. People go into a relationship because you find something *interesting* about the person.

Extract 31:

Peter: **You're not your hair**. You're not your **colour**. You'd really want the appeal to be something
Debbie: =more

Extract 32:

Sophie: Maybe the question is what is a person made of? Because you can say I only like someone who dates me because I'm white or because I'm a woman. But, um, if you are attracted to someone it is because this person is made up of many different things, and, mm, usually the first time you assume that people are that way because they are black, or because you are a *woman*, or you are a man. But maybe you are completely different [from other men/women etc]. Maybe the question is what is a person?

The notion of the exotic Other and of racialised stereotypes are set up in relation to whiteness, as discussed previously.

Just a 'normal' couple?

Interracial intimate relationships were constructed as both 'normal' or 'abnormal' within the corpus of texts analysed.

Normal

In Extracts 95 and 96 below Paul and Susan respectively emphasise how their relationship is normal, or rather the problems that they experience in their relationship are "completely normal, run-of-the-mill couple problems" (Extract 96). They are at pains to negate any influence of race within their relationship. In Extract 97 Lesego also normalises interracial relationships, saying they are "nothing new to [her]". Lotus does not negate the influence of race in her interracial marriage, but rather downplays the racial difference between her and her husband and highlights

the similarities – that they are both minority groups in the United States, and that they share other attributes, such as class, education, religion, and values (Extract 98). Lotus uses a binary conception of race, that of white/black, and puts herself on the black side, thereby aligning with her black husband. Thus although these participants all use the discourse of 'normality' quite differently, the discourse serves the same function – to normalise interracial relationships, especially their own, and to thereby create cohesion between the partners. The discourse of 'normalising' acts as an affront to the discourse that portrays interracial intimate relationships as 'abnormal'.

Extract 95:

Claire: And then, since you guys moved in together? That was what, how many years was that ago?
Paul: As long as I've been at [current place of employment], so three-and-a-half years.
Claire: Mmm hmm. And how's that been? Stumbling blocks? Plain sailing?
Paul: No. I think the *normal* stuff. Just more getting used to someone else's, their habits and stuff like that.

Extract 96:

Susan: Sjoe. Whatever problems we do have, *they are completely normal, run-of-the-mill couple problems.*

Extract 97:

Lesego: It's funny, I was at JCE the other day and there was this, a black and a Chinese couple. So my friend and I were walking past. Like I don't care. *For me it's normal.*
Claire: And how did you feel that she was staring?
Lesego: To me I find [my friend staring at an interracial couple] funny actually. [Laughs] It was funny, cause I'm used to it, so. It's nothing new to me.

Extract 98:

Lotus: …Because in the long run while [my husband] and I are from different racial groups, because we came from similar background in terms of class, in terms of educational levels, and because we are both Christian, and share a lot of similar values. And I think the other experience I talked about in terms of being a minority and often the token, [my husband] had a very similar experience, he went to predominantly white schools, and was one of very few blacks, and so we share that experience as well. Of maybe having to prove yourself. Having to be better than everybody else just to be accepted. And things like that. So in the long run I think those things, the level of education ends up **mattering**, as well as the values.

Abnormal

Contradicting the discursive strategy of constructing interracial intimate relationships as 'normal', there were also instances where these relationships were constructing as 'abnormal'. In Extract 100 Debbie states that interracial relationships are no longer a "huge novelty" and that "you don't necessarily look twice". (The word "necessarily" implies that in some instances you may still look twice though). Debbie goes on to talk about the response to the portrayal of interracial relationships in the plays she performed at schools. She says that sometimes the interracial aspect was a "huge novelty" and sometimes "they don't even notice" the interracial aspect, but only talk about "the normal sex stuff". In Extract 101 interracial relationships are again constructed as "something different" and "[b]eyond your ordinary".

Extract 99:

Lesego: My friend turned around and she had to **look twice** [at the interracial couple]. Cause it's new to her. It's not something that she's used to. So it's gonna come up. You have to mix and stuff like that. It's just strange for her to see something like that.

Extract 100:

Debbie: It feels like the middle of the process to me. Like **years ago** it would have been **really** the topic of conversation and it would have been a huge novelty. Now it's like settling in, like you don't necessarily look twice. Like I think, for our children, it will be completely, not such a. I was thinking I did a lot of **plays** in the Eastern Cape and Joburg on sort of safe sex and things, in primary schools and high schools... But you would find a lot of variation in the response, and I think in the plays, with the black and white, um factor. And sometimes it's a huge novelty with lots of [inaudible] and sometimes they don't even notice that, in the question and answer, they just talk about *the normal sex stuff*.

Extract 101:

Matthew: I think there is something in that. When you have mixed relationship, there's always there's aspiration, it is *something different now*, because it is a mixed relationship. *Beyond your ordinary.*

Although the talk about interracial intimate relationships as "strange", "a huge novelty", "different" and "beyond the ordinary" are not depicting these relationships as wrong, or an abomination, but rather as a thing of interest and fascination, they still serve to highlight racial differences and reify race. So although not explicitly derogatory in nature, they may still be seen to contribute to the perpetuation of racism by the uncritical acceptance of racial categories.

Furthermore, the implicit connotations of normal as 'good' and 'abnormal' as bad persist. People generally prefer to fit-in, not stand out, and pass for 'normal'.

"It depends on where you go"

A common discursive theme running through the corpus of texts analysed related to the divides between cities and small towns, suburbs and townships, and urban and rural areas in terms of the prevalence and acceptance of interracial intimate relationships. Johannesburg was characterised as having more interracial couples (Extracts 102, 103,104) whereas Cape Town was said by one participant to be "not so accommodating" (Extract 103). Townships were said to be the exclusive domain of blacks (Extract 105), and hence devoid of interracial relationships (Extract 104), whereas more mixing was possible in the suburbs (Extract 105). People in Asian racial minority groups expressed their discomfort at being in small towns or historically Afrikaans towns, and expressed that they felt most comfortable in Johannesburg (Extracts 106 and 107). The acceptance of interracial relationships was said to be correlated to the prevalence of these relationships, although the directionality of this relationship was not stated. Geographical locations were also linked with class, which was in turn associated with socio-economic status and education levels.

Extract 102:

Brett: I've also noticed there's more interracial couples in Johannesburg than …from Grahamstown. And very rarely do you see interracial couples there.

Extract 103:

Caroline: Yah, yah. At first when we went out, when I started going out with my boyfriend, I think we were also very much aware of people like **staring** at us. This was in Cape Town. [Inaudible]. Cape Town's not so accommodating as what I thought. We had this, people staring at us all the time. And we went on holiday to this small town, small town somewhere in the Eastern Cape. You get people staring at you and going 'Ah!' It's getting there slowly. It's different in Joburg, but definitely in some parts of South Africa [inaudible]…You get more and more couples in Joburg. People are more used to you. And I also think it depends on where you **go.** [Inaudible]

Extract 104:

Lotus: … I think you do see more acceptance or a greater comfort level with racial mixing. Whether it's dating or just friendship. The comfort level changed. Again it would be different if you did this at a Wits setting or someplace like Rosebank. It's cool. It's okay. But if you go to the township, probably still huge gaps.

Extract 105:

Kwezi: It's like she [Sophie] said, it depends on your class. Say like you stay in the suburbs, you are likely to meet like white people and Indians. But if you're from the township, you only get closer to them in lectures and through group work.

Extract 106:

Lotus: It has to do with what you're comfortable with. I think it would be the same difference between, leaving here, leaving Johannesburg, going and leaving here and immersing yourself in Piet Retief. Or somewhere in the Orange Free State. It would just feel so strange. Cause this is the place that has the vibe, in part because it is so mixed, and you hear all these different languages all the time. So that's what I'm personally comfortable with.

Extract 107:

Paul: Ja, even here. I think Joburg is probably the city in South Africa where I feel most comfortable. If I go to small towns, let's say we stop off somewhere. I feel far more conspicuous in a rural town. Even, Pretoria, I feel very very, I don't like Pretoria. I don't like Pretoria. It might also be my own mind set. I don't feel that uncomfortable there.

In Extract 108 below (which continues from Extract 102) Brett explains the absence of interracial intimate relationships in the small town of Grahamstown by reason of the "the socio-economic differences" between the racial groups in the area. There are said to be more interracial relationships in university settings. This may be attributed to the likelihood of there being greater similarities in terms of financial status, class, and education levels between university students, regardless of race. Universities were also said to be places of "diversity" and to be "[c]osmopolitan"; furthermore, it was suggested that being "exposed" to this "diversity" would increase the chances of individuals entering into interracial relationships (Extract 109).

Extract 108:

Brett: …Especially not in the local (.) environment, you'll never find, it's a got a lot to do with *the socio-economic differences*, the **great disparities**, but you'll never find interracials, especially between black and white. Um (.). You'll find it at the University. There might find a few (.) international cross-racial relationships. Um, but I definitely notice that in Johannesburg there's more.

Extract 109:

Debbie: It's also context. Places like universities where you get that, diversity.
Brett: = Cosmopolitan
Debbie: = Where you're exposed to it.

Although Extracts 108 and 109 are representative of talk about university settings being conducive to interracial friendships and romantic relationships, there were also instances where this point was ambiguous, or even contested. The university where the study took place and where the participants attended, was variously said to be "racially integrated " (Extract 110), "so divided" (Extract 111), or a place where "very close engagement" between races occurs, even though this may very rarely cause people to look on with fascination (Extract 112).

Extract 110:

Susan: …But I think it depends what circles you move in. Like I think because I'm part of the Wits, like we were saying that Wits is a lot more like racially integrated, and most people don't even bat an eyelid, but as soon as you move out of the circles, they like "oh wow, ok, what does your family think, what does his family think?"

Extract 111:

Lesego: Well, I went to a mixed school. And when I came to Wits it was a *shock* to the system because everyone was so *divided*.
Brett: At Wits?
Lesego: *At Wits*. It was so divided. Cause white people hung around with white. Especially like, I have this friend in my class; we were very close at school. And *because* there's this thing of white people hang out with white people and black people hang out with black people, I hardly speak to her. Because of that. It's very. It's not what I expected basically. Let's just put it that way…There was more [integration at school], *much* more. We used to just chill and hang around. Do whatever. There was nothing like that's a white hangout, that's a black hangout.
Claire: On just a friendship level?
Brett: And more than that? Relationships?
Lesego: There were lots of (.) interracial relationships. *A lot*.

Extract 112:

Matthew: …You know, here people. Here at Wits I was just talking with my black friend. And we were plotting something and you could see it was a very close engagement, and this woman, she was just fascinated. And it was something I've never seen before.

The denial, negation, and justification of the racism implicit in opposition to interracial intimate relationships

In the corpus of texts analysed racism was frequently either denied outright, negated or excused on some grounds, or justified. The function of these discursive strategies was primarily face-saving (or face-keeping as van Dijk calls it), that is, positive self presentation by means of dismissing any accusation of racism by the speaker (van Dijk, 1992). Mostly the speakers denied, negated, or justified their own racism, but often they also used these strategies to attempt

to nullify the racism of others. Kasese-Hara (2006) argues that denial is a characteristic response of many whites to the issue of racism in post-apartheid South Africa. It makes sense that people engage in positive self-presentation, and desire to represent themselves in a favourable light. However, what function does the dismissal of others' racism serve, especially by the targets of this racism?

In cases where individuals deny, negate, or justify the racism of family members, it can be argued that this is still with the aim of face-saving, as they do not wish to admit to the racism of their family members as it reflects badly on themselves and their families. Furthermore, dismissing racism in these instances may serve to protect the individuals when they or their partners are on the receiving end of this racism. To deny, negate or justify the racism is to attempt to insulate oneself or one's loved ones from the hurt caused by others' racist actions. The attempt to protect oneself from the negative effects (and affects) of racism may also be the dominant function of denying, negating and justifying the racism of strangers, however the motivation to do this would arguably be stronger when the perpetrator of racism is someone known and loved.

The discourse previously identified of 'apartheid is over, hence racism is dead' may also play a role in the denial, negation or justification of racism by those on the receiving end of such racism. Individuals may feel pressure to conform to dominant popular discourses. Additionally, South Africa is currently being portrayed by popular culture and the mass media as a country 'alive with possibility' (as per one advertising campaign) where difference is aestheticised and presented "as nothing more than feel-good conviviality" (Kiguwa, 2006, p. 327). While these media campaigns contribute to a nation-building discourse, and undoubtedly leave positive after-effects in their wake (such as a sense of national pride and unity), they do not create an environment conducive to critical reflection on current forms of racism. Rather, they may encourage the negation or denial of racism by portraying South Africa through rose-tinted glasses as a picture of a multicultural utopia, which at first glance seems to imply a society necessarily devoid of racism. In people's desire to uphold the vision of a new undivided South Africa, they feel pressure to deny, negate, or justify any instance of racism. Although this may stem from a sincere desire to see South Africa as the new Rainbow Nation, devoid of remnants

of the past, this refusal to acknowledge racism also parallels an "Emperor's New Clothes" mindset, where people deny apparent racism in order to maintain group acceptance and cohesion. Van Dijk (1992) has remarked how accusations of racism can come to be seen as more serious social transgressions than the instances of racism themselves, in that the racist accusations (and no doubt the accuser) are seen to ruin the convivial atmosphere of social life.

<u>It's not racism, it's concern for the parents….</u>

A frequent discursive strategy to negate racism was to supposedly disguise racism as concern for one's parents or the parents of others. Interestingly, this discursive strategy was only used in the context of interracial intimate relationships, or more accurately in support of opposition to such relationships. This discursive strategy functions in the broad service of face-saving (van Dijk, 1992), more specifically it removes the blame or prejudice from oneself and transfers it onto someone else, namely the parents or extended family. In the extracts below the speakers do not explain why they feel their parents would be so distressed if they as son or daughter were to enter an interracial relationship, but it is unquestionably accepted that this would cause their parents distress. What is stressed is how the adult children feel pressure to prevent causing their parents such distress. In this way the individuals are constructed as good dutiful sons or daughters as opposed to either a) racists, or b) bad children who knowingly cause their parents pain and suffering by entering interracial intimate relationships.

Extract 50 clearly illustrates how this discourse is used to negate and even justify racism. Lesego is able to construct the "guy [she] was interested in" as a good son as opposed to a racist. His racism in rejecting as a partner on the grounds of race is reframed as concern for his parents ("So I guess he didn't wanna cause any havoc by dating a black girl. And upsetting his parents…"). Furthermore, the racism of his parents is also negated. They are not racists, but merely are "orthodox" people, who "can't deal with change". In this way, Lesego attempts to protect herself from the hurtful effects of what may be construed as racism.

Extract 50:

Lesego: ….Like the guy, the guy I was interested in, he was Afrikaans. And I think his parents are very (.) orthodox. They very like, they can't deal with change, and stuff like that. So I guess he didn't wanna cause any havoc by dating a black girl. And upsetting his parents or whatever.

Whereas Lesego negated the racism of others (Extract 50), Kwezi used the discourse of parental opposition to interracial intimate relationships as a justification of why she is hesitant to "date a white guy" (Extract 51). Her concern that a white partner's parents would not accept her is said to be her "only" problem with dating a white guy. It is significant that Kwezi and Lesego express no concern about their parents' possible reactions to their entering interracial relationships, but only voice concern about the reaction of their hypothetical white suitors' parents. Lesego and Kwezi differ in that Kwezi explicitly states that her anxiety is related to the possibility of the racism of the white parents, whereas Lesego uses various strategies to deny that it is in fact racism. Whether they call it racism or not, their fears of whites responding to them in a racist manner can be seen as justified, and hence it may be problematic to attribute Kwezi's statement in Extract 51 to her (inverted) racism. In Extract 52 Paul defends his declared reluctance to enter a relationship with a black women by attributing it to the "perception of his family". It can be inferred that his family's perceptions are racist, yet he makes no apology for this – it seems he feels he has sufficiently 'kept face' by transferring the racism from himself to his family. He has constructed himself as the good dutiful son of his (racist) parents.

Extract 51:

Kwezi: But I wouldn't mind. I say I wouldn't mind to date a white guy but I'd always have that, you know his family, I think the family part, you know if the guy is to introduce you to their parents. If their parents approve you, you'd feel comfortable. If they don't approve you, you'd always think, okay I'd say that happens everywhere, if the parents don't approve you you'd feel "Oh, Oh my goodness". I'm gonna go there, and the mother won't be, you know you wanna help out with the dishes, and then the mom's like "no, no". So then I think I'd only have the problem that, what if the parents are racist and the child is not? So other than that I wouldn't mind.

Extract 52:

Claire: What would make it [marrying a black woman] so hard for you? What would be your apprehensions about getting into a relationship with a black person?

Paul: *I think perception is one thing, perception of my family:: is probably one of the biggest things if I had to look at perceptions.*

In Extracts 53 and 54 the discourse of parental opposition is couched in terms of (white) males being protective over their daughters and granddaughters. Tshepo is pre-emptive in negating that there is a racist undertone to Julie's father's protectiveness by quickly adding, "[l]ike every

father would [be]"; negating that the protectiveness is influenced by Tshepo's race (Extract 53). Julie's statement that her father's "not exactly gonna shoot [Tshepo] for coming to the house" conjures up visions of the lynching and physical abuse that befell black men that were accused of having romantic or sexual aspirations for white women. Julie's dismissal of her grandfather's racism is unconvincing, she herself is doubtful whether "it could just be that" he is "overprotective".

Extract 53:

Tshepo: [laugh]. Girls are like 'Julie's parents, her dad is really protective of her'. Like every father would.

Julie: He's not exactly gonna shoot you for coming to the house

Extract 54:

Julie: My one granddad just has issues because he's overprotective about me. But he's always had issues, so I don't know if it's racial or the fact that I've just brought a boy home… But it could just be that, it's a guy in my life, I'm the apple of his eye. He's very protective over me.

In Extract 55 below Lotus constructs the decision whether to enter an interracial intimate relationship as one based on personal choice ("it depends on the individual"). Ostensibly it depends on whether someone is "willing to take those risks" of "antagonising their parents". Hence the discourse of parental opposition to interracial relationships positions the person who rejects potential partners based purely on race as someone who is not prepared to risk "antagonising their parents" or causing "havoc" (Extract 50). In this way, the accusation of racism is resisted. The discourse communicates that this is a legitimate and justifiable reason to refrain from interracial partnerships.

Extract 55:

Lotus: I think it depends on the individual. Some people aren't willing to take those risks. And do anything out of the ordinary or risk antagonising their parents.

<u>No my parents aren't racist…</u>

It was mentioned in the section above that participants did not attempt to apologise for or negate the racism inherent in their parents' opposition to interracial intimate relationships. This said, the unvoiced admission of their parents' racism is tempered by the fact that their parents did indeed

come to accept the interracial relationships and partners. The theme of acceptance was evident in talk about other interracial relationships, for example Paul's sister's relationship (Extract 56), and Susan's aunt's and brother's relationships (Extract 57). Both of the two couples interviewed were at pains to express how their families had not only accepted their interracial partners, but grown to love them. That they were so emphatic in expressing how much their partners were "adored" (Extract 58) by their parents, so much so that for instance, Julie's parents get "withdrawal symptoms" when they do not see Tshepo (Extract 59), suggests that there may be an element of overcompensating for their parents' unvoiced or perhaps suppressed racist attitudes.

Extract 56:

Paul: Because, when my parents actually find out [my sister] was seeing a white guy they weren't very happy, initially. So I think it took a while, a while for them to, to accept it.

Extract 57:

Susan: I think they [extended family] were quite shocked by, the one aunt …when she married this Iraqi guy. …but they've accepted it. And recently they've accepted Paul as well. I mean, they love my sister-in- law Zuraida [who is Indian], even my gran.

Extract 58:

Susan: Oh [my mother] adores Paul…Absolutely adores Paul. I'm sure she's already thinking of what her grandchildren will look like. [laugh]. She loves it. She loves it.

Extract 59:

Julie: Now they tell me when he doesn't come over they're having //withdrawal symptoms
Tshepo: //withdrawal symptoms

In Extracts 60 and 61 below Julie and Tshepo again are overly enthusiastic about denying that their parents could have any antagonistic attitudes towards their relationship due to their racial differences. They use absolute terms such as "it's just *nothing*" (Extract 60) and "they're *completely* fine with it" (Extract 61). In Extract 60 there are various rhetorical moves that suggest that Tshepo is self-monitoring and is particularly trying to present his family in a positive light. It is likely that in addition to this positive self-presentation he is also trying to reassure his partner, Julie, of her acceptance by his family. The rhetorical devices utilised by Tshepo include downplaying or mitigation by using the word "just" ("Everybody *just* loves her at home. It's *just* nothing. They're *just* happy about it"); and false starts ("They don't."). False

starts are indicative of the self-monitoring process that accompanies positive self-presentation in the service of face-saving (van Dijk, 1992).

Extract 60:

Tshepo: And then I let her know that Julie and I were dating, and she's, she loves Julie. Everybody just loves her at home. Ja. *It's just nothing. They don't. They're just happy about it.*

Extract 61:

Julie: He wouldn't let me tell my parents about him for like the first three months. [laugh]. But they're like *completely fine with it. They really don't have an issue.*

Julie states that her parents "don't have an issue" with her dating a "black guy" (Extract 62 below). The reason given for this is that her previous white boyfriends were abusive. Faced with an abusive white man, her parents will accept or choose a black man for their daughter ("*they said they'd rather have a black guy that treats me like a princess than a white guy that abuses me").* However, it is still implied that if there were a choice, they would choose a white guy "who treats [her] like a princess". A reality is presented in which the only choices consist of abusive white men, or failing that, you can be treated well if you settle for a black partner.

Extract 62:

Julie: My parents don't have an issue. Like they've said to me they'd rather have, cause my ex-boyfriend, he really like, (inaudible) white guys have verbally abused me and stuff like that. And my ex-boyfriend, I'd sit and cry just because he was unhappy. And, um, *they said they'd rather have a black guy that treats me like a princess than a white guy that abuses me.*

<u>It's not racism, it's just got to do with upbringing and life experience</u>

A second way in which racism was denied or mitigated was by explaining attitudes and actions as stemming from one's background or upbringing (see Extracts 63 to 67). The function of this discursive strategy is the same as for all denials of racism, primarily, the perpetuation of racism, but also positive presentation of self or others. Denying racism allows people to see the world as a good place, and particularly see people close to them (for example, classmates, family members, and in-laws) as good. Denying racism is also an attempt to deny the deleterious effects of racism, especially on an emotional level. Lotus's declaration that her mother-in-law's opposition to Lotus is "not personal", but "has to do with her upbringing and her expectations

and things" (Extract 64) illustrates how the justification of racism may be used to try alleviate hurt inflicted by racism.

Extract 63:

Lesego: Um (.). Well most of [my classmates] went to mixed schools, so they were interacting with others [of different races]. *I don't think its to do with racism, I think its just to do with the way their parents brought them up, or their background*

Extract 64:

Claire: And how did you feel about [your in-laws'] response to you?
Lotus: Ag [sigh]. (.) Look I think the same way I make exception for South Africans calling me Chinese or being called white…you have to try to understand that it's not **personal**, it has to do with **her** upbringing and **her** expectations and things

Extract 65:

Caroline: Things that they grew up with, they might think black people are like this…

Extract 66:

Claire: So you're thinking it [your grandfather's opposition towards to your boyfriend] might not be the race issue? He hasn't said it's a race issue?
Julie: I don't know, he's very closed and he won't talk to many people. It could be because he grew up in Nazi Germany? So I don't know. [Laughs]

Extract 67:

Sophie: So they experienced war, war like everywhere in France. My great grandfather was in the resistance against Nazis, I remember my mother told me that um [my grandmother] would tell her, she wouldn't care if she would marry anybody, except for a German or a black person.

Extracts 66 and 67 above both mention the Nazi regime of World War II. Julie explains her grandfather's racism on the basis of him having grown up in Nazi Germany. Sophie's great-grandfather fought against the Nazis, and so came to espouse anti-German prejudice. What is intriguing is the way Sophie's grandparents equate Germans with blacks. To be anti-German based on the conditions of the Second World War presumably translates into opposing Anti-Semitism, but then how or why does this allow for racism against blacks? Despite this anomaly, the above extracts still depict how racism is explained on the basis of upbringing and life experience.

In contrast to the explanation of racism based on life experience, in Extract 68 Julie draws on the theme of life experience in a different way. In keeping with the 'apartheid is over, hence racism

is dead' discourse identified earlier, she advocates for the position that life experience should teach black youth that racism is dead.

Extract 68:

Julie: = Since grade one, they got to be in any school they wanted, they didn't have to go to Bantu Education. So there's no point in being like 'black, this that and the other' or 'white this that and the other'.

Tshepo also sees upbringing as an explanation for racism; in this case, in a very direct way of learning racist beliefs from one's parents ("Then I think you're more likely to sway in that direction cause your parents think that way, and you listen to what your parents say"). However, he goes on to posit that life experience should counteract this and act to dispute racist beliefs, in line with the Contact Theory.

Extract 69:

Tshepo: Yeah, like Julie said, I don't think people will like, the youth actually think about it as much, but if it starts at home, and your parents are still on that whole trip of, blacks on that side, coloureds, Indians, and the whole. Then I think you're more likely to sway in that direction cause your parents think that way, and you listen to what your parents say. But after a while I think you come to a place like Wits or you go to schools where there's not only white people there, you get to know more about these people other than what the parents used to hear being said of these people without actually interacting with them. So on some level racism is still alive, but it's going away, but it's going to take, ja forever, but it's going to die down eventually.

In keeping with the discursive strategy of justifying racism as a result of upbringing and/or life experience, racism is also excused on the basis of old age. This intersects with the discourse of race as a legacy of apartheid discussed previously. In Extract 70, old age is constructed as a justification for racism. However this is not expanded upon. We are told that "the older generation" has "their side of the story", but we are not told what this is.

Extract 70:

Tshepo: Ja. People don't wanna stand out and be known as you know [racists], [people wanna] understand what's going on with you, *there's the older generation that still stick by, but their, they've got their side of the story*, but I don't see why things should be like that right now.

Interestingly, as Tshepo speaks on behalf of the older generation of white racists, Julie speaks on behalf the older generation of black victims of racism (Extract 71). Julie uses age as a qualifier

for whether you may claim the existence of racism. Thus, if you are old, it is okay to hold onto racism, because you "experienced it"; but if you are young, you have had "equal opportunities" and so you may no longer believe in the existence of racism. (Clearly this unqualified belief that all young black South Africans have had opportunities equal to that of their white counterparts is untrue).

Extract 71:

Julie: …I know like, I understand with the older generation, where they experienced it, and they were part of it where they were excluded and stuff, but these days, even my age, they've had all equal opportunities.

What about the children?

As noted in the review of relevant literature for this study, racism often masquerades as concern for the children of interracial relationships (Frankenberg, 1993; Phoenix & Owen, 2000). Although this was not a major theme in the texts analysed, it did surface. In Extract 72 Kwezi admits that concern for the children would be reason to make her "think twice" about having children with a white man. She expresses concern that her "kids would be coloured". It is significant that she does not even see the need to explain why she finds it problematic that her children would be "coloured". Of itself, this communicated how strongly she finds it problematic, and ostensibly perceives that her fellow focus group members share her viewpoint, hence her omission of a further explanation.

Kwezi's implied construction of children of 'mixed' parentage as problematic is insensitive given that Sophie (who posed the question to Kwezi) is of 'mixed' parentage. However the speakers seem oblivious to the harsh racism inherent in their words. In addition to Kwezi's faux pas, in Extract 73 (from the same focus group) Lotus also expresses her concerns about having children with a black man. She clearly states that this is because she does not want her children to be classified as black. Although her resistance to her children being classified as black may be related to real structural inequalities and discrimination black people may face, her admission nonetheless smacks of racism. Extract 74 is a further example of the construction of children of 'mixed' parentage as plagued by problems. Susan expresses a hope that in years to come the problems faced by children of 'mixed' parentage will be "less and less". However she is doubtful

about the diminishing of these "problems" as indicated by her use of the word "might" ("it might get less and less").

In Extract 75 rather than 'mixed' children being problematised, Susan's niece is said to be "beautiful [be]cause she's half-Indian". As for the sing-song quality to Susan's speech, this could be an indication that Susan finds this problematic or alternatively that she finds the sentiments of her grandmother to be somewhat insincere. Although the last extract constructs the 'mix' of races as "beautiful" as opposed to problematic, the discourse continues to be racialised.

Extract 72:

Sophie: Would you have children with a white man?
Kwezi: Ja, I wouldn't mind. I don't see any problems. But then at the same time, as you said, at school *my kids would probably be coloured*. Stuff like that. I'd think of that and that. Maybe I'd think twice. But from me personally I wouldn't mind I wouldn't see any problem.

Extract 73:

Lotus: When [my husband] and I first started dating about 15 years a go, I had some serious reservations about having kids. In America, with a black man. Because in the US if you are half black or a quarter black, then you're black, it doesn't matter**.**

Extract 74:

Susan: I think by the time we have children, I think, if they have problems, by the time our children are their age, I think they may have less problems, I think it might get less and less.

Extract 75:

Susan: [My grandmother talks about] how she loves my niece, her granddaughter, cause she's so beautiful cause she's *half-Indian::* [lyrical / sing song quality].

<u>It's not racism, it's respecting culture…</u>

A theme evident in the corpus of texts analysed was that of excusing or justifying opposition to interracial intimate relationships by reason of concerns about "culture". This concern was expressed as a need to "respect [one's] culture" (Extract 76), presumably by not 'tainting' it by getting involved in an interracial relationship. This concern with 'cultural purity' closely resembles concerns regarding 'racial purity' and hence alludes to discourses related to miscegenation and eugenics. In Extract 77 Lotus says the reason why she was apprehensive to have children with her black partner was she is "already so distanced from her Korean culture".

She goes on to talk about whether her child would be classified as black – this connection that she makes between racial classification and culture is rather incongruous. If she is concerned that her child will not know about her Korean culture, what difference will classification make? Lotus seems to imply that a racial classification is accompanied by cultural affiliation. Culture is constructed as static and inextricably tied to racial classification. This idea of 'cultural purity' is echoed in the next extract. Paul explains his parents' disappointment about their children's interracial marriages as a result of the death of the culture and the family ("the culture and the family starts to die out") (Extract 78). Interracial intimate relationships, and perhaps especially interracial marriages, are said to herald a loss of culture ("losing"). It is ironic that (interracial) marriage is seen as a path to the family starting to "die out", when marriage and the resulting children are normally a means by which lineage and culture is continued.

The discursive theme of opposition to interracial relationships being portrayed as a concern about "culture" functions to reframe this resistance in a more socially acceptable way. It functions in the service of the negation and denial of racism. It is evident that within the broad strategy of negating or denying racism, various discursive sub-themes converge. For example, Lesego draws on the themes of parents (Extract 50), upbringing (Extract 63), and culture (Extract 76), all within one burst of speech. Furthermore, in Extract 77 Lotus combines the themes of concerns about culture with concerns about children, and uses both subthemes to disguise her arguably racist apprehensions about her interracial marriage.

Extract 76:

Lesego: *It's not **racism**. It's just culture, and respecting that culture.*

Extract 77:

Lotus: …And, *my concern was that I'm already so distanced from my Korean culture*, I don't speak the language well enough to teach my child, um . But then if we live in **America**, she's automatically going to be classified as black, at least that was the case 15 years ago, and so I would have to try doubly hard to make sure she spends time with my **parents**, and kinds of knows, visits Korea at some point and knows my half, half of her culture

Extract 78:

Paul: But I still think my dad, I still think they still were disappointed, every single time. And then obviously with me, all three kids. None of them married a Chinese person. And I think in a way they still are quite disappointed.
Claire: And what do you think that's about for them?
Paul: Um. I think for them a big part of it has to do with, *they feel like they are losing, losing something. That, it's almost like, the culture and the family starts to die out.*

It's not racism, it's just about preference…

Racism was also reconstructed as "preference". This discursive reframing explains opposition to interracial intimate relationships as a matter of personal taste or preference. This functions to remove blame from the individual who disqualifies potential partners based on 'race'. Just as one cannot be criticised for having certain tastes, for example preferring orange juice to apple juice, according to this discursive strategy you cannot be blamed for having a supposedly natural preference for a certain racial group. In Extract 79 Lesego says that the white guys in her class "just prefer to go out with white girls mostly". She is downplaying their racism by couching it in terms of 'preference'. She speculates that this preference may be due to the "guys in [her] class" being "afraid". She omits to clarify what they are "afraid" of, but presumably they are afraid of black women, or dating black women. Lesego alludes to the young men's fear of 'difference' in that they "want to be with someone they're used to" or want "something in common". This common factor is named as "whiteness". So, although this explanation of why the white male students only look to white women as potential dating partners can be construed as racist, Lesego negates this possibility. This may serve to protect her from the reality of the situation.

Extract 79:

Lesego: ... I know the guys in my class, they **do prefer** (.), I don't know if it's because they're **afraid**, or the just want to be with someone they're used to, or what, or something in common, the whiteness, I don't know. They just prefer to go out with white girls mostly. That's what I found with the guys in my class.

In Extract 80 Debbie draws on the discursive theme of preference and compares having a preference for dating people from a specific 'racial' group to having a sexual preference for either men or women. Two of the common discourses that people draw on in relation to sexual orientation are those of a) sexual orientation as innate and b) sexual orientation as a choice (Burton, 1999). Debbie uses the seemingly liberal position of respecting people's right to choose their sexual orientation, to support the right to choose one's sexual partners based on race. The

use of this discourse of preference in relation to interracial intimate relationships, especially as compared with discourses on sexual orientation, would be fascinating to explore. However, due to the minimal mention of this theme in the collected data, further exploration is not warranted in the context of this study. Suffice to say that the discourse of preference functions to justify and support people's decision to restrict the pool of potential partners based on race. Racialised sexual stereotypes, as discussed elsewhere in the analysis, may be one of the factors underlying the discourse of preference.

Extract 80:

Debbie: So for some people there might be a strong preference, that they **wouldn't** like me so much if I were. So why is race so much more loaded than gender? And we're comfortable to say 'Oh, I only like men' but we're not comfortable to say 'Oh, I only like blacks' or 'I only like whites'.

Denial, negation, and justification of racism *within* interracial intimate relationships

The idea that one partner in an interracial intimate relationship could engage in racist attitudes, beliefs, and actions against the other partner was largely subject to denial, negation and justification. In Extract 81 Brett declares that to be racist and to then enter an interracial intimate relationship would make you a "psychopath". He therefore completely denies the existence of racism within interracial relationships (unless you are a psychopath). However, a few moments later in the same focus group discussion, when asked outright about racism within interracial relationships he concedes that he thinks "it exists" (Extract 82). Although Brett seemingly acknowledges the existence of racism in interracial relationships, his explanation thereof downplays this type of racism to a less malicious form of taken-for-granted preconceived notions based on race (Extract 82). Peter then enters the discussion and reframes the notion of racism within interracial relationships as merely a "misunderstanding between two people….based on any difference" (Extract 83). In this way the possibility of racism in interracial relationships is refuted by naturalising it as "misunderstanding[s]".

Extract 81:

Brett: …Unless you're a *psychopath* you're not going to get into a relationship with someone from a different group if you have a problem with it So then it's just a matter of, whether, like any other relationship, you can work things out.

Extract 82:

Sophie: What do you think about racism in interracial relationships?
Brett: I think it exists. I think that you can, not see the person properly as they see themselves. You can take for granted that this is how they might feel, because: , because of their colour. You have assumptions about everyone, that can be caused by your thoughts about what a person of a different race thinks like, feels like.

Extract 83:

Peter: You can also then take that, you can *factor out the race*. You can do it on a gender basis as well you know
Brett: =Mmm
Peter: =As a man you think, well she's going to react in the same way, or an English and a Afrikaans person. So for me, is there **racism**? It's a **misunderstanding** between two people. That could be generic, based on **any difference**, and not on race. I think that's what you [Brett] meant by **racism** in a relationship.

In Extract 84 (below) Debbie also refutes the possibility of being racist towards one's partner, but concedes that an individual "could be a racist towards other people, and somehow magically exclude [his or her] partner". It is pertinent to note that Debbie's use of the word "magically" suggests that she may not feel that this is in fact possible or likely. Sophie counters Debbie's apparent mitigation of racism within relationships by saying that the racism could also be directed towards the relationship partner. However, Sophie draws on the euphemised definition of racism given by Brett in Extract 82. It is telling that both Debbie and Sophie end their utterances with "I don't know" (Extract 84). This rhetorical device ("I don't know") may serve the function of mitigating the speakers' statements, absolving them of responsibility for their statements, while still having presented their opinions. It may also serve a self-presentation strategy if they feel that the rest of the group does not necessarily agree with them, and in this way serves to ensure group cohesion.

Extract 84:

Debbie: I suppose you could be a racist towards other people, and somehow magically exclude your partner. Like have problems with their ***family***, or. It doesn't necessarily imply, I don't know.
Sophie: I think you can include this person too, if you think they react a certain way because you have assumptions about who they are. I don't know….

In Extract 85 (below), Caroline admits that partners in interracial intimate relationships may act in a racist fashion, however she justifies and excuses this racism on various grounds, namely, a)

of the racism not being "outright", b) the racism is a result of upbringing and/or life experience ("things that they grew up with"), and c) that it is unintentional ("he might not realise that he's being racist").

Extract 85:

Caroline: Um, (.) I'm not quite sure really. My partner is saying that all people are racist, in some form. Even if they're not outright racist. [Inaudible]. Things that they grew up with, they might think black people are like this, so that comes across in the relationship. He might say something, and might not realise that he's being racist…

Other discursive strategies used in the denial, negation, and justification of racism

The participants used various other thematic strategies in order to deny, negate, and justify racism. Although some of these themes only received a single mention, it is still worthwhile to highlight them as examples of how the broader strategies of denial, negation, and justification are utilised. The first two discursive strategies relate to interracial intimate relationships, whereas the subsequent three thematic strategies relate to generic instances of racism.

Terrorism

Sophie drew on the discourse of terrorism to justify why people "go back to their cultural groups" in choosing relationship partners. Her reference to "what's happening on a global scale", presumably, "terrorism", constructs terrorism as an unchallenged reality. Furthermore, if numbers of interracial relationships are said to be dwindling ("you will find less uh interracial relationships") as a result of terrorism, it is suggested that sticking to one's one cultural or racial group could prevent terrorism. Interracial relationships are hence associated with danger and terrorism. This discursive theme is currently very prominent against the backdrop of the wave of anti-Islamism sweeping the world in the wake of the September 11 attacks on America (Stevens, 2004; Stevens *et al*., 2006).

Extract 86:

Sophie: Um. But I've noticed through the years, you know with what's happening on a global scale, with you know, race, with terrorism et cetera, people will go back to their cultural groups, and you will find less uh interracial relationships. I think. I don't know.

It's not racism; it's just a little reminder that we are different…

Susan found a novel way of negating racism by saying that instances where people explicitly respond to Paul's 'race' serve to remind them that they are "from two different backgrounds". She adds, "not in a bad way", lest we doubt that this is a good thing. However, she adds this qualifier in a very quiet voice. Her partner does not challenge this idea of racist encounters being 'helpful reminders'.

Extract 94:

Susan:	I think very often we forget, that we from two different backgrounds, I think these kind of things just remind us, not in a bad way [quiet].
Paul:	Mmm? What do you mean?
Susan:	I don't know. You forget. I forget that you're Chinese, and then you'll tell me that something like this happened, and I'll "Oh jeez". You remember that.
Paul:	Oh, okay.

It's not racism; it's punishment for misbehaving…

Racism was also negated under the guise of 'punishment for misbehaving'. Julie's comment below disputes that a fellow female student is the victim of racism and rather claims that she is subject to certain treatment as a result of, or punishment for, her 'misbehaviour'. Furthermore, the individual is said to be "too loud mouth and too over-the-top" due to her thinking "that racism is still alive". This relates to the argument made at the start of the section on 'The denial, negation and justification of racism' that accusations of racism can come to be seen as more serious social transgressions than the instances of racism themselves, in that the racist accusations (and no doubt the accuser) are seen to ruin the convivial atmosphere of social life. By claiming that "racism is still alive" the student committed a serious social transgression in Julie's eyes, and hence she has been labelled as "loud mouth", "over-the-top", and as someone who is "misbehaving".

Extract 87:

Julie:	…I've always found her too loud mouth and too over-the-top because like she seems to think that racism is still alive and everything's because she's black not just because she's misbehaving.

It's not racism; it's curiosity…

Instances of racism were also reconstructed as mere "curiosity" (Extract 88), whereby people's seemingly racist actions were said to be "quite innocent" (Extract 89). Conversely, in Extract 90 Tshepo suggests that people may overcome racism, or at least social segregation, as a result of curiosity. First Tshepo explains racism on the basis of a lack of shared interests ("[people] didn't mix cause they don't [sic] have anything to share"), then he goes on to explain that now people do mix because they "just wanna know a lot about other cultures nowadays, so that kind of makes people have that whole openness towards different races and stuff". The implication is that Tshepo gains entry and acceptance into a white world by being a thing of interest. Although Paul and Tshepo both qualified people's curiosity about them as "innocent" or positive in that it breaks down social barriers, they also both imply, if not freely admit, that it makes them feel uncomfortable (See Extracts 91,92, and 93). Extracts 91, 92, and 93 deal with instances (either past or hypothetical) of people of colour (either Chinese or African) travelling abroad. The extracts depict the "curiosity" of people towards these people of colour. Even though Paul and Tshepo are the tourists, it is as if they become the tourist attractions.

Extract 88:

Paul: I do think people often, people, they would get questions. I know people that I grew up with in [town], they were mixed race, and they would be Chinese-white or Chinese-coloured, predominantly. And people would sometimes ask them "what are you?" But not in the Chinese community, but people outside. Cause the community there is so small, you grow up and you know. *I think it's more of a curiosity thing, than I believe a racism thing*…

Extract 89:

Susan: Remember even at the airport. I don't know if they were joking. We came back into the country together, and they were like "Who's your friend, where's he from?"
Claire: Like you picked up Paul on your travels
Paul: [laugh]
Susan: Ja, and Paul even had to speak Afrikaans to them that he was South African. They were "No::"
Paul: *I think that was quite innocent.*

Extract 90:

Tshepo: Ja, it was like, ooh ooh [tentative], till a few laughs. Then I find that people aren't, there's that whole, at first I think they didn't mix cause they don't have anything to share, cause the minute you sit down people wanna know about things and you talk to them and they tell you about stuff. People just wanna know a lot about other cultures nowadays, so that kind of makes people have that whole openness towards different races and stuff.

Extract 91:

Tshepo: Those situations where you like get on the tour bus and they look around at you and stuff. "O-K". [laughs] You'll be the only black guy there.

Extract 92:

Julie: He's worried about going to Germany with me [laughs]
Tshepo: Ja, that.
Julie: [laughs]
Tshepo: They say "You'll stand out". Yip, I will [laughs]
Julie: [laughs]
Tshepo: "There's a black man there" [laughs]
Julie: [laughs] When we were in Germany, in 6 weeks we saw like one black person
Claire: Mmm hmm
Julie: "*Ah, black person*!" [expressing excitement, fondness]
[Julie and Tshepo both laugh]

Extract 93:

Paul: Oh Hungary I got loads of stares [amused tone] [laughs]
Susan: No, but I swear, in some of these towns they had never seen an Asian person in the flesh.

RHETORICAL DEVICES

When talking about race, racism, and interracial intimate relationships, the participants made use of various rhetorical devices or conversational moves. Van Dijk (1983) associates these conversational moves with deeper underlying cognitive functions and strategies. He found that in the situation of talk about (ethnic or racial) minorities, these cognitive strategies work towards two primary goals, namely those of *optimal self-presentation*, "more specifically as a tolerant, understanding, broad-minded citizen", and of *optimal expression,* which is "the strategy for the particular communicative situation…*and* for the - autonomously motivated - expression of personal experiences and opinions and attitudes (e.g. the complaint or accusation function of talk)" (van Dijk, 1983, p. 401). Van Dijk (1983) notes that some people focus primarily on the first goal, and make most of their conversational moves in order to try to make a good impression, whereas other people are less concerned with looking good, and pay more heed to the second goal by using conversational strategies in the service of trying to portray their stories and arguments as convincingly as possible.

In the corpus of texts analysed for this study, the various conversational and rhetoric strategies used to deny, negate and justify racism may be indicative of underlying cognitive strategies.

These cognitive strategies have been discussed as pertaining to the function that the various discourses serve. These cognitive strategies were organised towards the goals identified by van Dijk (1983) of optimal self-presentation ('I am not a racist'), and optimal expression ('even if I am racist, here's the very convincing argument or story behind it').

Brief reference was made to the rhetorical devices utilised by participants in the course of the analysis, however, by way of further illustration, the following extract is presented:

Extract 95:

Paul:	I think, even myself, I don't think I'd have a problem going out with a, a Chinese, coloured or Indian person. I think I would really have to think very hard about marrying a black woman, being myself. I might have a relationship with them, *but* marrying them would be very very difficult choice to make.
Susan:	// It is
Paul:	// *And even for me. I don't really consider myself a racist, but* even that, I still don't know how comfortable I would be with that.

Paul alludes to racial hierarchies and although he admits he could date a "coloured" or an "Indian" person, and maybe even a black person, he would not be "comfortable" marrying a black woman. Paul utilises various rhetorical devices in this extract: thematic strategies or topics (racial hierarchy), false starts ("a, a Chinese…"), repetition ("very hard…very, very difficult"), concessions ("I might have a relationship with them, but marrying…"), and disclaimers ("I don't really consider myself a racist, but …"). The apparent denial of racism by use of disclaimers (e.g. I have nothing against blacks, but…) is well documented by van Dijk (1992). However, this form of denial was a rare occurrence in the texts analysed, with mitigations, justifications and excusing being used much more frequently. Paul employs the rhetorical devices to save face and show that he is supposedly not a racist (goal of optimal self-presentation). (The false start is not a strategy or a device, but rather an indicator of self-monitoring).

CHAPTER 5: THEORETICAL INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

The previous chapter presented the results of the discursive analysis, and made an effort to briefly a) discuss these results, b) link the results to relevant theory, and c) situate the results socio-historically. The wealth of the data and the volume of the discursive themes that resulted from this data prevented a more in-depth discussion in the previous chapter. It is this task that the current chapter concerns itself with. Rather than attempting a detailed discussion on each of the facets of the results, this chapter will highlight some of the most striking themes, and undertake a synergistic interpretation of the study as a whole.

SILENCES

Whilst numerous discursive themes were identified by analysing the talk about interracial relationships in post-apartheid South Africa, it is also extremely significant to note the silences surrounding this talk, that is, what was *not* said in the focus group discussions and couple interviews. Unlike the results presented in Chapter 4, the 'silences' cannot be corroborated by textual evidence in the form of extracts from the transcripts. For this reason, an analysis of silences is necessarily an eminently subjective undertaking, and as with the analysis of talk, the analysis of 'silence' is in no way presented as exhaustive.

Crenshaw (1997, p. 260) posits that "[s]ilence is active, not passive; it may be interpreted". Silence is not merely the absence of speech but can have symbolic impact. Furthermore, silence can do ideological work. For example, Crenshaw (1997, p. 260) notes that whiteness' silence is ideological because it communicates that to be white is "the natural condition, the assumed norm". hooks (1995, as cited in Crenshaw, 1997) believes that silence is a fundamental component of racist oppression that operates in various ways. For example, the apartheid government was at pains to silence rage against oppression, and as such instituted legislation to ban political meetings, rallies, and marches, and also enforced censorship on a wide scale.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, of the nine focus group participants, five were currently in interracial intimate relationships at the time of data collection. Furthermore, two-thirds of the nine focus group participants reported (via the demographic questionnaire) that they had previously been in one or more interracial relationships. It is intriguing that for the most part, these participants

remained silent about their personal experience of interracial relationships. This silence or lack of personal disclosure could be attributed to the manner in which the study was framed and the methodological approach that was taken, i.e. the advertisements did not cite personal experience of interracial relationships as a pre-requisite for participation in the study, nor were participants directly asked to share their personal experiences in the course of the interviews. However, it is still interesting that so many of the participants were in interracial relationships, but refrained from giving this away in the course of the discussions.

Another area, which it can be argued was surrounded by silence, was that of love. Considering that much of the conversations revolved around romantic relationships, it is striking that no mention was made of meaningful emotional connections or love between relationship partners. If interracial relationships were constructed as devoid of love, and supposedly took the form of (loveless) brief affairs, casual dating, or sexual encounters, then it is also interesting that there was an absence of talk about sex and sexual practices. Indeed, the literature supports the idea that interracial relationships are more likely to be transitory and less likely to result in marriage (Rosenfeld & Kim, 2005). Popular culture also tends to sexualise interracial encounters, highlighting the sexual features, while downplaying the possibility of committed, meaningful connections. While neither love nor sex were explicitly spoken of, racialised sexual stereotypes were covertly (and sometimes overtly) referred to.

CONSTRUCTIONS OF RACE

The first main theme to emerge out of the data related to how race was constructed by the research participants. It is fitting that the report addressed various constructions of race prior to engaging with the topics of whiteness and interracial intimate relationships. This focus on race is significant as the study forms part of the broader academic enquiry into racism, and as Miles (1989, as cited in Stevens *et al*., 2006, p. 58) notes, the notion of race has developed into a "fundamental building block" in the sustenance and justification of racism as ideology. As Duncan (2002) maintains, "[r]acism is inextricably linked to the notion of the existence of human 'races'", and as such any investigation of racism should necessarily include an exploration of the concept of 'race'. The discourses on race presented in this study ranged from less critical, such as 'race as visible', to more sophisticated discourses, such as 'race as an

ideological construct'. The pervasiveness of the discourse of 'race as visible' is intriguing in that in a global context that generally acknowledges the political incorrectness of referring to 'race', these frequent references to physical markers of race may be seen as somewhat crude. The references to phenotypic features hark back to the blatant and banal racism of the apartheid era, such as the 'pencil test'.

WHITENESS

The discourses on whiteness presented in the study were largely utilised by people of colour, and not by white people. This may be seen to be indicative of white people's reluctance to engage with their own racialisation. To other people, 'white' is a race, whereas to whites, 'white' is perhaps seen as the absence of race. Williams (1999, p. 392) remarks that "in a world of normative whiteness", whiteness is defined as "the absence of colour". This notion, of whiteness being the absence of colour, manifests itself in the South African context in that the Afrikaans word for 'white' (*blank*) literally means *without colour*. Although whiteness was not an explicit focus of this research endeavour it is necessary to include a focus on whiteness on any study related to race and racism. Indeed, the words of hooks (1990) are apposite in this regard:

> In far too much contemporary writing - though there are some outstanding exceptions- race is always an issue of Otherness that is not white; it is black, brown, yellow, red, purple even. Yet only a persistent, rigorous, and informed critique of whiteness could really determine what forces of denial, fear, and competition are responsible for creating fundamental gaps between professed political commitment to eradicating racism and the participation in the construction of a discourse on race that perpetuates racial domination (hooks, 1990, p. 54).

The paucity of research on whiteness worldwide, but in South Africa in particular, calls for further research in the area.

INTERRACIAL INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

There were numerous discourses on interracial intimate relationships that were identified in this study. Three particular aspects of these discourses will be explored here, namely, the discourses of 'Experimentation', "It depends on where you go", and the various discursive strategies utilised in the denial, negation and justification of racism.

The theme of ‘Experimentation’ is interconnected with the theme of ‘Drawn to difference’. The discourses constructing interracial intimate relationships as a) a result of being drawn or sexually attracted to someone who is different in terms of ‘race’, and b) these relationships being part of a phase of experimentation, function in complex ways. This complexity takes the form of both advocating for, and normalising interracial relationships, while simultaneously perpetuating an uncritical stance towards the concept of race, and also then the representation of interracial relationships. It can be argued that these discourses construct interracial relationships as manifestations of curiosity. There is an unvoiced comparison that parallels interracial relationships with other forms of experimentation, such as the use of drugs. This discourse may intersect with discourses on human development, specifically those relating to adolescence and early adulthood, wherein teenagers and young adults are constructed as being preoccupied with experimenting with various roles in their search for identity. Furthermore, much of this experimentation (such as drug and alcohol use) is held to be dangerous, but is accepted as part of the turbulence of these life stages. Society will condone such experimentation, as long as the experimenting individuals learn from their experiences and then move on to live a more ‘responsible’ and ‘settled’ life.

Meyer and van Ede (1998) note that society allows individuals who are going through an “identity crisis” (Erikson, 1968, as cited in Meyer & van Ede, 1998) a certain degree of freedom to experiment with various possibilities. This psychosocial moratorium facilitates a period of tolerance for behaviours that would not otherwise be tolerated. Following this, interracial relationships may be condoned during this time, but only temporarily. Although this phase of identity confusion and hence experimentation was traditionally said to be restricted to adolescence, it can continue into adulthood, especially while young adults are continuing to study. This prolonged period of training applies to many university students, especially those that are pursuing postgraduate studies (and as such may apply to the present study’s sample). If interracial intimate relationships are seen as part of the experimentation taking place in efforts to resolve identity crises, this communicates that they are only accepted if they are temporary arrangements. This ties in with research showing that interracial relationships are less likely to result in marriage (Rosenfeld & Kim, 2005). It is pertinent to note that developmental

psychology has come under considerable critique (Bozalek, 1997; Burman, 1994), and the notion of adolescence necessarily being a time of turbulence, has also been challenged (Shefer, 2004). Bozalek (1997) takes the perspective that:

> Developmental psychology is not a neutral, scientific discipline, but one that privileges the views of the dominant group operating in society during a particular historical period, and has been used to justify certain practices by those in power (Bozalek, 1997, p. 7).

This critical take on developmental psychology also informs the section to be discussed below on how the family structure and the notion of 'family' promulgates racist and patriarchal stereotypes (Kiguwa, 2004), in this case through the sanctions on interracial intimate relationships.

The discourse of "It depends on where you go" is interesting in that it shows how the constructions of interracial intimate relationships intersect with discourses on geographical locations, socio-economic status, and class. The participants drew on discourses of geographical location in order to talk about interracial relationships. This is striking in that one of the ways in which apartheid continues to linger in south Africa, is through the remnants of geographic control (Dixon, 1997). Indeed, landscapes are texts, and "physical terrain is ideological location" (Davis, 1987. p. 61, as cited in Dixon, 1997, p. 18). Through the discourse of "It depends on where you go", it was communicated that there is greater prevalence and greater acceptance of interracial couples in big cities as opposed to smaller towns, 'liberal' areas as opposed to traditionally conservative ones, and in centres of learning (such as universities) as opposed to other places. These geographic locations are inextricably linked with class and socio-economic status, and as such, the more affluent South Africans are afforded a mobility that extends into a freedom to date interracially, whereas the poor are often confined to townships, and hence are presented with fewer life options. This can be seen to suggest how whites still inhabit privileged places of many life options, and blacks still inhabit impoverished places. Yes, some people of colour have negotiated the social barriers by means of advances in class and financial status, and while affluent areas have become more 'mixed', poverty-stricken areas remain almost exclusively black. Dixon (1997, p. 19) warns that the "racialization of space lays the foundations for racism proper". Furthermore, he notes that discourses of geography provide a medium for the reproduction of racial inequality (Dixon, 1997). The special focus section: 'Race', isolation and

interaction in everyday life' in the South African Journal of Psychology (Volume 35, Number 3, 2005) addressed issues relating to the geography of segregation and the micro-ecology of racialised divisions. Foster (2005) referred to this focus on space as the "spatial turn" and located it in opposition to the "linguistic turn". Interestingly, the current study situates itself within the linguistic turn, which includes discourse analysis, yet has illustrated how spatial concerns intersect with discourses on race, and how space is both geographic location as well as ideological location.

A major component of this research report constituted looking at the denial, negation, and justification of racism, both in opposition to interracial intimate relationships and within these relationships. Many of the discursive strategies utilised to deny, negate, and justify racism in opposition to interracial intimate relationships were related to an overarching theme of 'the family'. For example, topics involving parents, children, culture, and upbringing and life experience, which all constitute aspects of 'the family' and family life, were drawn upon as discursive strategies to refute or excuse racism. In this way, the meta-discourse of 'the family' is utilised to supposedly disguise racism.

This discourse of 'the family' constructs the normative, ideal family as necessarily nuclear. Furthermore, this nuclear family reflects "heterosexist and ethnocentric assumptions" (Burman, 1994, p. 70). Burman (1994) asserts that ideologies of femininity and family can be seen as fundamental to doctrines of racial supremacy. The family is a white, nuclear family, with clear (patriarchal) gender roles. The white mother and child are constructed as vulnerable and in need of protection from the dangers that lurk outside the supposed safety and sanctity of the family. Thus, white men are set up as the protectors of their white families from the dangers of black men (Burman, 1994). If the meta-discourse of 'the family', as expanded upon here, is at work through the sub-discourses presented in this study, no wonder these discursive strategies work to resist interracial intimate relationships. In this discourse of 'the family', interracial couples and families pose a threat to the dominant model of the family, and the accompanying ideologies of femininity, patriarchy, and white supremacy. Burman (1994, p. 67) suggests that "the most pervasive assumption about families is that they are necessary". Additionally, families are constructed as harmonious, safe havens, protecting the family from the conflict and violence of

the outside world. The necessity of the family is debatable, and the family is certainly not immune to violence and aggression. Angless and Shefer (1997, p. 171) explicate:

> [The family] is often the very place where, because of its safety and insularity, the most destructive of human behaviours emerge. Nor is the family a haven untouched by the outside world. Rather it is often the space where the pains and frustrations of the outside world are played out.

It is therefore argued that the family and the intimate relationships are also places where racism plays itself out. Consequently, racism is possible, and even likely between partners in interracial intimate relationships, as well as between various family members in interracial or multiracial families.

The idealised construction of the family as nuclear, patriarchal, Westernised, ethnocentric, and conforming to racial hierarchies, is of value to the stability of state. The family can be seen as a controlling institution or as posited by Althusser (1971, as cited in Hamber, Masilela, & Terre Blanche, 2001), an ideological state apparatus. The family grows 'well-disciplined' citizens, who conform to dominant ideologies that serve to maintain the status quo. Racism is such an ideology that maintains the power differentials in society.

The discourse of "It's not racism, it's concern for the parents" functions to justify resistance to interracial intimate relationships as efforts to be faithful and obedient to one's parents and to not risk upsetting them by entering an interracial relationship. In this way accusations of racism are supposedly deflected. This is a good example of how the socially constructed 'family' perpetuates and maintains a racially stratified society. In line with the discourse of the family as the provider of people's needs, people do not want to risk antagonising their family (by entering an interracial relationship), and then be left at the mercy of a society that seemingly does not care for people. The aforementioned argument deserves significant exploration and elaboration, and as such will be a focus of a publication based on this research report.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

This study has identified some of the current discourses on interracial intimate relationships in post-apartheid South Africa. The variability of these discourses is indicative of the complexity surrounding discourses of race and racism in South Africa. Furthermore, there are no prototypical responses in answer to questions surrounding interracial intimate relationships. The discourses on interracial intimate relationships certainly did intersect with discourses on racism, but did not noticeably intersect with discourses on anti-racism. It was postulated that opposition to interracial intimate relationships may be indicative of underlying racism, and that conversely acceptance and support of these relationships may be indicative of a stance against racism. The results seem to attest to underlying racism in the objection to interracial relationships. However, it was not apparent whether tolerance or approval of these relationships corresponded to the contestation of racism.

The discourses identified in the corpus of texts analysed fell into three broad categories, namely race, whiteness, and the largest category, interracial intimate relationships. In terms of how discourses on interracial intimate relationships intersected with discourses on racism, the discursive strategies and themes ranged from the crude and banal, to the more sophisticated forms of racism. The discourses largely fell into the latter category, with the racism not resembling explicit statements about biological inferiority, but rather masquerading as more refined and justifiable arguments. These arguments were oftentimes embedded in other meta-discourses, which are themselves highly ideologically loaded, such as discourses relating to the family, or seemingly liberal discourses (i.e. of preference as an individual and inalienable right).

Perhaps the most striking finding of the study is that being in an interracial intimate relationship does not magically mean you are incapable of racism. Additionally, discourses on interracial intimate relationships appear to intersect with other discourses on race, racism, sexism, and classism. In this way, these discourses intersect and work together to maintain a society entrenched in ideologies that sustain the status quo.

The current study yielded a wealth of data, and this research report, although useful, was not able to explore all possible aspects of the data. As such it is necessary to review the limitations of the study, and to look to the future, for recommendations for further study in the area.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher wishes to acknowledge the heterosexist bias of the current study. While in no way excusing this bias, the scope of the study is limited, and as such the decision was made to restrict the focus to heterosexual interracial intimate relationships. According to Rosenfeld and Kim (2005) the United States Census data of 1990 and 2000 indicates that same-sex relationships are more likely to be interracial, and interracial couples are also more likely to be gay. In light of this, it would be beneficial to include same–sex relationships, or exclusively focus on same–sex relationships in future South African studies of interracial relationships. Further highlighting the need for research on interracial lesbian relationships is the argument that most of the psychological literature on such relationships has focused on white women, to the exclusion of lesbian couples of colour or mixed-race lesbian couples (Pearlman, 1996). Pearlman (1996) suggests that gay and lesbian interracial intimate relationships may be particularly complex, as in addition to the effects of racism, the couple faces homophobia, which may further limit social support.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that future studies wishing to make use of focus group discussions in order to study issues relating to race, racism, or interracial intimate relationships, consider carrying out focus groups with interviewers of different demographics, e.g. a black interviewer, or a male interviewer. The use of interviewers with different demographic variables may result in the participants speaking about different topics or disclosing more sensitive information. In this way, perceptions of ‘in-group’ and ‘out-group’ memberships between participants and the interviewer may influence the focus group discussions. Therefore, it may be interesting to match focus group participants to the interviewer in terms of demographics, such as race, gender, relationship status and so forth. In terms of interviewing interracial couples, it may be useful to interview partners separately, or to only interview one partner in a relationship. This may yield more sensitive data – such as incidents of perceived racism within the relationship.

Certainly this research study illustrates how rich the field of interracial intimate relationships is, and how it could contribute to the broader academic enquiry into racism. Numerous suggestions can be made for possible areas for future research directions. It is clearly apparent that more research is needed on interracial intimate relationships, race, whiteness, and racism; however, some more specific recommendations for future research can also be made.

This study was framed in such a way that it held peoples' personal experiences at somewhat of a distance, therefore it would be interesting to address people's experiences of being in an interracial intimate relationship from a more subjective perspective. In light of the prominence of racialised sexual stereotypes, it would be relevant to look at aspects of sexual intimacy in interracial relationships. Looking at partner-on-partner racism within interracial intimate relationships is another area deserving of study. Related to this, would be research on the experience of the children of such relationships. What impact does it have on children to be witness to racism between their parents? A possible hypothesis is that children of 'mixed' race do not suffer problems of identity due to their mixed parentage, but possibly may experience inter-parental racism and intra-familial racism as problematic. An additional area of study related to this may attend to the mother-child dyad where mother and child belong to different 'races'. Would bonding or attachment be affected by differences in race, for instance where a mother is white and her child is black? This is relevant for biological as well as adopted children.

The wealth of data generated by the study calls for further research in the area of interracial intimate relationships in post-apartheid South Africa. The discourses generated are specific to the particular point in space and time. This said, they may be indicative of discourses surrounding interracial relationships in general. There is a pressing need for us to theorise about why people respond in the ways identified by the study towards interracial intimate relationships.

This research report has illustrated that discourses surrounding interracial intimate relationships in post-apartheid South Africa are complex and varied. These complex discourses intersect with discourses on race and racism and as such form part of the broader academic enquiry into the challenges of dealing with racism and deracialisation in South Africa. Furthermore, the

discourses on interracial intimate relationships also intersect with the ideologically loaded discourses on sexism, classism, preference, geographical locations, and the family.

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