EXPECTATIONS IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS: ASSOCIATIONS WITH CULTURAL BACKGROUND AND PERCEIVED QUALITY OF RELATIONSHIP

by

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ABSTRACT

The theories of social cognition and personal constructs compose the theoretical backdrop to this dissertation which deals with people's expectations regarding romantic partners and relationships. Five women were interviewed and a qualitative analysis undertaken and discussed with a view to elucidating the influence of one's parents, cultural background and individual identity on the development and functioning of expectations. These expectations are based on beliefs about men and relationships in general and about healthy and unhealthy relationships in particular. Attention is given to the role of relationship beliefs and expectations in evaluations of romantic relationships and the consequences of such evaluations for relationship satisfaction and commitment. It is concluded that expectations play an important role in the process of partner and relationship evaluation and thus, in the outcome of relationships. Parental and cultural influences are found to play an important part in shaping individual values and expectations, albeit in an indirect manner.

Key terms: relationship expectations; relationship beliefs; personal constructs; relationship evaluation; social cognition; relationship prototypes; parents; cultural background; satisfaction; commitment.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In this section the reader will be introduced to the problem underlying the study and the objectives of the research. In addition, key terms will be defined and a general overview of what is to follow in the body of the dissertation will be provided.

1.1. The problem.

Have you ever been in the situation where you do something quite innocuous (you think) only to have your partner jump all over you with hobnailed boots, give you a stony glare, look at you as if you just arrived from a different planet, or disappear in a huff? You're left feeling confused, asking yourself what just happened. Sound familiar? If you are an adult, and you have been (or are currently) in a romantic relationship - that is, an intimate, non-platonic, heterosexual relationship - you will almost undoubtedly have had this experience. If you experience this situation only occasionally, it may be no cause for concern, but over a period of time, repeated miscommunications may spell doom for any romantic relationship. Sadly, we all know the heartache involved when our relationships do not work out as we hoped. Relationship counsellors see the people who suffer from broken relationships every day, and attempt to help these people pick up the pieces and move on with their lives, by making sense of what went wrong. How odd that something as small as not washing the dirty dishes, or leaving your socks on the floor when you take them off, can cause a rift in a relationship. Not because these actions are inherently negative, but because they are interpreted negatively within a particular framework of understanding; a framework with which one might be completely unfamiliar!

The fact is that the world we live in brings people together in a variety of settings, in which we must make sense of events and respond appropriately. We do not always get this right, primarily because we do not live inside one another's heads. We are each unique creatures and, therefore, we do not always know how others have interpreted and understood what we have said or done, nor do we always accurately interpret the actions of others. For this reason we cannot always respond appropriately. We can only respond in accordance with our own intentions, and according to how we understand the actions of others with whom we interact. In other words, in accordance with our own frame of reference. Expectations form
an important part of how we understand other's roles. For example, we each have our own picture of what is appropriate and desirable behaviour for a boyfriend or girlfriend, a husband or a wife. What we anticipate generally from people in these roles (i.e. our expectations) will greatly influence how we interpret the behaviour of the actual individuals that fill these positions in our lives.

Among the many situations in which people interact, interactions between romantic partners are perhaps particularly prone to misunderstanding and conflict. This is so because of the particular expectations that people have of romantic relationships and romantic partners, and the fact that these expectations are not made explicit either to ourselves or to our partners. Expectations are often (if not mostly) not verbalised, operating in the background of our thoughts, influencing our interpretations of events and actions, and contributing to our subsequent evaluations of our partners and our relationships. Jane Ussher (1989) points out that framing (or making sense of things) involves placing boundaries around people. It defines behaviours and experiences, providing explanations for experiences that fit within the framework while simultaneously defining as deviant behaviours that do not fit the framework. On an individual level the framework excludes from the realm of understanding behaviours of the other that do not fit the frame or model. This can be problematic in romantic relationships, inasmuch as behaviour that does not fit the frame may lead to discomfort, dissatisfaction, or distress. We leave the dishes in the sink, because we intend to wash them later, but our partner takes this innocuous behaviour personally, and interprets it to mean that one does not care about her/him, because his/her framework includes the expectation that a caring person will wash the dishes. This interpretation (that one is uncaring) is filed away for future reference, and may colour future perceptions and evaluations of behaviour. If, over time, one's expectations are not fulfilled, the resulting dissatisfaction and distress may lead one to decide that the relationship is not working and that one should move on. Thus, one's expectations can have a profound impact on one's romantic interactions, and on one's happiness.

From the above it should be apparent that an accurate understanding of one's partner's frame of reference - including his/her expectations of the romantic relationship and of oneself as the romantic partner - could reduce misunderstandings and confusion, and thus reduce conflict and distress. This would presumably benefit the relationship by improving evaluations of the
relationship and the partner, resulting in greater satisfaction and happiness. However, a search of the literature shows a lack of studies focusing on expectations in romantic relationships. Given the above, the first part of the research problem for this study relates to the specific expectations that people (in this case, adult heterosexuals) have of romantic relationships and romantic partners.

However, the story does not end there. While it is true that each individual is unique, and has a unique set of expectations that contribute to his/her framework of understanding, it is also true that we do, as a species, manage to communicate with one another. Since people function within a social and/or cultural context, the implication is that a social and/or cultural element forms part of the expectations we have and use in making sense of our interactions. "Culture" is defined as the customs and civilization of a particular people or group, therefore "cultural background" is the context of customs or civilization in which an individual was raised and/or with which an individual is most familiar. It would appear from the literature, which will be discussed in chapter two, that the cultural context within which one is raised and within which one lives as an adult plays a part in the particular expectations that one develops with regard to romantic relationships and romantic partners. For this reason, the second part of this study focuses on the potential influence of one's cultural heritage on the particular expectations one has of romantic relationships and romantic partners. Given that expectations have a cultural element and play a role in evaluations of a relationship, it is apparent that one's cultural heritage will be influential in how one evaluates one's romantic entanglements.

The latter leads one to the question of the perceived quality of a romantic relationship and people's satisfaction with these relationships. How do people decide if they are in a good relationship or not? What leads them to feel satisfied in a relationship or not? Presumably each person has his/her own criteria for evaluating his/her romantic involvements, and that evaluation plays a part in determining whether or not a person is satisfied, happy, and remains in the relationship or not. The literature to be discussed indicates that criteria for evaluating romantic relationships vary cross-culturally. Consequently, what satisfies a person from one culture may not satisfy someone from a different culture. For example, a woman from a collective culture which emphasises group cohesion and loyalty (such as those found in Asia) will have different expectations of romantic
relationships from those of a woman in the United States, where a more individualistic culture predominates. These two women will most likely have quite different views on what is relevant and important in evaluating their romantic relationships, and deciding on their satisfaction. Given that this is the case, it is clearly important to try and assess the role of cultural background in perceptions of relationship quality. It is important to note here that it is the individual's perception of interactions within a relationship and of the relationship as a whole that is emphasised in the process of evaluation. This perception reflects that individual's reality, and so-called objective reality becomes largely irrelevant.

By now it should be clear to the reader that the problem of this research is multifaceted. It is, however, possible to state these facets clearly in the form of the following research questions:

Firstly, what expectations do adult heterosexuals have with regard to romantic relationships?

Second, what expectations do adult heterosexuals have concerning romantic partners?

Third, does one's cultural background play a role in the expectations that one has regarding romantic relationships and partners?

Fourth, do expectations regarding romantic relationships and romantic partners influence the perceived quality of such relationships?

And fifth, is there a relationship between one's cultural background and perceived quality of a romantic relationship? Having thus stated the research questions we can move on to the question of what the objectives of this research are.

1.2. Objectives of the research.

One of the obvious objectives of this project is to answer the research questions accurately and adequately. This, however, is not an end in itself. A search of the South African literature reveals a decided paucity of information concerning close relationships, and particularly a lack of information on the cultural element of such relationships. Therefore, another objective of this research is to begin to build up knowledge concerning close relationships and cultural heritage in the South African context. Furthermore, the literature on attachment and love styles does not adequately detail the area of thought processes underlying such behaviour in romantic relationships and, therefore, it is hoped that this study will be a stepping stone to further investigation and understanding of people's thinking and its effects.
on their behaviour. Beyond the theoretical importance of studying close
relationships and thinking within this context, it is hoped that the findings of this
project may be of some use to anyone engaged in a romantic relationship, or
seeking to help alleviate the distress of others who are in troubled relationships, or
anyone seeking to gain further insight into people and their communication.

1.3. Overview of the dissertation.

This first chapter supplies a gateway through which the reader can step into the
body of the work to follow. Chapter 2 focuses in more depth on theory and
research relating to interpersonal interaction and cognition in romantic relationships,
taking culture as a backdrop to these processes. George Kelly's Personal
Construct Theory is used as a foundation for understanding the role of expectations
in evaluations of relationships, with specific reference to attributions, compatibility,
motivations, satisfaction and commitment. It is argued that individual's perceptions
of reality are more salient in assessing these areas than is physical reality.
Furthermore it is proposed that culture plays an important part in shaping what one
values, and how one behaves in romantic relationships. In this chapter the
hypotheses of the study will also be stated.

Chapter 3 concerns the methodology employed in this research project. It includes
a discussion of the research design itself. The reader will thus find a discussion of
the following: the purpose of the study, conceptualisation, choice of research
method, data collection, sampling procedures and the sample, data processing, and
data analysis. It will be made clear in this section why each step in the process of
collecting and analysing data was undertaken.

Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 concern the results - so to speak - of the analysis of the
data. The results will be presented and theoretical discussion will be included with
each case.

In chapter 9 conclusions based on the analysis of the results of the study and their
potential contribution to psychological knowledge will be presented. This
contribution is made clearer through comparison with previous research.
Recommendations for future research will also be made.
CHAPTER TWO

THEORY AND RESEARCH

2.1. Introduction.

During childhood and adolescence (and beyond) we build up a picture of what constitutes a good or satisfying romantic relationship and what constitutes a good partner so that as adults we do not go into romantic relationships as blank slates. Our experiences have shaped a number of preferences for what we want from a partner and from a relationship, as well as expectations about how partners and relationships function. Our expectations are framed or influenced by the cultural context in which we are raised and in which we live, therefore, people's expectations will presumably differ cross-culturally. We interpret our partner's behaviour in terms of these expectations and act in accordance with our interpretations and this has implications for the success of the relationship. Success of relationships is assumed to depend on a number of factors. These include compatibility of partners, satisfaction with the relationship, and commitment. Compatibility relates to preferences and matching in personal styles, and these involve accurate understanding of how one's partner views the world and oneself. Satisfaction is founded on positive evaluation of various aspects of the relationship relative to one's preferences and expectations. Commitment is associated with continuation of a relationship, and is based on compatibility between partners, satisfaction, and extrinsic factors (such as others' evaluations of the relationship, or situational factors).

In this chapter I shall discuss theory and research relating to the expectations a person develops about romantic relationships and partners as well as the ways in which such expectations come to impact on relationship quality in a given cultural context. I shall refer to Kelly's personal construct theory as well as to research that has been done in the areas of cognition in close relationships, attributions in relationships, attachment styles, love styles, and gender differences in expectations and needs. Finally, not to be forgotten is the role of cultural background in the development and application of expectations in the context of romantic relationships. Theory and research connecting culture and expectations to relationship quality will, therefore, also be discussed. To facilitate ease of
understanding I shall begin this review by situating the work to be discussed within a broader context of social cognition.

2.1.1. Social cognition.
This literature review falls within the domain of social cognition. The latter is the study of how people make sense of other people and themselves, and relates to the context of interpersonal interactions. According to social cognition theory individuals exist in social environments as perceived by the person. These social environments are known as psychological fields, and are made up of two factors: 1) the person in the situation, and 2) cognition and motivation. The person includes his/her needs, beliefs, perceptual abilities, and so on, that act on the environment to constitute the psychological field. Cognition and motivation are joint functions of the person and the situation. Cognition provides the perceiver's own interpretation of the world, and helps to determine what a person will do. Motivational strength predicts whether a behaviour will occur or not (and if it does, how much of it will occur) (Fiske & Taylor, 1984). In other words, the person and the environment interact to produce some construction of reality. This latter interpretation of reality depends on how the individual views the world and him/herself, and on how s/he adapts to personal feelings and external demands, as well as on both the manifest and latent content of environmental stimuli. The social cognition approach thus facilitates a focus on the mechanisms whereby interpersonal expectations influence information-processing (Baldwin, Fehr, Keedian, Seidel, & Thomson, 1993).

It is apparent from the above, that physical reality is not considered to be the essence of human experience, only the raw material. This raw material is filtered through each individual's personal vision of how reality is organised and what it consists of. Inherent in this statement is the notion that every event is open to multiple interpretations: the assumptions of constructive alternativism. These assumptions underlie the social cognition - and more broadly, the cognitivist - approach. People's mental representations of reality impose order on the chaos of experience and provide the basis for future perceptions, interpretations, and actions. As Dunstan (1996, p.305) states, individuals "respond to their personally defined reality in terms of their own feelings, values, expectations, attitudes and convictions, thereby screening, selecting and interpreting stimulations from outside." Thus, mental representations are fundamental to how we construct the world we live in, and the meaning we generate for our experiences. This construction has
implications for our romantic relationships inasmuch as partners' constructions of reality may be similar or differ substantially and this can facilitate communication or hinder it, as the case may be, resulting in fulfilment or dissatisfaction respectively (Carver & Scheier, 1988).

Having situated this review in the context of social cognition, we can now proceed to the discussion of how expectations come to influence relationship quality. George Kelly’s (1955) Personal Construct Theory provides one basis from which to understand this process.

2.2. Personal Construct Theory.

The cognitivist approach emphasises the uniqueness of each person’s subjective construction of the world, as well as the idea that people actively construct their picture of reality. George Kelly’s Personal Construct Theory reflects both of these assumptions. In his view one can understand human behaviour if one views people as scientists trying to predict events with some degree of regularity so as to make sense of the world and to be able to function in it. This need for prediction shows up in almost every aspect of behaviour, from the expectation that water will appear when one turns a tap, to the multitude of expectations one has and predictions one makes in social situations.

In social situations, as in other situations, individuals create theories about what other people are like and how they are likely to behave. Indeed, in social situations one needs to be able to interpret and understand other people’s behaviour in order to choose one’s own actions. Individuals use their theories about others to select appropriate behaviours for themselves in given situations. Each person responds to the need to understand and predict and control by developing a unique set of personal constructs which are used to make sense of events (an event being anything in a person’s experience, for example, objects, feelings, people, behaviour, etc.).

Kelly’s (1963) fundamental postulate of human behaviour is that people’s thoughts, feelings, and behaviour are determined by the constructs that they use to anticipate or predict events. The implication is that people can decide for themselves which constructs to use for interpreting events, as well as that people can alter their experiences by construing them in different ways. It is also implied that constructs
are the basis for expectations, since the latter are closely associated with the predictions people make for events (Carver & Scheier, 1988; Dunstan, 1996). At this point, a brief description of constructs and their use will facilitate a better understanding of the role of constructs in cognition in relationships.

2.2.1. Constructs and their use.

Constructs are conceptualised as basic structural and process units of the personality. They are ways of feeling, thinking, knowing, valuing, and behaving. Meanings are represented in the form of contrasts, although these bipolar and dichotomous dimensions do not necessarily oppose one another (Dunstan, 1996). The emergent pole of a construct is that which is applied to an event, and the implicit pole is the one that is not applied. One can only understand one pole because of the presence of the other (this is the familiar notion of recognition on the basis of opposition or contrast). Constructs are theorised to develop over time and reflect qualities or themes that recur in a person's experience. Since each person's experience differs from that of others, constructs will be equally variable between individuals.

Constructs have both a range and a focus of convenience. The former is the set of events for which a construct is generally useful for the purpose of predicting outcomes. The latter is the set of events for which the construct is maximally predictive (a portion of its range). The range of convenience is not fixed permanently; it can be modified. The degree to which this is possible is known as the construct's permeability, and it relates directly to the degree of mental flexibility and complexity that a person displays. A construct that is permeable will allow new types of events to be added into its range of convenience relatively easily. A construct that is impermeable is more rigidly defined and less likely to allow new events to be added to it (Carver & Scheier, 1988).

Application of a construct involves implicit and automatic hypothesising that a given construct will fit an event adequately and then testing the hypothesis. This is done by applying the construct to the event and predicting some outcome. To have meaning, the prediction must be able to differentiate between what will and what will not happen. Because of this necessity, predictions always have what Dunstan (1996, p317) calls "a positive expectation and a negative forecast". In this way, personal constructs are synonymous with "funds of expectations" with which we
structure experience (Rowe, 1973). If one's prediction is confirmed then the construct's applicability is supported and it is retained as useful. If the prediction is disconfirmed one must reconsider when to apply the construct, or one must revise or abandon it.

Prediction and expectations are closely related. Prediction proceeds on the basis of reference to expectations, and the latter are modified on the basis of experience. The assumption of active construction of experience reminds us that people make or shape their own experiences in the terms that they choose to use in interpreting events. Use of a construct or set of constructs will lead to a particular experience which may reinforce the construct and prompt its continued use. The implication is that a given expectation may be reinforced over time, if the constructs on which it is based are validated, but that such validation may occur because the individual is prone to using the same or similar constructs to interpret experience. In other words, one sees what one wants to see and what one is capable of seeing. In this context an expectation is defined as an internal mental representation of what is anticipated in a given situation, and personal constructs are seen as the building blocks of expectations.

Kelly emphasised that each individual's construct system is unique. Constructs, he argued, are also often preverbal and, therefore, people may have difficulty representing their constructs even to themselves, except as raw experience. Despite this difficulty, Kelly assumed that a person's constructs are related to each other in an organised and coherent way. Specifically, they are organised hierarchically, with some constructs at lower levels of abstraction than others. Constructs at higher levels of abstraction subsume those at lower levels. The hierarchical organisation of constructs is not fixed. It is only retained over events if it has predictive efficiency (Carver & Scheier, 1988).

The matter of organisation among constructs plays a role in creating individual differences in personality in that the use of a particular superordinate construct will channel subsequent construals toward constructs that are subsumed by it, and away from constructs that conflict with it. This process in turn will influence the character of subsequent construals (Carver & Scheier, 1988). Constructs are the terms in which an individual interprets his/her experiences and the particular constructs he/she uses (as well as their particular organisation) thus contribute to
making each individual unique. Essentially then, one filters reality through one's construct system (the constructs and their organisation). One interprets what one experiences in terms of one's constructs, and evaluates the experience in accordance with that interpretation. Interpretation and evaluation have implications for what one feels in a given situation. As discussed in the introduction, one's construction of the situation, one's cognition and one's motivation all influence how one responds (be it physically, mentally, or emotionally) and this response, in turn, impacts on others and they similarly impact on us.

From the above it can be seen that the relationship between constructs and experience is cumulative: interpretation in terms of a construct, and successful prediction of an outcome using that construct, increases the likelihood that in future such events will be interpreted in the same way. Constructs must be integrated into an organised system, and this system is directly related to one's experience of oneself (one's sense of identity) and one's experience of others. A narrow or enmeshed construct system organisation implies that all events are interpreted by means of a similar, fairly narrow range of broad or overarching constructs. Such organisation implies that the person is "narrow-minded" inasmuch as his/her construct system does not allow for flexible and complex understanding of differing events.

In the normal development of a construct system there is progressive differentiation of the system into relatively independent, internally organised subsystems. Simultaneously there is an increasing integration of these subsystems within the system as a whole (Adams-Webber, 1970). This extension and integration of the construct system allows an individual to interpret events in a flexible way, making his/her predictive capacity more accurate than that of a person whose construct system is either too enmeshed or too loose.

As stated above, when one finds a construct or cluster of constructs to be unhelpful in predicting the outcome of events, one will need to alter one's construct system. Such change may be incidental, involving only peripheral constructs, or it may be quite substantial, involving core constructs. This invalidation of constructs and the associated need for change in the construct system is accompanied by a feeling of threat, which may vary in intensity depending on the constructs (peripheral or core) that require changing. Kelly (1955) describes several emotions that are related to
the validation or invalidation of constructs including, for example, anxiety, fear, hostility, and guilt. Experience of these emotions may complicate the process of change required in one's construct system, and result in enmeshment or narrowing of the system rather than its loosening and changing. Thus, in the context of a romantic relationship, when one's expectations are not fulfilled, one may feel dissatisfied. Instead of changing one's construction of events, the experience of threat, or anxiety may motivate one to change partners instead, in an attempt to validate one's view of the world and avoid changing one's view of oneself and others (Dunstan, 1996).

In a sense, one's construct system provides the vocabulary with which we describe our world. Expectations are then somewhat like completed sentences. Constructs are just terms or words with different properties. They can apply to many different things. Expectations or knowledge structures, made up of clusters of constructs, provide the story line in which the words are used; they guide us in deciding which constructs are appropriate or likely to be useful in a given situation. Crittenden (1990) notes that internal mental representations, such as expectations, are supposed to help individuals to interpret the meaning of others' behaviour and make predictions about their future behaviour. “Open” representations are open to new interpretations or predictions (much as constructs are permeable or not). “Closed” representations mean that interpretation of all behaviour is in terms of the existing representation or model. Internal mental representations can also facilitate the organisation of a response inasmuch as they allow (or do not allow) cognitive manipulation of possible responses. Permeability of an internal mental representation as well as the ability of the individual to use it to organise responses are fundamental to the adaptiveness of the representation (and the individual). Adaptiveness (or lack of it) has implications for interpersonal interaction, since how we make sense of ourselves and of others will colour our behavioural responses in this context.

2.2.2. Interpersonal interaction.

Kelly argued that in order to interact meaningfully with someone else one must try to understand and anticipate how that person is understanding and anticipating reality. In other words, it is not enough to merely construe another person's behaviour; one must also construe his/her construction processes, in order to have some understanding of the rules by which s/he is operating, or some idea of what s/he
thinks is happening (Duck, 1973). This is what Kelly meant by role taking. When in a role one is particularly interested in understanding how the other person constructs one's role: what does the other expect of you and what are the constructs that s/he is using to predict your behaviours, and make sense of your responses? Kelly maintains that the effectiveness of interpersonal interaction depends mainly on how accurately one interprets the other person's construction of one's role. For Kelly, roles are thus not defined as primarily socially dictated modes of behaviour. Rather, roles involve patterns of behaviour that are based on a person's understanding of the other's construction processes as the latter relate to the person. The extent to which one's construal of behaviour matches the meaning intended by one's partner and reflects an accurate understanding or construal of the rules one's partner uses to make sense of events will impact on one's perceived satisfaction, and thereby on the quality of the relationship. This is because inaccurate understanding or construal of one's partner's construction process (not just the constructs used) will engender a feeling of lack of connection or compatibility, and thus lead to dissatisfaction. Stated simply, the accuracy or inaccuracy with which one construes the other's construction process results in a feeling of being on the same wavelength (or not). It should be apparent, at this point, that if constructs are the words, and expectations are the sentences we generate with those words, then accuracy of understanding of one's partner's expectations of one (and how he/she arrived at them) is very necessary to the mutual satisfaction of members of a romantic dyad.

For Kelly, people who use similar construct systems will find it easier to interact, because they will predict interpersonal events more accurately. What makes people similar is similarity in their patterns of construals i.e. the rules that govern how they arrive at a particular construction of events. Kelly saw this principle as applying to differences and similarities between cultures. This is because people from a given culture typically share some elements of experience (such as environment and manner of upbringing) and this could result in their adopting similar constructs and similar patterns of construction; they might be similar in how they interpret their experiences. People from some other culture would have a different pattern of construals.

Research by Triandis, Hui, Albert, Leung, Lisansky, Diaz-Loving, Plascencia, Marin, Betancourt, and Loyola-Cintron (1984) supports this idea that cultural differences
are rooted in variations in the constructs that people use. Each subject in this research made a series of judgements that revealed the pattern of his/her constructs about what aspects of social situations are linked to particular behaviours. Examinations of these patterns showed that people from the same culture shared certain similarities in organisation (despite individual differences) that were not shared by people from different cultures. Given the above discussion, it seems feasible that cultural background is related to the expectations that one develops regarding romantic relationships, and that the expectations one holds will play a role in how one evaluates the quality of one's relationships.

2.3. Romance and love.
Since we are concerned with romantic relationships in particular, it seems to be appropriate to define what is meant by "romantic". The word is used here to distinguish between platonic friendship-type interactions and dating- or marriage-type relationships. In both types of relationships one finds love, but the type of love differs. In romantic relationships we are concerned with romantic, companionate or passionate love rather than platonic love. Fehr (1988) notes that a wide range of definitions have been offered for the concept of love. These definitions have focused on a list of necessary and sufficient conditions for love. This form of definition has proved unsuccessful, however, since love has many criteria. After eliciting lists of criteria from her subjects, Fehr grouped these criteria into affective, behavioural, physiological, and cognitive components. She suggested that love is more easily understood in terms of a prototypical definition. By this is meant that there is a best case or prototype of love, and that this prototype is surrounded by other members of the category "love" that can be ordered in terms of the degree to which they resemble the prototypical cases. Hecht, Marston, and Larkey (1994) support this suggestion in their conclusion that a broad range of constructs are associated with the concept of love. A holistic conception of love thus allows one to view these constructs as meanings that can exist in a wide variety of combinations in the subjective experience of particular lovers.

Fehr (1988) proposes that as a relationship changes people's perceptions of the features applicable to or characteristic of the relationship change. She found that some features of love are central to the prototype, and others are peripheral. Fehr found that as the relationship became more loving, for example, the central features of love became more descriptive of the relationship than the peripheral features.
Referring back to construct theory, as relationships change the old construct system's organisation loses predictive efficiency and, therefore, must change to improve its efficiency. In this vein, Duck (1973) notes that within the context of their relationships individuals modify their interpersonal constructs as the relationship progresses. Initially, in the acquaintance phase of the relationship, constructs tend to be physicalistic, and relatively concrete. As time goes on and disclosure increases, the relationship deepens and such constructs are eschewed in preference for progressively more abstract psychological constructs. Fehr argued further that people pay particular attention to central features of the love prototype (and changes in them) as a way of assessing or evaluating the nature and state of their relationships. In this evaluation, violation of peripheral features of love are less detrimental than violations of central features. This mention of evaluation leads to a consideration of relationship quality or success of outcomes, which depend largely on evaluations.

2.4. Relationship success.

2.4.1. Expectations, satisfaction, and commitment.
The question of why relationships succeed or fail plagues researchers and clinicians alike. Relationship success is assumed to be a function of perceived satisfaction, commitment, and comparison level. Satisfaction is based on the outcome of evaluation of components of the relationship and/or partner. Evaluation proceeds by way of comparison to some expectation or comparison level, assessment of the importance of that which is under evaluation, and a decision as to the degree of fit between reality and one's expectations and preferences. One way of defining a comparison level is in terms of a realistic ideal in which past experiences and future expectations are used to establish a baseline for what one can expect from a romantic relationship (Sternberg & Barnes, 1985). Cultural background is assumed to play a role in the valencing of components or features of the relationship as positive or negative, as well as influencing the evaluation of the importance of some components relative to others for the success of the relationship. In other words, while people from different cultures may want similar things in a romantic partner or relationship (such as being in love with one's spouse), the relative importance of such things will be different between cultures. Furthermore, some things (for example, dependence on one's family) may be negatively valenced in one culture, and positively valenced in another. Rusbullt (1980) argued that individuals will be committed to a relationship to the extent that it is satisfying; it exceeds their
comparison level for alternatives; and they have invested inextricable resources (such as time, money, or emotional energy) in the relationship (Fehr, 1988).

People are assumed to possess networks of knowledge about social and intimate relationships that connect self and other and each one’s behaviour into a complete picture. These networks of knowledge are assumed to automatically shape people’s interpretations of social experiences without the mediation of deliberate, controlled processing. Constructs and their organisation constitute these networks or schemata. Based on one’s knowledge and/or experiences one comes to expect certain things in and from romantic relationships. Camnelley and Janoff-Bulman’s (1992) exploration of the association between students’ optimism about relationships and their experiences in their family of origin and in their own love relationships indicated that different experiences are relevant when making judgements about future relationships in general and marriage in particular. Optimism about future love relationships was predicted by the number of times a person had been in love, and by the absence of unrequited love. Optimism about marriage was predicted by the nature of the subject’s parents’ relationship with each other. Since optimism involves a cognitive judgement process, and judgement or evaluation involves comparison to some standard such as an expectation, the study suggests that different expectations are at work in evaluations of dating prospects and marriage relationships.

2.4.2. Attribution and motivation.

Related to the above is the question of what motivates people to continue in a relationship or not. The assumption of uniqueness or individuality implies that people will have a variety of motivations or reasons for continuing or not continuing relationships. Holmes and Rempel (1989) argue that these reasons or motivational orientations can be categorised into three types: extrinsic, instrumental, and intrinsic. An extrinsic motivational orientation is characterised by attempts to secure a partner who can provide one with rewarding outcomes such as social status, approval from others, and the like. Individuals with an instrumental orientation seek to gain interpersonal rewards within the relationship. Such rewards include information, praise, sex, and support. Finally, an intrinsic motivational orientation emphasises mutual satisfaction, empathic concern, and deriving pleasure from being with the partner. Given that motivational orientations can be considered as guiding one’s expectations in a relationship, it is apparent from the above that
people expect different things from their relationships, and the motivation to continue the relationship or not depends to a large extent on the degree to which these expectations are fulfilled.

Jones (1993) notes that attributions of own and partner's motives for maintaining relationships (i.e. one partner's construal of the other's rules of operation) have been shown to relate to feelings of love and trust within a relationship. Love and trust, in turn, are important when it comes to relational satisfaction. Attributions are inferences that people make about the causes of events or behaviours. In other words, people create a story for themselves explaining why something happened or why a person did something. The other's intentions or motivations, or personal characteristics are an important factor in attributions since observers tend to favour attributions to internal, stable factors relative to attributions to external or situational factors. To connect attribution theory to personal construct theory, one could say that the terms one uses in constructing explanations reflect one's construct system organisation. Attributions can be simple or complex, reflecting individuals' cognitive complexity. The latter is the degree to which events are understood multidimensionally rather than unidimensionally and harks back to the degree of enmeshment of construct subsystems. Cognitive complexity is attributed to a person who has a versatile construct system and who understands behaviour multidimensionally (Hall, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 1991). Hall, et al (1991) found that cognitive complexity is positively related to relationship satisfaction, length of relationship and depth of love. This supports the notion - discussed above - that a well integrated and complex construct system will facilitate greater accuracy of prediction of romantic events, inasmuch as one is in a better position to accurately understand the rules that guide one's partner's construction of one's role, and the expectations s/he has of one. This accuracy of understanding is likely to facilitate a bonding between partners (provided their expectations are compatible).

2.4.3. Compatibility.

Another domain that is relevant for relationship success concerns the compatibility of partners. De Angelis (1992) argues that lack of compatibility or insufficient compatibility can lead to failure of relationships. She proposes that people can better assess compatibility if they make their implicit preferences and expectations explicit. She provides a framework for assessing compatibility along a number of personal style dimensions. These include:
• physical style (e.g. appearance, hygiene, eating, and fitness habits, and so on),
• emotional style (e.g. attitude to romance and affection, expression of feelings),
• social style (e.g. personality traits, interaction with others),
• intellectual style (includes attitude to learning, educational background),
• sexual style (e.g. attitude to sex, skill),
• communication style (relates to how partner communicates, plus attitude to communication),
• professional/financial style (attitude to success, relationship with money),
• personal growth style (includes ability to introspect and change, and willingness to work on the relationship),
• spiritual style (such as attitude to higher power, philosophy of life, moral views),
• and interests and hobbies.

When following De Angelis' approach to compatibility one proceeds by listing one's preferences in each of the above domains and then comparing one's actual partner's style to the preferences one has listed. The degree to which one's partner fulfills or lives up to one's expectations is indicative of the degree of compatibility. This compatibility is associated with increased satisfaction and thus with relationship success. De Angelis notes that while the overall score one gets for compatibility using her formula is useful, one will most likely feel that some domains are more important than others so that a relatively high score overall can be nullified by a low score in a style domain that is particularly important to the individual. Similarly, a low score in a relatively unimportant area may be less likely to disrupt the relationship. This relates to Fehr's work (1988) on central and peripheral features of love, in that one's preferences (or the terms one uses in expressing those preferences) may be central or peripheral in evaluating compatibility and satisfaction. It is worth noting at this point that the attention focused on partner preferences, and compatibility is a reflection of the notion that evaluations of and interactions with the partner determine whether the relationship as a separate entity is considered satisfactory and worth pursuing.

The preceding discussion has dealt with what motivates people to remain in relationships, as well as the basis on which they evaluate these relationships. Since romantic relationships involve attachment processes, another way of understanding romantic relationships is from an attachment perspective.
2.5. Attachment theory.
Most research, to date, in the field of close relationships has accumulated in the USA. Many researchers have studied attachment and attachment styles (e.g. Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Levy & Davis, 1988; Bringle & Bagby, 1992; Krokoff, 1990) but the question of what and how thoughts influence an adult to be secure, anxious, or avoidant in attachment is not often explicitly discussed. Attachment theory does, however, provide a useful framework for understanding how and why adults behave the way they do in romantic relationships.

2.5.1. Working models.
Attachment theory is about the bond that develops between child and caretaker in infancy, and the consequences that this bonding has for the child’s self-concept and developing view of the social world. Bowlby (1973) argued that the attachment relationship has a profound impact on the child’s developing personality, and that the nature and quality of this early relationship is largely determined by the caretaker’s emotional availability and responsiveness to the child’s needs. Through continued interaction the child develops “working models”. These contain beliefs and expectations about whether the caretaker is someone caring and responsive or not, and also whether or not the self is worthy of care and attention. Working models are carried forward into new relationships where they guide expectations, perception, and behaviour. In this way, working models provide the mechanism for cross-age continuity in attachment style. They enable us to predict the actions of others in order to plan or prepare for particular outcomes, and to interpret and explain the behaviour of others in such a way that we can understand our social world. Analysis of psychotherapeutic transcripts by Luborsky and Crits-Christoph (1988) and Luborsky, Crits-Christoph, and Mellon (1986) indicated that individually unique and specific relationship patterns show consistency over time. This finding provides support for Bowlby’s theory of working models being carried forward from infancy. Luborsky et al’s research also supports Kelly’s (1955) argument that constructs and their organisation reflect themes that have been repeated in a person’s experience. In other words, people’s working models develop because the constructs from which they are composed are validated over repeated events. Thus the constructs and their particular organisation are retained over time, and the working models of the caretaker, the self, and consequently the world, are carried forward into adulthood.
From observations of infants and caretakers Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall (1978) identified three patterns or styles of attachment that relate to people's working models. The attachment styles are secure, anxious, and avoidant. Consistent with Bowlby's theory, the three styles are closely associated with differences in caretaker warmth and responsiveness. If a person has had a responsive and available caretaker then s/he is likely to expect others to be emotionally available and responsive and will interact positively with others. S/he will feel secure in relationships. If, however, the person has had a cold, rejecting, or manipulative caretaker, s/he is likely to view others in terms of these constructs and is likely to feel insecure or avoidant in relationships. Finally, if the caretaker has been inconsistent in availability and responsiveness the person is likely to feel anxious or ambivalent about others and in subsequent relationships (s/he will seek intimacy, but is unsure about others' willingness to be close). Thus relational expectations regarding availability and responsiveness of the other can be seen as underlying attachment style in adult romantic relationships (Baldwin et al, 1993; Fitzpatrick, Fey, Segrin, & Schiff, 1993; Mayer, Rapp, & Williams, 1993).

2.5.2. Beliefs underlying attachment.

Research by Metts and Cupach (1990) focused on the influence of relationship beliefs and problem-solving responses on satisfaction in a romantic relationship. They defined relationship beliefs as relatively stable expectations about how relationships and partners function. This definition connects their study to Bowlby's notion of working models of self and other. Metts and Cupach (1990) argued that relationship beliefs tend to be idiosyncratic constructions generated and revised on the basis of personal experience, and this ties in with Kelly's construct theory. They proposed that relationship beliefs guide the kind of communicative responses that partners display when faced with problems in their relationship. These responses then influence relational satisfaction. They used the Relationship Belief Inventory to assess beliefs. This forty-statement inventory measures five dysfunctional relational beliefs. Rusbult's (1980) typology was used to assess problem-solving responses. This typology identifies four types of response: 1) voice (e.g. discussing problems); 2) loyalty (e.g. having faith that things will improve); 3) neglect (e.g. general withdrawal); and 4) exit (leaving or otherwise destroying the relationship). Hendrick and Hendrick's (1989) Relationship Assessment Scale was used to operationalise satisfaction (Metts & Cupach, 1990). Results indicated that a) exit and neglect are
negatively related to satisfaction, and voice is positively related to satisfaction; and b) dysfunctional beliefs are negatively related to voice, and positively related to exit and neglect. Metts and Cupach concluded that communicative responses to problems mediate the relationship between dysfunctional beliefs and relational satisfaction, and that these beliefs are negatively correlated with satisfaction. This supports the notion of a link between expectations and satisfaction in romantic relationships.

Supporting Bowlby and Ainsworth's work, Collins and Read (1990) argue that three dimensions underlying attachment styles can be seen as guiding principles that determine how the attachment system manifests itself in adult relationships. These dimensions are related to Bowlby's working models inasmuch as they concern beliefs and expectations that are fundamental to feelings of security in adulthood. Factor analysis of Collins and Read's data revealed three underlying dimensions of attachment style: Close - the extent to which an individual is comfortable with closeness and intimacy; Depend - the extent to which an individual feels s/he can depend on others to be available when needed; and Anxiety - the extent to which an individual feels anxious about being abandoned and/or unloved. The study provided evidence that differences in attachment are linked to different patterns of beliefs and expectations about self and others in ways consistent with attachment theory. Crittenden (1990) notes that at ages beyond infancy attachment may become associated with other culturally derived needs. Similarly, Fehr (1988) acknowledges that history and culture are present in everyday conceptions of love (and commitment). Since such conceptions are important in romantic relationships, it is clear that culture will play a part in these relationships.

Weiss (1982) suggested that individuals seek partners for whom their attachment system is already prepared to respond. In other words, they seek partners who are similar to their caretakers, thus tending to confirm and perpetuate their working models of people and relationships. Collins and Read (1990) found moderate evidence for the relation between attachment style dimensions of the subject's partner and perceived caregiving style of the subject's parents. Attachment style dimensions of the subject's partner were, however, strongly predictive of relationship quality. Greater anxiety in women (associated with intense seeking of closeness as well as possessiveness) was related to more negative experiences and lower overall satisfaction for male partners. In contrast, when men felt
comfortable with closeness and intimacy, partners reported much more positive relationship experiences and greater overall satisfaction. These findings indicate that men and women differ in how they decide on satisfaction in romantic relationships inasmuch as different criteria for evaluation are suggested. This suggests that men and women hold different expectations with regard to romantic relationships.

2.5.3. Perceptions versus reality.
Other researchers' work on perceptions and relational satisfaction suggests that it is perceived, rather than actual, differences between the ways that two people feel about each other, that best predicts satisfaction. For instance, Sternberg and Barnes (1985) in their study on the role of realistic ideals in happiness in and success of romantic relationships found that perceptions of symmetry in feelings between self and other far outstripped actual symmetry. They concluded that it is not the existence of an ideal other that is associated with dissatisfaction, but rather the existence of an ideal who is very different from the actual other as perceived by the self. Relationships may succeed or fail, they argued, not because the actual other corresponds to the ideal other, or because of the level of the other's actual feelings, but rather because of what the self perceives the other to feel. This ties in with the social cognitive view that it is perception of reality rather than reality per se, as well as with Kelly's argument that it is the accuracy of construal of one's partner's construction process rather than socially dictated norms, that dictates the effectiveness of interpersonal interaction. In the same vein, Murray, Holmes and Griffin (1996) found that people were happier in their romantic relationships when they idealised their partners somewhat. Being the target of such idealisation was also a good predictor of relationship satisfaction. Thus, perception of the partner (albeit somewhat distorted) was found to be more important than the real thing in predicting satisfaction in romantic relationships. Similarly, Davis and Oathout's (1987) model of relationship satisfaction is based on the assumption that satisfaction with the relationship is directly influenced not by one's partner's actual behaviour, but by one's evaluation of perceptions of this behaviour. Since evaluation involves comparison and comparison involves expectations, once again it is apparent the expectations will influence satisfaction.

The question of what is relevant when making decisions about a romantic relationship is another important consideration. This aspect is most likely influenced
by cultural background, since the latter may lead people from a given cultural background to value or expect broadly similar things in the context of romantic relationships, even though individuals will differ idiosyncratically. Let us then explore this cultural connection further.

2.6. Culture and relationships.

2.6.1. Cultural syndromes.

There are many different definitions of culture, but there is also wide agreement that it consists of shared elements that provide standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, communicating, and acting among those who share a language, a historic period, and a geographic location (Triandis, 1996). Culture, as a construct, implies consensus. Cultural level constructs include shared norms, roles, and values. Triandis (1996) notes that the extent to which psychological theories are shaped by unstated assumptions found in one's culture is unknown. Cultural syndromes, he proposes, are constructs that indicate how a phenomenon in contemporary psychology is modified in indigenous psychologies. There are dimensions of cultural variation that can function as parameters for psychological theories.

A cultural syndrome is a pattern of shared attitudes, beliefs, categorisations, self-definitions, norms, role definitions, and values that is organised around a theme. This theme can be identified among those who speak a particular language, during a particular historic period, and in a definable geographic region. Examples of cultural syndromes include tightness, cultural complexity, activity-passivity, honour, collectivism, individualism, and vertical and horizontal relationships (Triandis, 1996).

Cultural complexity points to the fact that cultures differ in terms of the number and complexity of religious, economic, political, educational, social, and aesthetic standards. Related to cultural complexity is the syndrome of tightness. The latter refers to the fact that in some cultures there are many norms applicable across many situations and minor deviations from these norms are criticised and punished. In other cultures, however, there are much fewer norms, and only major deviations are criticised. Hofstede (1984) has used the phrase "uncertainty avoidance" to describe this syndrome. In his scheme the extent to which a culture tolerates ambivalence is determined by the extent to which it avoids uncertainty. Cultures high in uncertainty avoidance will have many more prescriptions and rules for
members, and will tolerate ambivalence much less than cultures low in uncertainty avoidance.

The active-passive syndrome draws attention to whether a given culture values activity (for example competition, assertion, self-fulfilment) or passivity (for example co-operation, leaving initiative to others, and reflective thought). The syndrome of honour is likely to be found in more active cultures, since it includes beliefs, attitudes, norms, values, and behaviours that favour the use of aggression for self-protection, to defend one's honour, and in socialising children so that they will react when challenged (Triandis 1996).

The dimensions or syndromes along which cultures are most often compared are collectivism and individualism. Four attributes define collectivism-individualism:
1) the meaning of the self: In collective cultures the self is defined as an aspect of a collective (such as the family, or tribe, or nation). This reflects an interdependent notion of self. In contrast, individualist cultures define the self in more autonomous or independent terms;
2) structure of goals: priority given to collective goals as opposed to individual or personal goals in collectivist versus individualist cultures;
3) Behaviour as a function of norms versus attitudes: across many situations, collectivists give more weight to norms than to attitudes as determinants of social behaviour, whereas the opposite is true for individualists;
4) Focus on the needs of the in-group versus social exchanges: in collectivist cultures attention is paid to the needs of one's in-group members in determining social behaviour, whereas in individualist cultures attention is given to advantages and costs of relationships to the individual. So, for example, if - in an individualist culture - costs exceed advantages individuals drop the relationship, whereas in collectivist cultures if a relationship is desirable from the perspective of the in-group but costly at the individual level, the individual is likely to continue with the relationship.

Individualism-collectivism is related to vertical versus horizontal relationships. The latter syndrome refers to the fact that in some cultures hierarchy is important [what Hofstede (1984) calls power distance] and in-group authorities determine most social behaviour, whereas in other cultures social behaviour is more egalitarian.
Triandis, Bontempo, Leung, and Hui (1990) developed a method for determining cultural, demographic, and personal constructs. The rationale behind this method holds that peers, who are good informants with respect to a particular culture, will reach rapid consensus as to whether a particular value or construct is important or unimportant if the value or construct is culturally important. Similarly, if the group is considering the construct as a disvalue (that is, an idea that at least 50% of a cultural group disagrees with) they should also have little trouble reaching rapid consensus. On the other hand, if the group is considering a moderately important value which is not widely accepted or rejected by members of a culture, then the time to reach consensus should be longer than in the previous two cases. This is because differing views will be presented in the discussion. Thus, response time is taken as a measure of the importance of a value. Triandis et al. (1990) drew up a list of thirty five values based on literature, and asked subjects to rate each value as important, unimportant, or objectionable.

With regard to generating a list of values, Triandis and his colleagues (1990) caution that one must ensure that the list is representative of the values of the people under study, that it is in their language, and that peer groups are formed in a way that is compatible with cultural norms and traditions. They hold that this method allows one to interpret a particular person's value judgements in the context of cultural values. So, for example, if an individual agrees with a cultural disvalue one's interpretation will differ from the case of agreement or disagreement with a cultural value. The different patterns "say" different things about the individual's judgements.

Triandis (1996) points out that western theories tend to emphasise the importance of attitudes, needs, personality, and idiosyncratic values, because Western culture is individualistic and, consequently, western psychology focuses on individuals and processes internal to individuals. He states that in non-western cultures norms, collective needs, collective self-definitions, and values are often more important. External processes, such as individual membership in a collective (such as the family, village, work group, religious community, or nation) and the context of the behaviour are emphasised.
2.6.2. Culture and attachment.
Given such cultural variations as those discussed above, it is not surprising that culture has been found to have an important impact on social definitions of how men and women think, feel, and behave in romantic relationships (Griffitt & Hatfield, 1985; Wallen, 1989; Simpson & Gangestad, 1991). Some social psychologists have argued that early attachments are the forerunners of adults' "desire for union" or their willingness to pursue romantic relationships (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Hatfield & Rapson, 1993; Hazan & Shaver, 1987). In this context, Doherty, Hatfield, Thomson, and Choo (1994) found a significant association between adult attachment style and likelihood of being in love. They also found a significant effect for attachment style on passionate love scores, as well as a significant relationship between attachment style and companionate love scores. Specifically, results indicated that anxious subjects were most likely to report currently being in love, followed by secure subjects, with avoidants least likely to so report. Anxious subjects had the highest scores on the passionate love scale, followed by secures, and then avoidants. And finally, secures scored highest on the companionate love scale, anxious subjects were intermediate, and avoidants scored lowest. These findings support research discussed in earlier sections of this review with regard to attachment in adulthood. Doherty et al concluded that (at least in Hawaii) men and women from various cultural and ethnic groups are equally likely to identify with various attachment styles. In support of this, researchers found that the prevalence of children and adults who develop the various attachment styles is roughly similar across cultures. Approximately 56% will be secure, 19% anxious, and 25% avoidant (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Similar prevalence rates were found in the United States, Australia, Israel, and China (Wu & Shaver, 1992).

2.6.3. Values and practices.
Historians have pointed out that the main message of historical research is not the universality of love, but rather its variability. In various eras and societies the words love, sex, and intimacy have carried a huge array of differing and contrasting meanings (Bulbough, 1990; Degler, 1980; D'Emilio & Freedman, 1988; Gay, 1986; Gillis, 1985; Mintz & Kellogg, 1986; Phillips, 1988; Stone, 1977, 1990). They note that the West initiated the ideology of romanticism with its associated ideas and practices. These include a) a high value placed on romantic and passionate love, b) marriage for love (as opposed to arranged marriages), c) egalitarian families (versus patriarchal or hierarchical ones), d) sexual freedom for men and women, e) equality
for women, and f) childhood as a separate phase of life with children deserving special treatment (as opposed to viewing children as miniature adults).

Hatfield and Rapson (1993) point out that the ideology of romanticism reflects a Western, independent culture's faith in inherent separateness of distinct individuals. In many non-western, interdependent cultures there is an equal insistence on the fundamental connectedness of human beings. As Hsu (1971, 1985) has argued, by way of this influence on an individual's perspective, culture can impact on where people seek intimacy and how likely they are to find it. Thus, in the West, people focus on romantic love and expect to find intimacy in passionate affairs. Furthermore, in this culture, it is considered immature to remain dependent on one's parents. In contrast, in Chinese society, men and women expect less from marriage, since parents and kin are the major source of intimacy. Men and women assume that they will be tied to their families for life, but that the future of love is less certain. In support of this argument, Hatfield and Sprecher (1995) studying American, Russian, and Japanese students found that cultural differences exist in how much is expected from one's mate. Specifically, people in Western, individualistic cultures expect or demand more in potential mates (as reflected in greater choosiness) than people from mixed or collectivist cultures.

With regard to the ideas discussed above, Wu and Shaver's study (1992) involving American, Italian, and Chinese people indicated that men and women from these cultures identified the same emotions as basic, and agreed in all cases, bar one, whether the emotions are positive or negative. The exceptional emotion was love. Americans and Italians equated love with happiness and assumed it to be a positive experience. Chinese, however, associated love with sadness, pain, and heartache, and therefore perceived it as a negative experience. Other researchers have shown that this negative perception does not, however stop Chinese people from falling in love (Aune & Aune, 1995).

Further to the above, Lee and Stone (1980) found that marriage based on love and choice of one's own spouse was less likely to occur in societies characterised by extended family systems as compared to those with nuclear family structures. An extended family system can be viewed as one manifestation of greater societal collectivism. Dion and Dion (1993) suggest that in collectivist societies personal well-being is not as strongly related to psychological intimacy in marriage as it is in
individualist societies. They found, for example, that in China, even after marriage, individuals' psychological well-being was rooted primarily in ties of family relationships with parents, siblings, and other relatives (Hsu, 1985). Dependency on the family, and the virtues of filial piety and devotion were emphasised across the life span (Ho, 1975). Hsu's description of traditional Chinese marriage illuminates the point that intimacy (defined by reciprocal self-disclosure, sharing activities, and revealing strong personal feelings) was not emphasised. There was less concern with issues such as happiness or satisfaction in marriage (relative to Western marriages), because the bond between spouses was not the most important relationship in the individual's life. A similar pattern was found in traditional Japanese society (DeVos, 1985; Roland, 1988). This research supports the notion that expectations of partners and of relationships will differ cross-culturally.

Buss (1989) with his colleagues (1990) found that both culture and gender impact on what people value in marital partners. In general, men and women in different cultures wanted similar traits in their spouses. Both said, for example, that they wanted intelligent, kind, and understanding partners when asked what they cared about most. However, almost all cultures indicated a few consistent gender differences in preferences. Men seemed to care a little more than women about traits related to reproductive capacity (such as good looks or youth), and women cared a little more than men about traits related to resource acquisition (such as ambition or social status). Buss (1989) found that sometimes culture exerted a powerful influence on the value that men and women attached to a particular trait. As an example, in China, India, Iran, Taiwan, and with Palestinian Arabs in Israel men and women attached a high value to chastity, whereas in Sweden, Norway, Finland, the Netherlands, West Germany, and France, men and women felt that prior sexual experience was unimportant or irrelevant. Similarly, scholars have pointed out that particular practices will be evaluated differently in different cultures. Thus members of individualist and collectivist cultures will differ in their expectations as to whether marriages should be arranged or be love matches, what parents and young people should look for in mates, and what both have a right to expect from the marriage (Chu, 1985; Doi, 1973; Ho, 1982; Hsu, 1985). Given the above, it is well to consider that relational expectations of members of different cultures will likely differ, and criteria for defining a successful relationship will also differ for people from individualist and collectivist cultures or societies. Nonetheless
expectations (whatever their details are) will exist and will play a part in the process whereby the person evaluates his/her relationship. Some of these expectations concern what one should experience in romantic relationships, and others concern how (or if) one should express this experience.

2.6.4. Emotion management.

Emotion experience and expression are considered to be the sine qua non of close relationships, but Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988) point out that little research has focused on the relationship between culture and emotion communication. Culture is argued to provide members with a repertoire of affective responses to stimuli (Jenkins & Karna, 1992). Therefore, exploring the cultural basis of emotion is essential to understanding emotion management, as the latter plays a role in adult attachment relationships.

In the context of emotion experience and expression, Argyle and Henderson (1984, 1985) argue that different intimacy-regulating rules govern the different appropriate levels of intimacy expressions in different cultures. If intimacy is too high or too low in a particular relationship it may generate stress in the relationship. Ting-Toomey (1991) notes that there is a lack of data about how members of different cultures express intimacy in their interpersonal interactions. She argues that in individualist societies members tend to verbalise and negotiate individual wants and needs with a strong self-assertion focus. In contrast, members of collectivist societies tend to be more circumspect and discreet in voicing opinions or feelings about interpersonal relationships, because of a strong communal focus. Based on the above, one might argue that cultural norms regarding expression of emotion may influence one's choice in this matter. Culture and expression of emotion relates to Rusbult's typology of problem-solving responses, as discussed above. The choice between responses of voice, loyalty, neglect, or exit may be influenced by cultural membership and concomitant rules regarding display of emotion, as well as norms determining the appropriateness of different communication patterns.

Aune and Aune (1995) studied cultural differences in self-reported experience and expression of emotions in relationships. Important components in understanding experience and expression of emotion are feeling rules and display rules. The former are shared social guidelines reflecting the appropriateness of experiencing given emotions in specific situations (Hochschild, 1979). The latter are learned
rules about the appropriateness of emotion expressions in specific situations (Ekman & Friesen, 1975). Ekman (1972) argued that emotional display rules vary across cultures. More specifically, Strzyzewski (1992) argued that display rules vary according to the valence of the emotion experienced, as well as the context. Negative emotions are least preferred, but positive emotions may also be socially unacceptable in some situations (for example, self-praise may be taboo in some cultures, but acceptable in others). Since feeling and display rules are interconnected, vary cross-culturally, and together affect the experience and expression of emotion the latter two are likely to vary across cultures. Feeling and display rules can be viewed as expectations that guide behaviour in different interpersonal situations in that one expects certain outcomes to stem from different forms of experience, and particularly from different forms of expression of emotion.

Following on from the above, Aune and Aune (1995) found that self-reported experience, expression, and perceived appropriateness of expression of negative emotions did not differ across cultures. Their proposed explanation for this finding is that across cultures, negative emotion management may, perhaps, be perceived to be more obligatory and may be practised similarly. Positive emotions, however, do not appear to elicit the same degree of emotion management as negative emotions. Therefore, positive emotions may be subject to less rigorous universal constraints, leaving display rules for positive emotions open to more variation cross-culturally. This fits their findings that experience, expression, and perceived appropriateness of emotion expression for positive emotions differed between European Americans, Filipino Americans and Japanese Americans. They speculate that emotion management may differ across cultures not because of the potentially disruptive nature of negative emotions, but because of the ability of positive emotions to enhance group cohesion and harmony.

In line with this speculation, Matsumoto (1989, 1991) suggests that emotion displays among members of collectivist cultures should foster group harmony to a greater degree than displays by members of individualist cultures. In this case, conflict-inducing behaviours are minimised in collectivist cultures, whereas members of individualist cultures may be more open with conflict (Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988). Minimisation of conflict or promotion of harmony may manifest in greater uniformity of emotion display among collectivist group members. Individualist cultures, being more tolerant of individual deviance, would presumably
have fewer constraints relating to a wide variety of emotion experiences and
expressions among its member. Related to this proposition, Gudykunst and Ting­
Toomey (1988) suggest that cultures lower in uncertainty avoidance are more free
to allow varying expressions of emotion.

Based on the above discussion it is very clear that one's cultural background will
influence what one expects of self and other in romantic relationships. Culture will
also play a role in what outcomes are associated with or expected from different
forms of behaviour. Culture can, thus, be seen as providing a framework for
romantic relationships.

2.7. Conclusion.
This chapter has dealt with theory and research relating to the roles of culture,
satisfaction, and expectations in romantic relationships. It serves to establish links
between a person's cultural background, his/her expectations or thoughts, and
his/her satisfaction with a given relationship. On the basis of this review one can
conclude that people will have expectations in one form or another. These
expectations are likely to be shaped by cultural norms which also determine what is
valued or considered relevant in making decisions about relationships. One's
personal experience will also modify these expectations to a certain extent.
Satisfaction is seen to be related to one's perceptions of the other in the
relationship, and to one's expectations of self and other. Personal satisfaction is,
however, one consideration that may vary cross-culturally. In some cultures it may
be highly predictive of relational success or outcome, but in another culture it may
be less predictive (if at all). Thus cultural context provides the backdrop to
individual functioning in romantic relationships.

Having thus situated this project in the context of current theory and research we
can now move on to the discussion of the methods employed in attempting to fulfil
the objectives of this study.
3.1. Introduction.

In any attempt to find answers to questions, it is useful to draw up a battle plan - so to speak. Essentially this chapter is an exposition of the strategies employed in this study in an attempt to satisfy the objectives outlined in chapter one. The manner in which this plan is discussed may give the impression that all aspects were thought out in advance of the study and applied in rather smooth, unproblematic fashion. However, as in most research endeavours, this was not always the case. The nature of this study was rather more organic and flexible. Nevertheless, this chapter will deal fully with what was studied, why, and how. Thus the reader will find a discussion of the purpose of the study and the various steps involved in the processes of conceptualisation and operationalisation. This includes the methods whereby data were collected, processed, and analysed. That said, let us begin at the beginning with the purpose of this endeavour.

3.2. Purpose of the study.

Babbie (1998) notes that there are three main reasons for doing research: exploration, description, and explanation. Although every study will have a main purpose, it will usually have elements of all three purposes. In the case of this project the main purpose is exploratory. Essentially the study was prompted by the observation - in the context of counselling - that many individuals present with the problem of misinterpreting the behaviour(s) of their partners in romantic relationships and this misinterpretation leads to discomfort, or dissatisfaction, pain, or conflict. Thus, the interest in delving into the process of interpretation, and particularly people's expectations - which seemed to be where the problem originated - was initiated. Essentially the research is an attempt to begin to understand the mental framework that people use for interpreting others' behaviour in intimate relationships. Since the literature review indicated that very little information exists on this topic, it was felt that this would be the logical starting point. Hence, an exploration of the topic of expectations and their place in the interpretive process was indicated. An exploratory approach seemed fitting for the purpose of satisfying the researcher's desire for a deeper understanding of the topic and providing information that could serve as a springboard for future investigations.
of this field. Additionally, this approach can serve to test the feasibility of a more extensive - and more generalisable - study, as well as suggesting methods that might be appropriate for such a study. Thus this research endeavour is intended as a starting point for further investigation in this area of human functioning and interpersonal interaction.

Having outlined the purpose of the study the question is then how - and where - to begin. The first step in this process is to identify the concepts that one will be dealing with, and to come to some idea of their definition. This is the process of conceptualisation.

3.3. Conceptualisation.

While apparently a simple process, conceptualisation can prove to be one of the most difficult aspects of a study. It is necessary to have some working understanding of the concepts under investigation, and thus one must try and clarify the meaning of such concepts. However, in an exploratory study such as this one that very clarification and definition forms part of the investigation. Nevertheless, it is possible to specify the concepts to be studied and to offer a tentative or working definition. Thus, for the purposes of this study, a “romantic relationship” was understood as an intimate, non-platonic, heterosexual relationship. Such a relationship could take a number of forms and have endured for varied periods of time, therefore, these two dimensions - form and time - were not specified at the start. It was decided to restrict investigation to heterosexual relationships, since the dynamics of a homosexual relationship are assumed to differ to an extent that would complicate, rather than clarify an understanding of expectations in intimate relationships.

“Expectations” were understood as being what one anticipates generally from people in various roles and in varying situations. More specifically, they are understood as internal mental representations of what is anticipated in a given situation and from a person in a given role. They are not explicit, but are available to consciousness. Going closely along with expectations are constructs and beliefs. The former are the terms one uses, and the latter are things that are accepted as fact. These two elements are understood as the fundamental building blocks of which expectations are composed. Thus, expectations are somewhat more complex in nature than constructs and somewhat more active than beliefs. A full
discussion of constructs and their relation to expectations, as well as how the latter relate to relationship satisfaction appears in chapter two, and I shall, therefore, not repeat it here.

Also as discussed in chapter two, one's cultural background plays a part in the expectations one develops, as well as the valencing of the latter in evaluations of one's relationships. "Cultural background" is understood as the context of customs and civilisation of a particular group or people in which a person was raised and with which s/he is most familiar. This is, however, an initial understanding, since respondents were asked to give their understanding of this concept.

A relationship is considered successful if both parties are satisfied with and committed to its continuation. From the literature the components of relationship success are identified as compatibility of partners, satisfaction, and commitment. Compatibility relates to preferences and matching in personal styles. Satisfaction is founded on the positive evaluation of the relationship relative to one's preferences and expectations. Commitment is associated with continuation of the relationship and it is based on compatibility and satisfaction, as well as on external factors (such as others' evaluations of the relationship or situational factors). Commitment results from the investment of resources in a relationship (such as time, energy, and money), as well as from the evaluation that one's partner - and the relationship generally - exceed the comparison level for alternatives (in other words, that one is not likely to find better elsewhere). Again, respondents were asked for input on what motivates them to stay in their relationships and, therefore, the understanding offered initially for the concepts mentioned above are working definitions only.

Given the fact that the purpose of this study was exploratory, conceptualisation is of necessity somewhat nebulous, although an attempt has been made to have a clear - albeit tentative and flexible - understanding of concepts and processes to be studied. It is apparent from the above discussion that the level of measurement of the variables in this project is nominal. The demographic variables included in the study are age, level of education, nature and length of relationship, number of children(if any). These variables (with the exception of level of education) can be considered ratio level measurements, and amenable to statistical manipulations. However, such manipulations have not been attempted, since they are superfluous to the purpose of this study.
Having come to some decisions about why one is doing research, and what exactly it is that one is trying to research one can continue with the process of data collection. Included in this phase are the choice of research method and operationalisation. The latter includes the questions of how, exactly, data will be collected, and from whom.

3.4. Data collection.
3.4.1. Choice of research method.
The choice of a research method relates closely to the purpose of one’s study and to the types of concepts to be investigated. The choice involves a decision about the general approach to be taken in collecting one’s data, and as such has implications for the process of operationalisation. There are many research methods available each with its strengths and weaknesses, and implications as concerns operations for data collection. In the case of this study, field research is the best label for the approach taken. The concepts and processes to be explored imply the need for a qualitative approach, and field research offers a comprehensiveness of perspective not readily available to other research methods (Babbie 1998).

Field research offers the opportunity for the researcher to recognise nuances of attitude and/or behaviour around a particular topic. Considering that the aim of this exploration was to develop a deeper understanding of people’s expectations and how they impact on relationship satisfaction and success, this aspect of field research made it an appropriate research method. The chief strength of field research lies in this depth of understanding that it permits. Another point in favour of field research is the flexibility the method allows, inasmuch as one can modify the research design as necessary. In an exploratory study such as this one, such flexibility is a necessity. Also an advantage is the fact that field research is generally less expensive than other methods of research.

3.4.1.1. Validity and reliability.
Given that field research is most appropriate to exploratory research, at this point it seems appropriate to make mention of the validity and reliability of field research. Babbie (1998) notes that relative to surveys and experiments, field research provides more valid measures. This is because the comprehensiveness of the
approach allows the researcher to tap a depth of meaning in concepts that is generally unavailable to surveys and experiments. While the validity of field research is thus established, reliability can be problematic. This is because field research measurements, while in-depth and comprehensive, are also often very personal. Thus the opinions, attitudes and knowledge of the researcher are inextricably a part of the research process and its outcomes (Babbie 1998). This is why it is important for the researcher to make every effort to sort out his/her own biases and perspectives from those of his/her respondents, to avoid coming to biased conclusions.

In this study, the author (who collected and analysed all data) attempted to reach accurate conclusions by engaging in a certain amount of introspection concerning her own expectations in relationships, and her own opinions on how partners and relationships function and should function, as well as the role of her own cultural heritage in the development of those expectations and in the process of relationship evaluation. In other words, the researcher attempted to answer the same questions posed to respondents as a means of separating out her own perspectives from those of the respondents. At all times, the researcher tried to set aside her own biases and remain open-minded to the data that respondents provided. However, it must be acknowledged that in this type of qualitative research it is not possible for the researcher to be entirely objective, simply because one might not be aware of ways in which one influences the data collection and analysis process. One can only try and deal with what one is aware of. Thus it is impossible to remove the influence of the researcher from that which is researched.

As a means of improving the reliability and validity of the data collection process, the initial interview was given to the researcher's supervisor for comment, among other things, on ways in which the researcher might be biasing the process of data collection. In collecting the data the researcher attempted to maintain an awareness of her own role in the interviewing process, and to avoid pushing respondents for particular answers or in particular directions while still guiding the interviews appropriately. The transcriptions of the interviews were read with a view to identifying ways in which the researcher may have biased the data, and this was kept in mind in the process of analysis. Thus, efforts were made to ensure validity and reliability.
3.4.2. Operationalisation.
Operationalisation involves decisions about how data are to be collected, from whom, where, when, and why, as well as the ethics involved in this process.

3.4.2.1. The interviews.
Since the purpose of this study was exploratory, and the concepts to be explored pertain to individual interpretive processes, and the roles of individuals in relationships, it was decided that the most appropriate way in which to collect data was to conduct in-depth interviews with a sample of respondents. In these qualitative interviews - which were recorded by means of a hand-held cassette recorder - the researcher had a general plan of inquiry rather than a specific set of questions that had to be asked. The interviewer established a general direction for the conversation and pursued various topics as raised by the respondents. The topics discussed included

- respondents' preferences and ideals in terms of romantic partners
- understandings and expectations of the role that partners play
- ideas on what makes a relationship a romantic relationship
- respondents' understandings of their cultural background
- perspectives on the potential influence of one's cultural background in relationships
- what motivates respondents to maintain their relationships
- what, in their partners or relationships, satisfies respondents (or not).

The interviews were conducted at the respondents' convenience, and took approximately two and a half hours each. Each respondent was asked where they would prefer to meet and thus three of the interviews were conducted at the respondents' homes, one at the respondent's place of employment, and one in the researcher's home. Cognisance is given to the fact that the variation in location may influence the responses given.

Given that this study uses Kelly's Personal Construct Theory as a foundation, one may well ask why the Role Construct Repertory Grid devised by Kelly was not used. The answer is simply that, for the purposes of this study, it was felt that this tool does not provide one with a holistic picture of people's expectations. It supplies a fragmented picture of a person's constructs, and requires the researcher to make
his/her own assumptions about how these constructs are put into action. The present focus is not only on the constructs a person employs, but also on how these constructs fit into a person’s interpretive framework and how that framework is put into action. Therefore it was felt that the interview approach would supply a more rounded and active picture of the processes involved, than the Rep. Test.

3.4.2.2. The sample.
For the purposes of this research, a non-probability sample of five adult women resident in South Africa was seen as appropriate. Lofland and Lofland (in Babbie 1998) note that if one’s aim is to collect the richest possible data - in the context of a qualitative study - one should try to obtain a wide and diverse range of information. Therefore, a convenience, snowball sample of five women was interviewed. The women varied in age, in level of education, in the nature of their relationships, the duration of their relationships, and their cultural backgrounds. Thus, a diverse source of information was provided by the sample. In terms of the exploratory purpose of the study, such a sample is considered to be adequate and acceptable. However, it is not appropriate for the purpose of generalising to a larger population of South African adults, and it is not the intention of this research to do so.

3.4.3. Ethics.
Lest it appear that this research was not informed by ethical principles I would like to point out the efforts made in this regard. Of primary concern to most researchers is the potential for research to cause harm - physical, mental, or emotional - to participants. In this study the possibility existed that respondents might suffer emotionally from the disclosure of personal information, or that their relationships might suffer as a consequence of the interviews raising their awareness of issues previously not thought of and possibly resulting in conflict between the members of a couple. To avoid these negative consequences, respondents were informed fully as to the nature of the study, and the possibility of the negative consequences mentioned above. Respondents were assured that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they were free to terminate the interview at any point, or to not answer any question that might be deemed too personal or distressing. They were informed as to the eventual publication of the information they supplied in the form of a dissertation, and where necessary it was explained what this entailed (e.g. that colleagues of the researcher would read the dissertation, that a copy of it would be available in the library for anyone to read). Respondents were offered the option of
choosing another name for themselves as a means of maintaining confidentiality, and in two cases this option was taken. In other words, every effort was made to ensure that respondents gave their informed consent to participate and to have the information they supplied published. In each case, such consent was given. At the end of each interview, the respondent was debriefed, and the researcher made an effort to establish that the respondent felt comfortable with the process of the interview and with its conclusion. Respondents were given the option of contacting the researcher or Lifeline (a lay counselling organisation) for support if the interview process should prove to have unanticipated negative consequences. Thus every effort was made to ensure that no harm should come to the research participants, or to deal with such consequences if they should arise.

Once one has collected one's data one can proceed to work with it. This involves transforming it into a workable form for analysis, and then analysing it.

3.5. Data processing.

The data provided by the interviews was not readily analysable, inasmuch as it was in the form of a recording, and constituted a large volume of information. For this reason each interview was transcribed verbatim, by means of a word-processing package. Notes concerning behaviours or gestures made by respondents during interviewing accompanied the text as they coincided with the speech. Names of people or places mentioned by respondents were abbreviated to ensure confidentiality. ATLAS/ti release 1.1E (Thomas Muhr, 1994) was used to facilitate the coding and analysis of the data collected in the interviews.

ATLAS is a computer package that is designed to assist the researcher in working with textual materials. It is a useful tool for qualitative analysis and interpretation, particularly of large bodies of texts such as those generated by qualitative interviewing. These texts are converted to ASCII files and assigned to a research unit. ATLAS facilitates many of the activities involved in text analysis and interpretation. It does this by allowing one to segment, highlight, and code passages of text in such a way that when one has completed a reading of the material one has a number of quotations (text segments) connected in an orderly way with a number of codes relevant to one's investigation. One can also attach annotations to selected text, so ATLAS facilitates the recording of one's thoughts or interpretations as one proceeds. In addition, ATLAS allows one to graphically
represent connections between text passages, codes, and memos, which greatly facilitates the construction of theories based on the original data. This is why ATLAS was used in this research project.

3.6. Data analysis.

Analysis is essentially the process of interpreting collected data for the purpose of drawing conclusions that reflect on the interests, ideas, or theories that initiated the study. In the process of analysis one looks particularly for similarities and differences in the patterns of interaction or the events under study. The aims for the present research are firstly, to identify the respondents’ beliefs about men and relationships in general, and what is believed to be true about good (and bad) men and relationships. The reason for this is that the women’s expectations concerning men and relationships are based on what they believe to be true. Secondly, the aim is to identify sources of influence on that framework of reference. These include the woman’s own identity, her cultural background, and her parents.

In each case the beliefs that the respondent holds are stated briefly under their respective headings, followed by commentary where this is appropriate. The sections headed “Men”, “Relationships”, and “General” concern the actual beliefs the women hold on these subjects. These sections allow us to build a picture of the respondent’s expectations for evaluating men and relationships. The sections headed “Culture”, “Parents”, and “Identity” give some insight into potential influences on the frame of reference. The sections headed, “Current partner”, and “Current relationship” allow us to see how the evaluative framework is put into action and how constructs and associated expectations come to influence relationship satisfaction. In this way, an attempt was made to understand the interpretive framework of each respondent as an individual, before drawing together the strands of similarity and difference between these five individuals in chapter nine.

Having discussed the reasoning, literature, and methodology underlying this study, chapters four, five, six, seven, and eight will focus on the information supplied by the respondents of the five interviews undertaken. As is the case with any qualitative inquiry, the interviews generated a large amount of information, ranging through many topics, and as a means of facilitating clarity, each respondent’s narrative will be presented with discussion following each case. This is also done with a view to maintaining the integrity of each narrative so as to give a sense of
each respondent's identity without imposing theoretical speculation. Nevertheless, relevant discussion is included in sections where this inclusion does not lead to fragmentation of the respondent's narrative. Subsequently the narrative has been shed, revealing the skeleton of beliefs underneath.

Since this is a qualitative study, the aim in the following chapters is to provide as much detail as possible so as to facilitate the later evaluation of the conclusions based on this work. Full transcriptions of all the interviews can be made available if these are desired.
CHAPTER FOUR

SADIE: SOMETHING OLD AND SOMETHING NEW

4.1. Demographics.

Two interviews were conducted with Sadie at her home. The first took place on the 15th of July and the second on the 22nd of July 1998. Sadie is a sixty seven year old clinical psychologist running a private practice from her home in Johannesburg. When speaking with her one gets the impression that she is a highly educated, intelligent, and articulate woman. She was born in South Africa and raised by her mother - who was of English birth - and her father - from Lithuania. Both were Jewish, and quite religious. Thus Sadie was raised in a traditional Jewish home. She has been married to her current husband for twenty seven years, and was previously married for eleven years. She and her ex-husband remain friends. Her current husband was also married before. His previous wife died leaving him with four young children to take care of - two boys and two girls. Sadie married him when the youngest child was five years old. Together, she and her husband had another child, a girl, when Sadie was forty and her husband fifty one. The children are now all adults and four of the five are married or in partnerships.

Having supplied an outline of who Sadie is and where she comes from, we can progress to a discussion of what she thinks about and expects from non-platonic relationships and partners, as well as how she understands the role of her cultural background in these relationships.

4.2. Partner preferences.

This section concerns characteristics that Sadie considers important in a romantic partner. Sadie's description of what she considers her ideal partner relates to De Angelis' (1992) work on dimensions of compatibility since she mentions criteria that can be considered as aspects of physical, social, and spiritual style. The description also gives some insight into what might satisfy Sadie in a partner and motivate her to continue in a relationship - or not. Given that this study is focused upon the ways in which people make sense of the events and people in their relationships, and come to decisions about those relationships, the mentioned characteristics themselves are of somewhat less importance than the meanings which Sadie ascribes to them and the way she uses them in evaluating people. It
should be mentioned here that in her discussion of her preferences for a partner, it was apparent that Sadie was talking about what she would consider necessary in a potential husband. Since the discussion was focused on her criteria for an ideal partner, one can assume that for her the ideal is a husband, and that marriage is the goal or end-point for a relationship that is "going somewhere" or is more than just casual. The suggestion is that relationships are categorised in different ways and that there are various criteria associated with the different categories.

The first criterion for an ideal partner that Sadie mentions is a sense of humour, which for Sadie means someone who laughs readily and is not dour or rigid. Also important is that he should be intelligent, which means that he thinks about life and himself. Of major importance to Sadie is integrity - as evidenced by the fact that she raises this theme many times in the course of the interviews. For her integrity means that the personality of the man she gets to know is not a projection he puts on. He is someone genuine. Evidence of this integrity and genuineness is found in his consistency, which is something else she considers essential in her ideal partner. Consistency means he does not display an erratic change of pattern; he should be steady - in moods, in personal history and life conduct, in his other important relationships (such as with his parents, siblings, and employers). Steadiness implies for Sadie the ability to go out and make a living and look after a wife and children. Consistency also entails loyalty which means consistent positive support for those people he is close to. The potential husband should display a similar pattern of behaviour to Sadie as he does to other people in his life. Not doing so would imply for her that he is not genuine, that he has no integrity. Thus far the preferences that Sadie has mentioned can be seen to relate to the dimension of social style that De Angelis (1992) refers to in her work on compatibility in a romantic dyad. Specifically, the above concern interaction with others. The next paragraph refers to the physical style dimension, particularly appearance.

Although Sadie does not specifically mention many physical characteristics she would prefer she does say that she goes for looks. When asked what she might look for in this regard, she mentioned good shoulders "maybe a shoulder to cry on, or maybe a shoulder to laugh on". She does not like "stringy" men. She said that her ideal partner is someone good to look at, and when asked to expand on what this means for her, she said that it does not mean an Adonis. That is, not someone
with traditionally perfect features, but someone good-looking. The latter entails an indefinable masculinity. A man with a strong sense of himself as a man, of his own masculinity, is what she considers good-looking and attractive. She is also of the opinion that one should be “turned on” by one’s partner’s physical being, as evidenced by her statement (in reference to a woman’s choosing a partner) that “if you like a short guy, and it turns you on to be with a short guy, then go and be with a short guy ... You want to be with a tall, dark, and handsome man, then go do it”.

Some of the other characteristics she noted for an ideal partner pertained to her ideal partner’s personality. Again the social style dimension of compatibility is relevant (De Angelis 1992). Included here is a positive attitude. Attitude, for Sadie is something deeper than a person’s manner; it is a part of him. To a certain extent she defines a positive attitude in terms of its opposite. Thus a man with a positive attitude doesn’t always complain, he doesn’t feel people put him down all the time, he likes most people, he has a good word to say about somebody. Generally speaking she says he’s not a sour puss, but rather he has a positive attitude or outlook on himself and to the world. Also important in Sadie’s picture of an ideal partner is that he is someone who is not only comfortable with “individuality” per se, but with her individuality in particular.

Being a spiritual person, Sadie said that religion would be important to her. Specifically she would not consider marrying someone who was not Jewish, since for her, this difference holds the potential to create a rift between her and her partner. In terms of what De Angelis (1992) mentions about the dimensions of compatibility being relatively important to a person, one might say that this spiritual dimension that Sadie speaks about here outweighs many other factors. She says “I would like to share major important festivals” and a spouse’s being of the same religion facilitates a sense of feeling at home and comfortable with him. Religious differences break the connection or bond between partners. For Sadie this implies being left “high and dry”, because her partner is not in a position to share experiences with her, nor she with him. Thus difference means “a spiritual, religious loneliness”, and lonely or isolated is certainly not what she wants to be in a relationship, either from her partner, or from their respective families. She says, “I don’t want a relationship on an island”. Sadie says that she would - and has - dated non-Jewish men, and has friends who are not Jewish, but that this is one thing that would stop a relationship from progressing beyond anything casual or platonic.
The reference to not wanting to be isolated from her partner or from their respective families points to something else that is also very important to Sadie's way of thinking. That is to have a man come from a family where he likes his parents and siblings, reasonably well. His getting along with his family has implications for the relationship between him and Sadie, as well as for her evaluation of him as a person. While this section pertains to Sadie's preferences in a partner, it is necessary to take a short diversion into the topic of family to gain a greater understanding of Sadie's interpretive framework.

Family, and a sense of family is very important to Sadie. She defines it as her family of origin, and her partner's family of origin - the people and what they bring. She likes the idea of the comings and goings of family, the easy familiarity, the closeness. She likes the idea that her children and the children of her partner's siblings will get along and that "there will be family". Thus children and family, and the accessibility of the people to each other is important to Sadie. Family accessibility implies "easier living" inasmuch as she does not have to go through the turmoil, discomfort, and unpleasantness of bad family relationships if her partner gets on with his family and she gets on with hers. Accessibility of extended family implies for her that the kinfolk "are healthy, normal people".

The reasons underlying the importance of family accessibility include the sense of security that Sadie derives from having a sense of family. As she says "ideally, one should feel secure in one's family". Her sense of security stems from her belief that "family support their members, that people are safe to experiment, like children are safe to experiment, and even adults are safe to do certain things within the family that may not be allowed elsewhere. Family supports it. ... people in the privacy of their own family are not as ... polite, as careful, as they are with strangers." Thus, family allows a certain indulgence. Furthermore, the closeness and familiarity within a family also facilitates security. As Sadie says "my family ... knows my ways" and this familiarity allows Sadie a certain sense of ease and comfort. The latter is an important theme for her, inasmuch as the way she speaks of her expectations and preferences in a partner give the impression that she tries to avoid putting herself on a road that will lead to problems.
Returning to her preferences and the way she uses them in evaluating people, Sadie says that if a man gets along with his family she will consider that he and his family will be accessible to her and this appeals to her. Also, as a therapist, she will consider that he is a healthy, normal person. This will motivate her to continue the relationship. In contrast, if he does not get along reasonably well with his family, she will think that there is something wrong with him and/or his family. For instance, she says "I would be very wary of a man who did not get on with his family". This does not mean that there are never arguments or disagreements between family members, only that these are not chronic or insurmountable. Such temporary and occasional difficulties are "normal" as far as Sadie is concerned, and are not a problem provided that a man gets along reasonably well with his parents and siblings most of the time.

For her, another implication of a man's not getting along with his family is that at some stage he will not get along with her, as she says "Why should he?". It also means that there will be no access to family on his side and, as mentioned above, family access is of major concern to Sadie. She is emphatically not interested in putting herself in this position which holds, as she sees it, so much potential for disaster.

4.2.1. Discussion of preferences.
Sadie's preferences show that she is interested in a man who is an individual and who allows her to be an individual, too. Hence the value she places on individuality comes into play. His intelligence suggests he will be sensitive to and aware of himself and others, someone who is as conscious of his "self" and his roles as she is. Her belief that integrity is a defining characteristic of a relationship means that she expects that partners should be genuine and be themselves.

Her ideal mate's having a positive attitude implies that he is happy with his life, comfortable with himself and others, kind and considerate. Therefore Sadie expects that he will relate to her in a healthy (that is positive, supportive, and genuine) manner. Thus, he is capable of being a companion and support to her. Her preference for a sense of humour suggests a desire for laughter and fun in her relationship.
Her preference for someone physically stimulating indicates that she believes the physical aspect of a relationship is important, as well as relating to her belief that there should be mutual attraction between partners. Presumably, such an attraction would facilitate the arrival of children, and thereby avoid the “emptiness” she refers to as being the condition of their absence.

Furthermore, his consistency implies for her a sense of security and stability. Her preferences indicate that she wants a man who is capable of providing for her materially - and any children they might have - inasmuch as he is steady and reliable. This relates to her expectation that in a marriage a man provides for and supports his wife, as well as to the notion that she should make a decent match. He is also able to interact with his family and hers, indicating that he is mentally health, and also promoting family accessibility and, thereby, security.

From the above discussion of partner preferences, and the importance of family, it is apparent that the way in which Sadie understands the terms and concepts she uses and how she applies them, have a great influence on how she might evaluate a potential partner in a romantic relationship. It is also clear that this evaluation has a bearing on the development of the relationship, inasmuch as a negative evaluation in terms of the criteria she uses will disincline Sadie to continue seeing someone. Thus, what she looks for and expects from a man influences the outcome of a relationship.

In the course of discussing her preferences with regard to a partner in a romantic relationship, as well as from specific discussion, some of the expectations that Sadie has surrounding what the role of husband entails became apparent.

4.3. Role of husband.

For Sadie, the primary function of a husband is that of provider. He is to provide for and support his wife, and that means both financially and emotionally. This is a major theme for Sadie. A husband provides by going out to work. He looks after, shelters, and protects his wife, children and home, and everything in it. Sadie says that her father would have been embarrassed for her mother to work, since it would have implied that he could not support her. However, she feels that today women do not expect not to work. Despite this, she still expects that her husband will provide for her and support her.
Emotionally a husband provides a shoulder for his wife to cry on or laugh on i.e. he supports her emotionally. He is someone to share things - good or bad - with. He provides companionship for her, and he also supports her by being loyal to her. Sadie identifies his role by his marriage vows: to love, cherish, support, and honour his wife. In time he should become a father as well - thus "providing" children. Children are very important to Sadie. So important, in fact, that the lack of children is what she identifies as the reason behind the break-up of her previous marriage, which she says was in other ways a good marriage and she was happy with it and her husband. She was reluctant to talk about this previous marriage, so I did not force the issue.

In terms of proscriptions for the role of husband, Sadie said "I expect him not to indulge in wine, women, and song ... while he's married to me", meaning that he should not drink excessively, he should not gamble, nor should he womanise. This is, in fact, a form of loyalty to her, since she expects that their resources (financial or emotional) will not be "splashed about" as she puts it, but will be for her and her husband to share.

From the preceding discussion we have a clear picture of the main themes in Sadie's picture of the role of husband. To gain a better grasp of the potential influence that Sadie's beliefs and their associated expectations hold for her current relationship and partner, I asked her to describe her current husband and current relationship. This is what became apparent.

4.3.1. Current husband.

Since Sadie's relationship with her current husband has lasted twenty seven years so far, one might well consider the reasons why this is so. When asked to describe her husband, Sadie went back to the characteristics she would consider important when looking for a romantic partner. She described her husband as possessing these characteristics. Thus, she said that he certainly has a sense of humour, he is intelligent, and he has very good shoulders. She considers him to be nice looking and masculine. Very importantly for her, he's a steady worker, he is loyal to the people in his life, and he has integrity. Also, he does get on with his family. Furthermore, he is there to support her and their children. What she particularly
likes about him is that he likes her and is loyal to her. He continues to find her attractive, and she continues to find him attractive.

When asked how her husband demonstrates his liking for her, in other words how she comes to the conclusion that this is so, she said that she cannot pinpoint how she knows that her husband likes her, she just knows it. She says “It’s a pattern of like that’s woven over the years. It’s a way of knowing when somebody’s angry with me, and when they’re finished being angry... there’s a network of mutual liking, not the same as love, but of like, and of good faith. You know that person basically likes you, you just know it.” This statement points to the fact that over time she has grown to know her husband and his ways, and this helps her to understand his behaviour and his intentions. It also points to a potential point where she might err: she might, over time, have come to see certain of his behaviours as reflecting certain intentions, but her conclusions could be erroneous. The result is that when he displays these behaviours, she comes to a conclusion that does not reflect his original - or current - intention, and if her conclusion is a negative one, the potential for upset or conflict exists. Thus, in Kelly’s terms, the accuracy of construal of the other’s behaviour impacts on satisfaction and thereby on the quality of the relationship (Carver & Scheier, 1988).

With regard to the ways in which she comes to interpretive conclusions, Sadie also stated that, in connection with a man she once knew, she just instinctively felt uncomfortable. It would seem then that she makes use of instinct or “gut feel” to guide her in making decisions. There is also the impression that she has a strong sense of her identity as an individual, and relies on her own judgement in making decisions. The conversation surrounding the topic of identity and her husband’s view of her role gave rise to this impression.

4.4. Identity.

Sadie says “I have two identities in the marriage. I have the identity as wife, and I have an identity as mother”. In a marriage, in general, she perceives that “there is a very real danger, for women always, that... Sadie, as it were, can be lost in the wife, or lost in the mother... if there is too much dedication to those roles... and not enough to the role of maintaining one’s individuality, and one’s path of individuation”. However, for herself this does not appear to be the case. In part this is due, she believes, to the pursuit and maintenance of a career, and
particularly her career as a psychologist. She feels that "inside oneself, one is aware that I am Sadie being a wife, I'm Sadie being a mother". The latter implies an awareness of having an individual identity separate from her roles as wife and mother. Thus it is apparent that she has a strong sense of being a separate individual within her marriage and the roles it encompasses. This definition of herself in individual terms (rather than in terms of association with a collective) suggests a more individualistic cultural affiliation (Triandis, 1996).

In retaining a sense of individuality, Sadie notes that pursuing a career is important. She feels, as mentioned above, that her career has helped her to retain her individuality and to pursue her path of individuation (i.e. personal growth). She does say that at times this has been problematic in her marriage, as there have been times when who she is has not gelled with who her husband is - and perhaps his view of who she should be (that is, her role) at a particular time. In this regard she says that her husband "must from the beginning [of the relationship] have seen me both as a wife to him, but also very strongly from the beginning ... [as] a mother to ... those [four step-]children". Sadie considers that her husband expects her to be there for her child and step-children and grandchildren. That means that she does not cut herself off from them, or wash her hands of them. In this regard she says "I could say, in this particular instance, I've brought these children up, and enough is enough ... and I think he would be very uncomfortable with that". She thinks that her husband's expectation of her is that she should maintain contact with the children and with the grandchildren. She should encourage visits. She should keep track of who's who in terms of genealogy, and so on. The relationship between her and the children should remain unchanged from how it was in the past, it should be unbroken. In Kelly's terms, this is her understanding of her husband's construction of part of her role in their relationship. Ways of being there for the children include being friendly (e.g. picking up the phone just to say "hi"), and fulfilling the role of mother. In Kelly's (1955) terms, this is her understanding or construction of her husband's construction of part of her role in their relationship.

According to Sadie's interview the role of mother includes the following: being there (physically and emotionally); offering advice; not pushing an issue; allowing the children to use you as they need you; allowing, encouraging, facilitating access or contact for children and grandchildren; helping with whatever task or project the
child presents (refers to adult children as well); being supportive; bringing oneself into the equation (i.e. being genuine, not just going through the motions).

In terms of what the characteristics of her ideal partner engender for her, and imply for her identity, Sadie says that being in a relationship with someone who possesses the characteristics she considers ideal makes her feel good about herself. She holds him in high regard, and if he is with her he must consider her worthwhile too, and this makes her feel good. His involvement with her, and his considering her worthwhile boosts her self-esteem. Thus, Sadie's partner validates her sense of self or identity inasmuch as a part of her evaluation of her worth is based on her evaluation of her partner, and also on his evaluation of her.

In interviewing Sadie on the topics of her preferences in a partner, her expectations of a husband, and her current husband, her identity and her expectations about the nature and structure of a healthy or good relationship were revealed.

4.5. Relationship ingredients.
Sadie's discussion of the ingredients of a good relationship, points to the criteria she might use in evaluating the state of her own relationship. Some of these criteria are more important than others, and might lead her to consider ending a relationship if they were not present, while the lack of other criteria is less important and can be tolerated. This relates to Fehr's (1988) work on the prototypical definition of love, where violation of central features of the prototype is more problematic than violation of peripheral features. In this case, however, we are dealing with a prototype for a healthy relationship.

For Sadie, a relationship is defined by integrity. She says "If there is not integrity in a relationship, there is no relationship". This means that the partners in a relationship must be genuine. This last can be seen in Sadie's statement that "what makes it a relationship is that this person turns round and looks at me, and sees me, and wants to go on seeing me". For Sadie "sees me" means that the person sees the real her, not a persona. It follows that the relationship is one in which both partners are genuine and can be themselves. In fact, on this point, Sadie says "you allow the person to be who they are". Thus, if partners are not their true selves, the relationship between them is based on a lie (i.e. there is no integrity) and it is therefore not a true relationship.
Very high up on Sadie's list is loyalty to each other. Loyalty, as mentioned above, entails consistent positive support for one another. Thus it is clear that for Sadie a relationship is "a mutual thing". Everything works both ways between partners. There is mutual attraction and mutual affirmation. The latter two are, for Sadie, what makes it a romantic rather than a platonic relationship. In a romantic relationship both partners want to be in contact and want to pursue the relationship.

As the relationship develops, there should be a connectedness or bond between partners. The latter is based on sharing of experiences, and on a network of mutual liking that develops over time and acts as a sort of safety net underlying daily interactions and any problems that may crop up. Sharing and mutuality relates to resources as well: Sadie says "our resources, whatever they are, financial, emotional, physical, are for us to share and enjoy".

As mentioned, feeling "at home" with one's partner is important in Sadie's scheme of things. With regard to the relationship, the implication is that it should be comfortable for both members. Thus, Sadie says "it doesn't help me to marry somebody whose sub-culture and whose religion makes me feel like an outsider". Here, she highlights the fact that similarities in these two areas facilitate the sharing of experiences, and this cements the sense of connectedness between romantic partners, making each feel like an insider rather than an outsider. For Sadie, the existence of differences is fine, as long as they are not in the majority. Overall, similarities (in religion, in life style, in culture, etc.) should predominate if the relationship is to be comfortable, easy and successful i.e. endure.

Something else that is helpful in facilitating comfort is mutual family approval. As discussed above with regard to the importance of family, in Sadie's view, mutual family approval, and the families feeling comfortable with each other makes for a healthy and happy relationship for the partners.

Speaking of family, Sadie notes that "I would have expected in a marriage ... to have children". This expectation of a marriage is important enough to her that her first marriage ended because there were no children. For Sadie, part of a marriage, part of husband and wife, is children. Furthermore she believes that people should get married if they have any intention to have children and a long-term, family
relationship. Perhaps the importance of children can be better understood in Sadie’s statement that “the absence of children just is emptiness”. For her “children bring a relief, the same way they bring certain extra responsibilities, they also bring a sense of relief, and fun, and play into the marriage and a sharing of something very important”. Thus, children fulfil an important function in a relationship, and their presence can also be viewed as a structural expectation of a relationship.

Sadie’s mention of children’s place in a marriage leads on to the question of her view of marriage per se. This relates to expectations regarding the structure of a relationship. In this regard, Sadie says “marriage for me is like a closed system, like a little closed unit ... it’s not closed from, it’s an en-closing system. Which includes the two partners, and their children”. For her a marriage ceremony - in whatever form it takes - is a “formal recognition that this man and this woman are together, with their children”. Considering the high rate of divorce Sadie notes that marriage does not confer permanence on a relationship “It confers something else, more like a blessing ... more like a societal acceptance. Which sits more comfortably with people”. Thus, in a sense, the marriage is for the benefit of the society, as well as for the children of the marriage, since it allows society a certain sense of comfort and, as Sadie puts it, “the culture still looks more favourably on the children ... of a marriage ... there’s a greater sense of dignity around it. Which the society confers”.

Since we are dealing here with non-platonic relationships, one might very well ask about the place of romance and love. In this regard Sadie says “I think that romance and marriage are not the same thing ... I think that a cynic would say that romance and marriages don’t go together. That marriage is the death of romance”. She gives as an example Romeo and Juliet, or Tristan and Isaul. She says that they remain a romance for all time because they did not marry. A central ingredient of romance is that the lovers are thwarted in their wish to come together and stay together. So this suspended state is what she considers as a central feature of a romance. Since in a real relationship one will come together and stay with a partner, this is perhaps where romance, for Sadie, becomes derailed. Certainly, it is difficult to maintain romance when one has seen one’s love clipping his/her toe nails or flossing his/her teeth! These are certainly things one will face when one marries and lives with someone (which Sadie considers to be the natural end-point of a relationship that is going somewhere).
With regard to Sadie’s expectations of how relationships develop and function she says that “there are going to be quarrels, there are going to be squabbles, there are going to be ... times when who I am ... doesn’t fit in with what he is”. She describes her own marriage as stormy, and says that this is so because she and her husband “both have our own minds ... and so there are times when we may not agree about certain issues, certain ways of doing things... We might have a common goal and have a different way of reaching it, and we fight about the way of reaching it”. The implication is that it is normal and to be expected in a healthy relationship that there will be disagreements. This, for her, is a natural consequence of being two separate people, each of whom “bring[s] luggage from our past” into a relationship. In addition, such disagreements/fights are not sufficient to end the relationship. Why? Perhaps because there is a network of mutual liking and good faith that has developed over the years, and because he fulfils most of her preferences and expectations of a husband. Thus, our expectations and our personal history play a part in our relationships and disagreement is a natural part of any relationship. Indeed, its absence may be seen as problematic. This points us to what Sadie considers potential problem areas in a relationship.

4.6. Potential problem areas.
As mentioned previously, Sadie considers that a predominance of similarities between partners in terms of, for example, cultural background and religion, facilitates easiness of interaction and connectedness of partners in a relationship. Thus, for her, things that - chronically - obstruct this ease of interaction and sense of comfort and connectedness are what she would consider as problematic. In this regard she says, "We bring luggage, and we bring it into the marriage, and the luggage that he has may not be the same as the luggage I have. So what we share we share, and we can joke about some things ... but some things then become quite serious”. Thus the existence of differences is not a problem unless they become a source of chronic discomfort or conflict for the partners in a relationship.

In addition to our religious or cultural “luggage” Sadie is of the opinion that “if people bring stuff from the childhood ... if, for instance, I’m expecting my husband to be like my father, and he isn’t ... I’m gonna be in some trouble. He’s going to feel uncomfortable and ‘what’s going on here?’”. Being a therapist she perhaps makes this connection to expecting one’s partner to behave similarly to one’s parent.
However, this is a well-known phenomenon: people choosing partners that resemble their parents so as to work through some issue or another that they had with their parent. It has the potential to be very destructive in a relationship. From the above, it is apparent that for Sadie it is important to be clear on one's personal issues - such as those pertaining to one's parents and those pertaining to one's partner - and not confuse the "appropriate objects" as this can cause serious harm in a relationship. The above potential problem areas may come into existence once a relationship has already progressed somewhat.

Given the discussion up to this point we can now consider the influence of Sadie's cultural background and her parents on her relationships.

4.7. Cultural background.

This section pertains to how Sadie understands the concepts of culture and cultural background generally, and their role in her life particularly. She says that culture is "the society you live in. And the ways, the mores, the requirements, and the prohibitions, and the taboos, of that society, that you've got to learn from the time you're very little so that you'll fit in". The rules and regulations of a culture thus facilitate and allow a person to fit into a particular group. She says that the culture "is many mini-cultures that make up the maxi-culture" and that "We're not just our generation. We've had parents". The influence of parents is strongly intertwined with the cultural influence because, as Sadie says "the culture that we are living in, I would expect to be conveyed to me by my parents. While I'm at home, and then by my teachers when I go to school". Thus, for her, cultural background includes what she was taught in her family from the time that she was a little girl, and also what she learned outside of her home. The role of one's parents in conveying the norms of one's culture points to Sadie's understanding that culture is history, each generation modifying the culture a little, so that what one gets during one's lifetime is somewhat different from what one's parents and grandparents learned. Sadie says that culture "is a sort of containing system, that provides security for its members [inasmuch as] without it there's chaos". Culture functions in this way because, as Sadie says "If you want to live within a certain culture, any particular culture, you can't flout it". You have to live within the limits defined by the culture, or you will be ostracised.
Sadie identifies her culture as South African, and says "part of the cultural is the religious". She identifies her religion as Judaism. She feels that religion and culture are so intertwined as to be inseparable: "[religion is] sort of knitted into the culture like a fair isle pattern". One learns the prescriptions and norms of one's culture from the time one is a child and one cannot say at that time which is religion and which is culture. Thus, "it's so ... interwoven that you're sitting [on a chair rather than on the floor], according to the culture, but you're doing a blessing, also according to the culture, but the culture may have a different religion". This statement hints at Sadie's feeling of having two cultures. The Judaism may be felt as a separate culture and as a religion, but it is bound to the dominant South African culture, which has a different religion dominant i.e. Christianity. Sadie says that later in life, as an adult, one may choose to believe or not to believe certain things, and to follow or not follow certain prescriptions, but for Sadie those beliefs and prescriptions are a part of who she is and her outlook on life and, as such, cannot be changed or removed from her make up.

Sadie notes that she cannot identify the norms of her culture in a vacuum. She uses the example of women in an Arab culture to compare or identify her situation. Relatively speaking she feels greater freedom to "move about, to say and do and be where you wish, and do what you please with your life, your body". She says "I think that the South African culture, the Jewish tradition, allows for a certain freedom [for women]. I certainly think it does. Compared with other cultures, that are more repressive". She feels that other sub-cultures within the South African culture are more prohibitive to women (she gives the Portuguese community as an example).

In terms of the influence of culture on one's identity and one's relationships Sadie notes, "I think that... we're still fortunate in this country that women have a great deal of freedom ... to be themselves, and to pursue their own path". This definition of freedom as the ability to do what one, as an individual, chooses again points to Sadie's affiliation with an individualistic culture, since this definition suggests a structuring of goals with priority given to individual goals over those of a group (Triandis, 1996). This leads us to consider some of the things that Sadie identifies as cultural influences on or requirements for non-platonic relationships.
4.7.1. [Sub]cultural requirements.
This section relates to the influence of culture on what is expected for a relationship and for a partner. It is very much interwoven with parental influence, perhaps because parents are the primary conveyers of the culture.

Sadie believes that marriage is a part of culture all over the world. That in one form or another cultures recognise a union between two people. For herself particularly, she says, “My culture requires me to be married, number one ... The South African culture requires that people should be married ... if they’re going to have children and make a family”. Her reasoning is that the culture still looks more favourably on the child of a marriage, than on a child who is born out of wedlock. So, for Sadie, “husband, home, and children was a requirement”.

In discussing the choice of partner, and any cultural influences she felt in this regard, Sadie said “a girl should marry anyone who looked like a decent person ... as long as he made a living, and looked like a decent guy, you were not to look at anything ... in particular. You were not to be fussy”. A decent person is anyone who meets with parental approval - if you’re young. Sadie gives an example of one man she knew who “came to see my parents dressed in a suit, and he was smartly dressed... and he drove a good car, and he had a good business, and he was nice-looking”. These things would seem, then, to define for Sadie - or her parents - what is considered decent - or minimum standards perhaps? Again they imply the theme of the man as the provider inasmuch as his car and his business suggest his ability to provide for and support a wife and family.

With regard to further influences on the choice of partner, it is not clear whether the things Sadie mentions stem primarily from her parents' influence or from the dominant culture she lives in. She mentions that as far as a decent match goes a decent guy is “somebody who meets with the approval of your parents”. Partners should have a similar background, and also there should be mutual family approval. She says families should “eye each other” and that they should feel comfortable with one another. Hence the importance of having similar backgrounds. Important similarities in a decent match include religion, cultural and subcultural backgrounds. As mentioned previously, similarities facilitate comfort and easiness in interactions which, in turn, promote success of a relationship. So Sadie says that a cultural influence would be that families are similar and that they feel comfortable. This
focus on the promotion of family (i.e. group) harmony and avoidance of discord would seem to suggest a collective influence (Dion & Dion, 1993; Triandis, 1996; Triandis et al, 1988).

Sadie says that in her youth she felt there was a strong prescription to be married: "You must not be an old maid, a blue stocking". However, she feels that today "girls are much freer... and the culture allows a greater freedom. And I doubt that there would be many of the... ideas of the older parents, now that we're sort of two generations away from them ... My parents' grandchildren grown up and choosing husbands, would not be, feel that they have to get married, they must take whatever comes, because they may not find something else". It is apparent that Sadie feels that in her youth her choices were more constrained, probably by her parents and grandparents ideas about not being fussy and choosing anyone who looked to be a decent match lest one be left high and dry. Although it is clear that she believes that cultural prescriptions have changed somewhat, her view is still that at some point her daughters will choose husbands (i.e. that is what they should do eventually) even if those husbands are not the first decent looking guys to come along. Referring to young women of today, Sadie says "I just think they're freer to follow their own instinct, follow their own instinctive need and want". In other words, there is a trend towards a more individual focus. This indicates Sadie's feeling that young women today are allowed greater freedom to rely on their own judgement as far as relationships or partners are concerned and can act on their own decisions, rather than deferring to their parents. This brings us to the question of the role that parents play in romantic relationships.


As mentioned with reference to sub-cultural requirements for relationships and partners, the influence of parents is somewhat intermingled with that of the culture and sub-culture, and teasing out which influence is which, is difficult, if not impossible, given that parents are the primary conveyers of the culture. A person is left with the sense that what is identified as a cultural influence may very well be a parent's variation on a cultural theme, or it may be something that that parent learned during his/her growing years and is now passing along to his/her child who, in tum, modifies that lesson. As discussed above, this is considered a cultural influence, but whether it is the dominant culture, or stems from a parental sub-culture is difficult to establish.
For Sadie, her parents' origins are identified as sub-cultures. She says "I am influenced by my mother's generation and my mother lived, was brought up in England ... so, very much a part of my outlook on life is what she brought to me, brought into my life. My father's family came from Lithuania, so that comes to me as well". Thus, she feels strongly her English mother's influence in shaping her outlook, and to a lesser extent her father's Lithuanian origins. It is the traditions and outlooks of these two cultures that she is referring to here, as well as the ways of her parents themselves, as conveyers of those traditions and outlooks.

With regard to choosing a husband, Sadie says that while she was admonished not to be fussy, her parents could be fussy. She believes that parents would want one to make a decent match. In terms of enforcing their will with regard to her choice of partner she says "my parents would simply not make me a wedding ... [and] that's the end of that". She would not have considered eloping, or some other way of asserting her will, in part because "in some part of me, I would think perhaps they are right". She says that her father's disapproval would not have been based on something whimsical, this would also influence her to toe the parental line. Thus, as a young woman, Sadie held her parents' judgement in high regard, and relied on it somewhat in making decisions about partners and relationships.

She said "Your father says to you 'you'll be on the shelf, and I can't support you forever". This points to parental pressure to find a decent match and get married. It also implies that a man must support a woman. That if she is unattached she will suffer from being unsupported. This statement that her father made to her, and others like it, have perhaps been a great influence in Sadie's construction of the role of a husband as a provider and a support for his wife and family. Her feeling that one should marry may also stem, in part, from the strong prescription for husband, home, and children.

For herself as a parent she says "I feel that I do not want to enforce my ways on my children. My ways worked for me ... but I can't hold my life up as an example for other people to follow". She says "I can't say that if I think such and such a thing is right that it might be right for you", thus, she acknowledges that her way is not necessarily the best way for her children. She adds "I don't want to enforce anything, but I do on the other hand, trust my children. I think that if I have put in
twenty years of rearing into the children, that by the time they reach the age of choosing a partner, I've either managed to instil the qualities I desire for them, or not. And you can't start when somebody's eighteen, nineteen, it's too late". So for Sadie there comes a point where one must allow one's children to make their own decisions and choices, and trust that one has done a good job as a parent. She says "I would not want to even begin to enforce anything... I don't think it's wise, and I don't think it works". She thinks that instilling what you want in your children as they are growing up works better than trying to dominate them and enforce your ways. In her children this has proved itself to be true inasmuch as she feels that those who are married or in partnerships have each chosen well for themselves. The foregoing suggests that there has been a shift in cultural trends in Sadie's lifetime. The shift seems to be away from the more group-focused and somewhat confining norms of her youth, toward a more egalitarian and individual-focused position. The influence of the ideas and values of the ideology of romanticism are apparent in this shift (Bulbough, 1990; Degler, 1980; D'Emilio & Freedman, 1988; Gay, 1988; Gillis, 1985; Mintz & Kellogg, 1988; Phillips, 1988; Stone, 1990).

This brings us to the point where the threads of Sadie's interview can be brought together to illustrate the ways in which her cultural background and her parents - as conveyers of the culture - have influenced Sadie's expectations of a husband, and how these expectations influence what she looks for in a romantic partner and relationship. Let us begin with a statement of her beliefs about men and about relationships.

4.9. Beliefs.
4.9.1. Men.
A man who gets along with his family is healthy and normal.
A man who does not get along with his family will not get along with me.
A man who drinks, gambles, or womanises is being disloyal to his wife.

4.9.1.1. Husbands.
A husband should provide for and support his wife (financially and emotionally).
A husband looks after, shelters, and protects his wife, children and home.
A husband should become a father.
A husband should be a companion.
Sadie does not reveal an especially clear picture of her beliefs about the nature of men in general. What is apparent in the above statements is that she assesses character on the basis of behaviour and interpersonal dynamics.

4.9.2. Relationships.
Beliefs in this section are categorised as those things that can be expected of relationships in general, those that are true of good relationships, and those that are true of unhealthy relationships. Beliefs about marriage, specifically, are also included under the heading of relationships. Beliefs relate to what the respondent expects to find in terms of static characteristics of a relationship, the dynamic between a couple, and how relationships function, or are maintained. In other words, as mentioned in chapter two, beliefs are relatively stable expectations of how partners and relationships function (Metts & Cupach, 1990). Also as mentioned, such beliefs give insight into a person's working models of relationships and her view of the social world (Bowiby, 1973).

4.9.2.1. General.
When two individuals come together there will be times when their identities conflict. Quarrels are inevitable.
Occasional disagreements and conflicts are normal.
The existence of differences between partners is fine.
Similarities between a couple facilitate ease of interaction.
Similarities should predominate if the relationship is to be comfortable and successful.
Mutual family approval facilitates relationship success.
Relationships develop over time as a couple get to know one another.
Mutual attraction and affirmation are what make a relationship romantic rather than platonic.
Children are important in a relationship. Without them is just "emptiness".

4.9.2.2. Healthy.
Integrity is the defining characteristic of a relationship.
Resources - physical, emotional, financial - are for a couple to share and enjoy.
Partners in a relationship should be genuine and sincere.
One should allow one's partner to be who they are.
A partner is someone to share things - good or bad - with.
Partners develop a network of mutual liking and good faith.
Over time one develops a gut-level knowledge of one's partner's feelings and his/her nature.
Sharing experiences cements the sense of connection between partners.
Everything in a relationship should work both ways between partners. There should
be mutual affirmation, attraction, loyalty, support, contact-seeking.
A couple should feel comfortable/ at ease with one another.
Children fulfil an important function by bringing a sense of relief, responsibilities,
fun, play, and a sense of sharing something important into a relationship.

4.9.2.3. Unhealthy.
Things that obstruct the ease of interaction between and sense of connectedness of
a couple. (For example, religious differences)
Choosing a partner who is similar to one's parents and using that partner as a
parental substitute to process issues with the parent can be destructive.
The absence of disagreement can be problematic.
Differences that become a source of chronic discomfort or conflict.
Chronic conflict will lead to termination of a relationship.

4.9.2.4. Marriage.
Marriage is an enclosing system that includes the couple and their children.
A marriage ceremony is a formal recognition of the connection between a man and
a woman.
Marriage confers societal acceptance.
Marriage does not insure permanence of a relationship.
Romance and marriage are not the same thing.
Marriage is the natural end-point of a good relationship.

It is apparent from the above that Sadie's view of marriage is mainly a positive one.
In that context, her view that people should marry makes sense.

4.9.3. General.
Family provides security for its members.
Family accessibility implies security.

4.10. Influences.
This section pertains to potential sources of influence on the respondent’s beliefs (and expectations) as identified in their narratives.

4.10.1. Culture.
In section 4.7. Sadie identified her understanding of culture and how it functions in her life (and in her relationships). For the sake of clarity, and later comparison, I shall state her beliefs in non-narrative form here. This section also deals with any norms or rules that respondents perceive. They do not necessarily agree with or conform to these rules, but they do recognise their existence.

Culture is the society one lives in and its associated rules.
Culture is many mini-cultures that make up the maxi-culture.
Culture is a containing system that provides security for its members.
Culture is not static, it changes from one generation to the next.
Some cultures are more repressive than others.
Religion and culture are intertwined.
One learns cultural or societal requirements from the time one is very young.
Cultural norms allow a person to fit in to a particular group.
One must live within the limits defined by one’s culture or one will be ostracised.
One cannot remove the lessons of one’s past from one’s adult personality and thinking.

4.10.1.1. Norms and rules.
Women today have greater freedom to do and say and be what they want in their lives.
Marriage is a requirement if a couple plan to have children.
Husband, home and children is the norm.
You must not be an old maid.
Families should be similar and be comfortable with one another.
A man supports a woman.

Sadie identifies her cultural background as South African and Jewish. Her belief that religious and cultural customs and values are intertwined is reflected in this
identification. As a direct influence on her relationships she has said that there were few rules stipulated by her cultural background, beyond that she should marry and have a home and children. In terms of the cultural syndrome of collectivism-individualism, the indirect influence on Sadie’s relationships of her background, via her beliefs and values, may be more significant (Triandis, 1996). This point is taken up in the section on her identity.

4.10.2. Parents.

Parents are the primary conveyors of culture. One’s outlook on life is to a large extent shaped by one’s parents and their origins. Values are instilled in a person from the time they are children. Make a decent match. Do not be fussy in choosing a partner/husband. If you are fussy you will be left on your own. A woman should defer to her parents’ judgement. Parents can enforce their will, but generally this does not work. Children grow up and make their own decisions.

If one combines what Sadie said about her parents with what she says of culture, it is apparent that she feels her parents and their origins influenced her opinions, and that, while she may identify many cultural and/or parental influences she feels they are an inextricable part of who she is today. As such, whether she likes it or not, they influence how she sees the world and her place in it.

4.10.3. Identity.

Clearly part of Sadie’s identity is as a therapist. Her training and her work influence how she interprets and thus makes sense of events, of herself, of other people, and of their behaviour. She is conscious of the roles that she fulfills as mother and wife, as well as psychologist. She is very aware of her identity as an individual separate from her roles. She values individuality and personal growth and considers the fulfillment of role expectations to be a choice. This is implied by her saying that she could, if she chose to, cut off contact with her step-children and their families. She chooses not to do so, but to maintain family access and contact, for the most part as it has always been. This point harks back to the discussion of the importance to Sadie of family and their accessibility.
She has said, with reference to parents enforcing their ways, that what works for one person does not necessarily work for another, so she is not keen on enforcing her ideas or holding up her life as an example for others to follow. Each person, her children included, will grow up and make his/her own way in the world. It is apparent from this that Sadie believes in the inherent separateness of individuals, and that she not only values this individuality, but encourages it.

It was clear from the way Sadie spoke that she has an interesting mix of old and new ideas. On the one hand she believes women have more personal freedom today than she did as a girl and young woman, and as an individual she enjoys this freedom. On the other hand she also believes that a woman should marry, and furthermore, that her husband should help to support her. So she embraces the current trends, but simultaneously holds on to the ideas of her youth. In terms of the cultural syndrome of collectivism and individualism, as discussed in chapter two (Triandis 1996), the indirect influence of Sadie's background finds expression in her identity.

Consider first that she defines herself as an individual separate from the roles that she fulfils. Although it is difficult to pinpoint the structure of her goals, given that she values personal growth, one might guess that her other goals are fairly individualised, too. However, she also values family, a more collective tendency, so this confuses the issue somewhat. To a certain extent, Sadie's relationship behaviour is a function of the norms she has identified. However, given that these norms do not refer explicitly to standards of behaviour, the extent of her collective tendency is difficult to gauge. For the most part the impression gained is that her behaviour is a function of her own attitudes and what she perceives to be right or wrong. She does not subjugate her own beliefs and needs to those of the group. Finally, if we consider the beliefs she holds about men and relationships it is apparent that the majority of these beliefs do not focus on the needs of an in-group. However, they do not clearly indicate a tendency to focus on social-exchanges either, so one must conclude that Sadie straddles the individual-collective fence somewhat. This is evidenced by the mix of old-fashioned and modern ideas that she espouses.
4.10.3.1. Themes.

These can be viewed as the dominant constructs in Sadie's construct system. As mentioned in chapter two, their use will channel subsequent construals of experience (Carver & Scheier, 1988). In other words, these are the main terms that give structure to Sadie’s experiences.

Family and children; access versus isolation; isolation versus security; normal versus unhealthy; individuality and personal growth.

4.11. Application.

Here we see how Sadie's beliefs and expectations find expression in her relationship and the way in which she evaluates both her partner and her relationship. This evaluation has implications for her motivation to continue the relationship or not.

4.11.1. Evaluation and outcome of relationship.

While Sadie has certain preferences in choosing a partner, or certain things that she looks for in a man, she also has a definite picture of that man's function once he is a husband. Preferences and expectations co-exist, but while preferences are somewhat malleable and can be applied to a given man with varying degrees of severity - depending on the nature of the relationship - the expectations she has of the role of husband are less flexible. In terms of relationships with casual boyfriends versus those with potential husbands, Sadie says relationships with boyfriends “don’t come out anywhere”, but with potential husbands they do. Therefore, greater stringency in applying criteria/preferences is required, to ensure that you get what you want, and that you can live with what you get. The suggestion is that an individualistic process of social exchange is in effect. Thus there is more leeway with boyfriends in terms of one's preferences and expectations because the consequences of a wrong choice are less serious for the individual.

From the discussion of Sadie's preferences and the statement of her beliefs it is apparent that Sadie's beliefs about men and relationships help to shape what she expects from a mate, inasmuch as she looks for characteristics that indicate that a partner fulfills her expectations for a “normal” and a good man, and his characteristics also indicate that he will have the capacity to fulfill her expectations of a good relationship. Her preferences also indicate that her cultural background
has emphasised the individual over the collective, since her preferences refer to her own needs and desires, rather than those of a group. In addition, the emphasis on the partner rather than the family or in-group as the source of intimacy and satisfaction is also an individualised cultural tendency that Sadie shows.

The characteristics that Sadie looks for in an ideal partner she looks for in any man she might date. Her evaluation of him on the basis of her understanding of these characteristics will be the main factor in her motivation to continue with the relationship or not. The characteristics she has mentioned are used in her evaluation of a man as a potential husband. She might continue seeing someone who does not fulfil an important criterion - such as being of the same religion as herself - but she would then not consider him as a potential husband, and the relationship, for her, would be temporary.

Thus Sadie's description of what she considers her ideal partner gives some insight into what might satisfy her in a partner and motivate her to continue in a relationship - or not. The characteristics she mentions, and the ways in which she comes to conclusions as to whether the person possesses these characteristics, as well as their relative importance in the process of evaluating someone in her life, give one a view of Sadie's interpretive framework. Thus, it is not the characteristics themselves that are so important, but what they imply for Sadie as to a man's potential to fulfil her expectations of a husband for her. So, by investigating the implications for her of various personality traits or attributes, as well as gaining an understanding of how she understands and applies them, one is in a better position to see how the way in which Sadie makes sense of her partner's behaviours and his personality can impact on her relationships and their outcomes.

The process whereby preferences and expectations interact to influence Sadie's motivation to continue seeing someone and to pursue a relationship may be something like this. She meets someone and finds him good to look at, and senses that he is comfortable in his masculinity. In the course of their interactions she observes that he laughs readily, that he seems to have a good word to say about most people, and that he generally looks positively on the world and on himself. Thus, according to her definitions, she concludes that he has a sense of humour and a positive attitude. She feels comfortable with him because they share certain religious and cultural similarities, and also she feels that she can be herself with
him. This pleases her and she is motivated to continue the relationship. Furthermore, she feels that this attraction is mutual. These things lead her to consider that the person she is seeing is a decent person, and someone she could possibly live with.

As she continues to date this man, she observes that he gets along tolerably well with his family, and that he holds a steady job, drives a decent car, and is consistent in his behaviour with others in his life. This leads her to consider that he is consistent and loyal, and it also implies for her that he has integrity. These are all major points in his favour, since they are very important to Sadie. They imply that he is a genuine person, and that he will be loyal to her. This is another point motivating her to pursue the relationship.

Along these lines, if Sadie sees a man as steady her evaluation of his character is positive, because she associates steadiness with being able to provide for her and take care of her. Since this is a major theme or expectation for her he will be evaluated as a good potential husband and this will, presumably, motivate her - at least in part - to continue to be with him. Her positive estimation of this man and his liking for her combine to make her feel good about herself and this also bodes well for the relationship. It is apparent from the above discussion that Sadie's motivational orientation is primarily instrumental since she emphasises interpersonal rewards (Holmes & Rempel, 1989).

Her requirement of steadiness in a partner and its implication for the role of a husband as a provider, may stem from her cultural background. As mentioned above, she feels her culture was very clear that she should be married, number one, and her parents emphasised that if she was not married they could not support her forever. The implication was that she could not support herself, and must find a husband to do so. Hence her view of a husband as a provider. Thus the role of Sadie's cultural background and her parents' influence on her expectations of a romantic partner and relationship become clearer.

Through this exercise in scenario-building, it becomes clear how Sadie's preferences in a man are tied to her expectations of a husband, and how her evaluation of her partner's character according to those preferences impacts on her motivation to pursue a relationship. If a man possesses the characteristics she
looks for, the implication is that he will be able to fulfil her expectations of a husband. If he does not, the implication is that he will not make a good husband. This will motivate Sadie not to pursue the relationship. Her search for a husband can be traced to the influence of her parents as conveyers of the culture in which she lives. Thus, the influence of her cultural background on the outcome of her relationships becomes apparent.

Consideration of what Sadie had to say of her current husband and relationship serve to concretise the above exercise and give insight into how her beliefs about relationships, in particular, find expression.

4.11.2. Current partner and relationship.
What Sadie says of her husband indicates that according to her frame of reference he is evaluated as being healthy and normal. His fulfilling most of her preferences suggests that he fulfils her expectations of how a man should be, and that together they have the capacity to fulfil the requirements for a good relationship. The fulfilment of her preferences also suggests that her husband does not differ markedly from her ideal. This bodes well for their relationship, because it avoids the dissatisfaction associated with marked differences between the ideal other and the actual other (Sternberg and Barnes, 1985).

Their relationship is "stormy", but disagreements are not sufficient to end the relationship. This is because there is a network of mutual liking and good faith that has developed over the years, and also because Sadie expects that in a relationship there will be ups and downs. They argue over how to get to a shared goal, so their arguments are not evaluated too negatively. They are still attracted to one another, and Sadie's narrative suggests that they have developed an intimate understanding of one another that allows for a certain ease of interaction.

The way that Sadie speaks of her relationship suggests that her beliefs about the nature of a good relationship, and the nature of relationships in general are combined and applied to her own relationship, so that she evaluates the latter as a bumpy ride, but basically healthy and this, for her, is quite acceptable in terms of what she expects to find in a relationship. In terms of relationship success one could say that Sadie is committed to her relationship because it is, for the most part, satisfying (given her evaluation of her partner and their interactions), it fulfils or
exceeds her expectations, and she has invested time, money, and emotion (Rusbult, 1980). Therefore, she is inclined to continue as she is.

This brings us to the end of the data provided by Sadie, and we can now move on to a consideration of the next respondent, Rachel.
CHAPTER FIVE

RACHEL: SHE FLIES ON HER OWN WINGS

5.1. Demographics.
The interviews with Rachel took place on the 13th of August and the 2nd of December 1998 at her home. Rachel is a small woman with distinctive cropped, coppery hair. She gives the impression of being both energetic and calm at the same time. Rachel is twenty eight years old. She was born and raised in South Africa by her parents. Her parents divorced when she was twenty three. As for her education, she finished school, having attended private schools during her schooling career. Since finishing school she has undertaken one or two courses in computer software applications, and further than this she has not studied. Currently she works from home on a freelance basis doing computer software support. She met her partner (K), who is now thirty four, when she was twenty years old. She fell pregnant shortly after they had begun seeing each other. She and her partner are not married, and have been together for seven years now. They have a son (R) who is six years old.

In Rachel’s case it is necessary to begin with what she had to say about relationships before we can discuss her preferences and expectations. It was clear from how she spoke that this is how Rachel proceeds as well.

5.2. Relationships.
Rachel disclaims any expectations: “I don’t have any kind of rosy little picture in my mind, or even a horrible picture in my mind as to ... how I expect the relationship to go, or what I expect it to be like”. In her own mind this is true, but based on what she says directly, as well as on what is implicit in what she says of her partner and her relationship (and how she says what she says) it is possible to see that Rachel does have some views on what is healthy and unhealthy in a relationship. She does, in the course of the interviews, imply a great deal about what she thinks brings people together and keeps them together.

Firstly, the basic requirement of a relationship for Rachel is “to be friends and to have fun together”. For her “friends was a major, major factor” when she was starting out in relationships, and it is still an important ingredient of a relationship.
Being friends means that both partners accept each other, warts and all, so to speak. However, there is more to a romantic relationship than just friendship. When asked what makes her relationship with K different from a friendship, she said “sex”, but when asked if that meant she would have this type of relationship with any male friend she happened to sleep with, she said “No, definitely not the same kind of relationship ... the mental sort of synchronisation we have with each other [is different]. Knowing each other...knowing where our boundaries are”. Thus, it is not merely that one sleeps with a man friend that makes it a non-platonic or romantic relationship. It is the fact that people are mentally synchronised, that they know one another and know the boundaries of the other and the relationship. How, then, does one get to this point of mental synchronisation and knowing the other?

Rachel says “There’s... got to be something ...about K physically, and his looks that attracted me to him” suggesting that physical attraction is what draws people together initially. She says, however, “I don’t think there are two people who are totally compatible. I think that at the end of the day people do make slight adjustments to their character all the way along to fit in with ...the person that they want to be with”. Thus “there are certain character flaws that I have, like being overly demanding... And I feel that K has adapted to that in his own way” and “I’ve made slight adjustments to him,...I’m still demanding, but yet I’ve learned to allow for his long thought processes.” So, part of building a relationship is compromise.

On this point Rachel believes that when you are first getting to know someone “There’s no compromise “. One has not yet developed a knowledge of the other person and therefore some behaviours may be very negatively perceived and there is less leeway given. Rachel says “if you’re starting off a relationship with somebody, and they do something you don’t like you think ‘oh my G-d, you’re so disgusting, I never want to see you again’ as opposed to saying ‘I don’t like that but...look either change it or if it’s something that’s such an ingrained part of you then I’ll adjust ’”. In this sense there is more room to manoeuvre in an established relationship where one has already invested some effort and time and some of oneself.

She says of her relationship with K that they do not have to be on their best behaviour all the time and try to never displease the other person. They are free to
tell the other when s/he does something that they do not like. She compares this to the situation one has at the beginning of a relationship when both partners are unsure of the boundaries and of the other person's likes and dislikes. So, once one has bonded to someone it is easier to be open and honest with them, and also one is more inclined to compromise, but Rachel says "... if I sit back and I look at our relationship when was the point that I started compromising... I actually don't know... there would be no way for me to turn around and say, well, this is the point where I started saying ... we don't have to go out to go and please each other any more, because we're now a couple and we're together, and we can kind of accept the bad things as well as the good things. I don't know when that point was". So, compromise sort of sneaks in unnoticed over a period of time.

Rachel says "I think there are certain things that you sacrifice in a relationship " (such as gifts or romance) but this sacrifice is not an enormous one, because it is balanced by what one gains from the being with the other person. Thus, Rachel has come to accept that K is not terribly romantic and is not the best looking man she has ever met, because he is generous and decent, he likes to spend time with her and he is a good father. She has balanced out his good and bad points, and decided that on balance she can live with the bad points, given the good ones.

On the topic of compromise and satisfaction Rachel says "I don't think anybody ever feels satisfied 100% of the time in a relationship...but ... I'd say that overall...I'm happy with the way things are. ...I think I needed that break last year to make me realise a lot of that. Funny enough I think he needed it too". This quote clearly shows that Rachel believes that people are never totally satisfied with their relationships, and also shows that on balance (i.e. overall) she is happy with how things are. While this shows her level of satisfaction, it also suggests that the weighing up of aspects of a relationship - and a partner - against each other is part of how she comes to a conclusion about whether she is satisfied or not. It is not a black and white decision; rather it is a give-and-take type of thing with some aspects outweighing others, tipping the balance of satisfaction one way or another until one comes to rest at a particular decision at a particular time. The statement also indicates that Rachel feels a break from one's partner is not wholly negative inasmuch as it can have positive consequences, such as partners realising what is very good in the other that is difficult to appreciate when one is living with their irritating habits every day. This appears to be the case for her and K when they
were apart for a few months in 1997. The fact that Rachel does not interpret this break from K as wholly negative suggests that she views her experiences multidimensionally. In Kelly's terms this means that her construct system is sufficiently extended and integrated to allow for flexible interpretations of events (Carver & Scheier, 1988).

So now we have seen that in the process of development of a relationship two people meet and are attracted, and then go on to get to know one another better. In the course of this, there will be some compromise on both sides, some adaptation to the other person, given that the people involved like each other enough to pursue the relationship. Ultimately though, for Rachel a relationship is "very much a feeling thing... you either connect with somebody or you don't...". This is Rachel's opinion of why people get together and then stay together - they either connect (i.e. bond) or they do not. For her, if one does not connect with the other person, there will be no inclination to pursue anything, no compromise, and the relationship is not going to go anywhere beyond perhaps friendship.

At this point it is perhaps appropriate to mention that Rachel says she has a "Mills and Boon" notion of romance and love: people are drawn together by physical attraction and should then stay together for love. They should want to be with the other person, and should make time to do so. Obligation, duty, or convenience are not a part of this scenario. So it is apparent that Rachel has a fairly romantic notion of how a relationship should be. This notion points to her assimilation of the ideology of romanticism, and the concomitant belief in the inherent separateness of individuals mentioned in chapter two (Hatfield & Rapson, 1993; Bulbough, 1990; etc). However, this notion is also mixed with some very practical ideas on what the people in a healthy relationship should and should not do.

The fact that physical attraction is what draws two people together initially does not mean that it is what the relationship should be based on. While sex is important in a relationship, the fact that it becomes less exciting with time is something to be expected, and is not worth too much worry. It is also why a relationship should not be based on the physical attraction between two people. Her narrative on physical attraction and sex also relates to Rachel's mentioning that "electricity" between a man and a woman is a factor in whether or not a man's wandering eye is a problem or not. Thus, it is okay by Rachel if her man looks at other women, but if there is a
mutual physical attraction then her "claim" on him is threatened, and that she does not enjoy. "I don't like to feel threatened in a relationship. ... Threatened by ... other women." However, she does say "if it makes K, and I've told him ... 'if it makes you happy to go and have someone on the side, fine. I don't want it done behind my back'. ... I'm not going to say that I'm not going to be upset if I know about it ... but I would rather... know... But then whoever she is, [she mustn't] steal time from me ... I'm not going to suffer. If he wants to go and have a fling with somebody else, then fine. But I don't think it must steal from me." Her feeling that sex becomes unexciting after a while, and that it is not terribly important to her, as well as the fact that it is natural for a man to look for excitement elsewhere, is perhaps why she feels that she would not mind if K had a fling. However, the last part of what Rachel says here is perhaps why, despite her protestations to the contrary, it would appear that monogamy - even sequential monogamy - is a must. This is because any time or attention that K gives to another woman (by sleeping with her) will immediately "steal" from his relationship with Rachel, and that is unacceptable to her. In more abstract terms, it is apparent that faithfulness to one partner is part of what makes a relationship work, given that unfaithfulness reduces the resources available to a couple and thus impacts negatively on their relationship.

Given that part of the romantic picture of a good relationship is that the members of a couple love each other and want to be together, from Rachel's leaving K when she felt she was not loved or wanted it is apparent that this is one ingredient of a relationship that, if lacking, outweighs all other considerations. In other words, love is a core criterion of Rachel's relationship prototype (Fehr, 1988). Along this line Rachel says also that "without ... togetherness there's ... no relationship", so togetherness is also a defining characteristic of a relationship. Togetherness means that a couple "connect" with one another, but it also means that they spend time together. Therefore, something that is not healthy to Rachel's way of thinking is "people... that only come home at like two, three in the morning from the pub, and they do this on a very, very regular basis" or "the type of person that goes out and spends a lot of time at work without bothering about what goes on ... the type of guy who goes out and goes and plays golf every weekend, or whatever ". This indicates that for Rachel, spending quality time with a partner is important in keeping a relationship healthy and happy. Furthermore a partner should take an interest in what is happening in his home and with his partner, rather than avoiding or neglecting either one.
Part of connecting with someone means that one knows the true person and accepts that person. This brings us back to Rachel’s emphasis on friendship. Given the basis of a relationship, that a couple are friends and have fun together, Rachel says that the type of fun and the type of friendship will change over time. So, for example, when she was in school Rachel wanted to go out to nightclubs all the time. Later she would go to pubs. She says that she and K don’t really fit into that social scene any more. Not because they are too old, but because they have somehow outgrown it. Thus people’s tastes change over time, and some accommodation to this is necessary. It also indicates that what is important is that they still have fun and remain friends.

Given that obligation is not part of why people should get together or stay together Rachel does not think that a man should stay with her because she is pregnant with his child. Each person in the relationship should be confident in themselves that they can survive on their own, and are not with the other out of dependence. People must want to be together and not feel obliged to do so or afraid to do otherwise. Keeping up appearances, as perhaps a part of obligation, also does not count for much in Rachel’s book. As an example of this Rachel said “my parents had really, really drifted apart...I remember saying to my mom ‘You and dad are just so far apart,... you don’t enjoy the same things any more... why don’t you two get divorced?’ “. Rachel felt that the fact that her parents no longer shared common interests or activities and had drifted apart to a large extent was good enough reason for them to divorce. Thus, it would appear that she does not hold with the notion of staying with someone just for the sake of staying together, or for the sake of appearances. She mentions that her mother said she and Rachel’s father would not divorce because there had never been a divorce in their family, and Rachel took this to mean that her mother was avoiding divorce because of the stigma she perceived to be attached to it. Rachel does not associate this stigma with divorce. The way she speaks of her parents’ divorce and some of her friends who have divorced implies a lack of condemnation or judgement. Clearly, Rachel’s behaviour is a function of her attitudes rather than any norm she perceives (Triandis, 1996). The way Rachel speaks also points to her view that marriage is not necessarily a good thing for a relationship.
While the wedding day might be romantic and memorable, Rachel does not think that marriage itself is romantic or that it has any special significance. She admits that she misses the romance of the thing, but she believes that it does not make any great difference to a relationship. In fact, she thinks the consequences of getting married can be negative inasmuch as "when you do get married suddenly you relax, and you stop trying as hard, in your relationship. ...you stop trying to hang on" to the partner and to the relationship. People stop making an effort and become complacent and begin to take the other's presence for granted, as if the marriage certificate somehow ensures the survival of the relationship. For her this is why, although the idea of marriage has been so romanticised, the divorce rate is so high; indicating that the reality is not romantic. She believes that when one is younger marriage or a wedding is like a "peaches and cream" fantasy, but that reality is different, and that as one gets older one grows out of this phase: "you ...realise ... the world isn’t as rosy as big weddings and flowery wedding dresses." So, finally she comes to ask "is marriage and all that stuff worth it?". For her, people marry for religious, legal, or financial convenience, and any other special meaning in it has dwindled.

In terms of this discussion on Rachel's view of marriage, it is apparent that she thinks that a couple should not "suddenly ... relax, and ... stop trying as hard ... to hang on" when they get married (or at any time). Clearly, Rachel is saying that part of a good relationship is that the partners do not relax in their efforts to keep their relationship alive and well and that this effort is mutual. It is this effort that helps a relationship to survive. This relates to her view on the structure of a relationship. She says "although we’re a unit, the three of us together... R’s going to go one day... And I still see K and myself as the most important part of that unif'. This quote indicates Rachel's feeling that the two partners in a relationship are the most important part of the family unit. A couple should "constantly try to...keep things together" because "if the top of the unit isn’t cemented, then the rest of it will just fall apart". So, an expectation of hers - in terms of the structure of a relationship - is that the relationship works from the top down, so to speak. The couple (at the top) ensure the endurance of the whole unit by making sure that their relationship with one another is solid.

As an example of the kinds of things a couple might do in working at their relationship, Rachel mentions "ballroom dancing ... we have a lot of fun at that." Or
she says "...some evenings after R's gone to bed the two of us will play network computer games together or... like the other night, we just... put some quiet music on and sat down...had a couple of glasses of wine and sat and spoke shit. We didn't really speak about anything consequential, we just sort of spoke and sat." Thus, making an effort includes sharing an activity that both partners enjoy, it includes spending time together, play, companionship, and it includes just being quiet with one another. It means that one can talk about consequential stuff, or just sit and chat. The whole image that Rachel creates is one of connectedness and comfort between two people.

The quote above also refers to the process of a relationship over time inasmuch as Rachel says that her son will leave home one day. In other words, children naturally leave the parental home at some stage, and for Rachel this is how it should be. Once that happens, though, the couple are left with each other. So, again, a solid relationship between the couple becomes important. A child is important, but if the parents are not connected to one another, then eventually their relationship will crumble when the child goes. This is the practical reason why obligation does not form part of Rachel's ideas on why people should stay together - once the obligation is gone there is nothing to connect people to one another. The above indicates that, for Rachel, a partner is the primary source of intimacy, suggesting a Western, individualistic focus (Hsu, 1971).

In a good relationship, where partners are bonded, each partner's emotional well-being impacts on the other. Therefore, it is important for members of a couple to support one another and try to make each other happy. So for Rachel, in a healthy relationship a partner is there for you, for emotional support and guidance. As an example of how one might support one's partner and help him or her to be happy what Rachel says about giving K a break from work is relevant. She said that she knows that K's job makes him unhappy so she has told him that she thinks it would be better for him if he took some time off and decided on his next step carefully so that he will do something that makes him happy. She has said that she does not mind supporting their family while he does this. She feels this way because "he's allowed me to do that, and I think in all fairness I should allow him to do that". This quote also indicates her sense of fair play, and of what is important in a good relationship: each partner should have a chance to decide carefully on what makes them happy without financial pressure, and partners should support each other
(financially, if necessary) in this process. Thus the relationship should be reciprocal
and fair.

Rachel's views on how to deal with problems in a relationship relate to her sense of
fairness. Her anger over K's bringing up what she considers an old issue gives an
insight into how she feels problems should be dealt with. The procedure she
followed at the time she left him last year and was deciding whether or not to come
back was to confront the problems, get them out in the open, talk them through
honestly, come to a mutual resolution, and then lay them to rest. In terms of
Rusbult's (1980) typology of problem-solving responses it is clear that Rachel's
response falls into the category of "voice", which is positively associated with
relationship satisfaction.

At this point it is clear that Rachel most certainly does have certain expectations
with regard to how relationships work in general, and how they should be
maintained. These beliefs and expectations about relationships feed into what she
looks for in a mate and how she evaluates a partner.

5.3. Partner preferences and expectations.
The characteristics that Rachel mentioned when questioned about her ideal partner
shed light on what she prefers in a man. As with Sadie, De Angelis' (1992) work on
compatibility is relevant, as is Sternberg and Barnes' (1985) discussion of an ideal
other. However, Rachel does not have an extensive list of characteristics she looks
for. What she does mention is more in terms of the dynamic between her and her
ideal partner. Rachel also does not claim any hard and fast views on what
constitutes normal behaviour for anyone, no expectations she can pin down.
Rather she says she seems to judge each behaviour as it comes and on its own
merit. However, when one speaks with her, it becomes apparent that she does
have certain opinions on how a partner in general should and should not behave.

Rachel's preferences in terms of looks include that a man should be very tall and
very skinny, and that he should be dark in complexion. She says that she has not
had many pale-skinned boyfriends. The physical characteristics that Rachel
mentions are not so much her preference, as a pattern she has noticed in her
choice of boyfriends. She assumes that there is something in this type that she
finds attractive, but does not state that this is what she actively seeks. She refers to
the fact that her father is tall and skinny in making sense of her preference for tall, skinny men. She says her exposure to psychological theories (such as this one) came through her mother who studied some Psychology as well as through a past boyfriend. She said that she does not like “fat guys” nor does she like men who work out at the gym and are all rippling with muscles - for her that is a turn-off. She does not mention any other physical characteristics she would prefer in her ideal partner, although with reference to the physical, she says that sex is “not an issue” meaning that an exciting sexual partner is not something she considers very important. Given the fact that she does not think a relationship should be based on sex, and that she expects that over time the physical side of things becomes unexciting, her lack of emphasis on physical characteristics makes sense.

Basic to a relationship for Rachel is that she and her mate are friends and can go out and have fun together. So, her ideal partner is someone with whom she can do this. For her it is important that her mate should be able to listen to her and be able to keep track of her in conversation. She says she has a tendency to bring obscure and strange things into conversation, and it is important to her that her mate is not critical of her. He should accept her as she is and as she changes over time. Her ideal partner is there for her one hundred percent when she needs him. Furthermore, from what she says she wants in her son when he is older, it can be gleaned that she finds it important that a man should be sensitive to people so as not to hurt them, he should be a good judge of character, and he should have a strong character himself so as not to be swayed into doing things he should not (as an example she gives something like taking drugs).

She does not want a man who is a “walk-over” (that is, whom she can manipulate) as this would bore her very quickly. She prefers a bit of a challenge. She tells of a boyfriend she once had whom she had “wrapped so far around my little finger that I could just push him around and he would ... perform the way I wanted him to perform... needless to say I dumped him after about a month... I'd had my fun, like a cat playing with a mouse... and I let him go”. This statement makes it clear that she has very little respect for a man who allows himself to be manipulated, even by her. Rachel emphasises that in a healthy relationship people want to be together voluntarily, primarily because they love one another. A man's having a strong character and being a good judge of the character of others means that in Rachel's scheme of things he is not going to be swayed into doing anything he does not want
to do, such as being with her. If she can manipulate him, she will not respect him, because she will believe he is weak and unmanly. She will also not be sure of his true feelings for her. She wants to be absolutely sure that the man she is with is with her of his own free will, because he knows, understands, accepts and loves her. The above relates to Jones' (1993) conclusion that attributions of the other's motivations relate to one's feelings of love and trust in the relationship, and that the latter two are important to satisfaction.

A partner should - over time - get to know her likes and dislikes, get to know and understand and accept her. He should want to please her and make her happy. She says, in terms of a partner fulfilling her material wants "subconsciously they sort of know that this is something you would really like and by giving you that gift ... they're saying ...'I'd like to fulfil that need ...materially' ". The reference to a partner knowing subconsciously what one would want seems a little unrealistic at first glance inasmuch as she does not tell him precisely what she wants. However, when one considers that Rachel has said that over time a partner should get to know one's likes and dislikes, this statement becomes more realistic. She is not saying that her mate should be psychic or something like that, merely that he should know her extremely well. Furthermore, she is referring to material gifts she might enjoy, not to his fulfilling subconscious needs that even she is unaware of. She interprets a man's giving her a gift as a material indication that he cares about her.

On the level of fulfilling her emotional needs she expects a lot of love and attention and listening to and feedback. She expects a partner to be there for her one hundred percent, to be "on tap" for her whenever she needs him and to not "go wandering off and doing his own thing". Based on what she wants for her son to be when he grows up, one can add that her partner should be sensitive to other people, and not hurt them out of ignorance to their feelings. He should be very giving and should not be self-centred at all; she says "I think somebody who's really very self-centred, that would really pee me off. Because ... I am ... and I need somebody to ... give of themselves, before I'll give of me". Thus, she expects a partner to balance her. She therefore needs a man to be strong emotionally to offset her nature and cope with her demands. Her ideal man is emotionally well developed inasmuch as he is sensitive, attentive, giving and supportive. These characteristics coincide with Rachel's belief that in a good relationship partners do not take one another for granted or become complacent. Partners care for one
another and support one another. The couple make time to maintain their relationship and this can only happen if both are prepared to give of themselves. She sees herself as quite demanding in terms of her expectations of a man and an emotionally handicapped man will not be in a position to cope, hence Rachel's preference for someone who is emotionally strong. For her, a partner’s role is to be there for emotional support and guidance when she needs him. Given what Holmes and Rempel (1989) mention with regard to interpersonal rewards we might say that Rachel - like Sadie - has a primarily instrumental motivational orientation.

Further to the above, a partner must be involved in her life and that of their children. She expects a partner to spend quality time with her. He should be someone who cares about what is going on at home and with her and should not neglect her by spending a lot of time away from the home when they could be together.

Rachel’s narrative on her current partner also suggests a picture of what she expects from a man in general: he should be a good guy, he should be an involved and participating father, he should be stable, he should spend time with his partner and with his child (rather than, for example, going out to the pub all the time), and he should be good at what he does (that is, capable and self-sufficient). It is interesting to note here that Rachel states quite clearly that she does not need a man to provide financially for her. Nor does she require him to marry her. However, the way Rachel spoke about possibly supporting the family so her partner could find some direction in his work without financial pressure did imply a feeling that a man should be the main breadwinner. She says “I don’t think I’m taking away any of his identity being a man. I’m saying to K ‘I’m really happy to support, or at least kind of get the family by for a while, until you figure out what your next step is’”. Thus, being the provider is part of a man’s identity, and she is careful to emphasise the temporary nature of her sole support, in case she should be seen as detracting from K’s identity.

The picture Rachel paints is of a man who is strong in himself and sure of who he is as a man. He is self-sufficient and capable and these, to a certain extent, define the meaning of manhood to Rachel. These characteristics also have implications for Rachel’s belief that part of a man’s identity is as a provider. It means that he is sure of his ability to survive, and that he is not with her for any reason other than
that he wants to be with her. This goes along with her belief that partners should not stay together out of duty, obligation, appearances, or dependence.

As part of her picture of men, in general, she says she thinks it is healthy and “a man thing” for him to look at and fantasise about other women. She says any woman who says to her that she would kill her man if he looks at another woman is a fool, because “what are they going to do when this man suddenly goes through his mid-life crisis, and that’s what he wants to do?” Also part of her picture of men is that they are not romantic in terms of buying a woman flowers or other tokens of affection. She says “I’ve sort of realised that men are like that ... there’s not many men that go out and ... do that”. She adds that of those men that do go out and buy flowers or other gifts that they have probably got other character flaws that she would not like, such as being “really big wusses” or “walk-overs”.

This sort of rationalisation, while it helps Rachel deal with her disappointment over the fact that men in general (and her partner in particular) are not overly romantic, does also give an idea that she is unlikely to look too negatively on a man who does not give gifts or does look at other women, provided he fulfills the more important criteria of being an essentially capable, stable, decent person, an involved father, attentive and loving to her. If his behaviour speaks to her of these criteria, she will be inclined to overlook what she considers amusing characteristics of the male species.

Based on the foregoing narrative and discussion it is now possible to state Rachel’s beliefs about men and relationships in non-narrative form.

5.4. Beliefs.

5.4.1. Men.

A man who allows himself to be manipulated is weak.

Part of a man’s identity is the role of provider.

It is natural for a man to look at other women.

Men have mid-life crises.

Men are not romantic.

A man does not do anything he doesn’t want to do.

If a man is indecisive in his actions he is not sure of his feelings.
5.4.2. Relationships.

5.4.2.1. General.

Each partner's emotional well-being impacts on the other.

No two people are totally compatible.

People make adjustments to be with the other person.

Part of building a relationship is compromising.

Compromise is a gradual process.

Without togetherness there is no relationship.

Something more than sleeping with someone makes a relationship non-platonic.

Mental synchronisation that a couple share plus knowing one another and one another's boundaries defines a romantic relationship.

Physical attraction is the first step in a relationship's development.

There is more room to manoeuvre and more inclination to compromise in an established relationship than in a new relationship.

In a long-term relationship sex becomes unexciting.

Sex in a committed relationship is more meaningful than a fling.

Being emotionally intimate with someone is more substantial than being physically intimate.

Nobody ever feels satisfied all of the time in a relationship.

A break from one's partner is not necessarily a bad thing; it can have positive consequences for a relationship.

You either connect with somebody or you don't.

Part of connecting with someone is knowing the real person and accepting them as they are.

Relationships have to be worked at to be kept healthy.

People grow and change over time.

Children have to be included into a couple's relationship.

The couple are the most important part of the family unit.

The couple ensure the endurance of the whole unit by making sure that their relationship with one another is solid.

Some relationships start with a "big spark" and others develop quietly.

As an influence on the development of a relationship, racial difference per se is not as important as a person's beliefs and values.

Strong religious or cultural beliefs and values can hinder the development of a relationship if they are not shared by both partners.
A gift is a material indication that a man cares about one.

5.4.2.2. Healthy.
Friendship and being able to have fun together are the basis of a good relationship.
Partners should accept one another as they are.
Partners should not expect the other to be other than what and who they are.
People in an established relationship are more open and honest with one another and do not try to hide their bad behaviour.
Partners should maintain their individuality.
Partners should have a sense of freedom and independence.
Partners should not “live in each other’s back pocket”.
Partners should support one another financially and emotionally.
Partners support each other’s quest for growth and happiness.
A man should want to please his partner and make her happy.
A partner should - over time - get to know and understand the other.
Partners should include one another in activities and plans.
A man should want to be with a woman voluntarily, and should not be manipulated or persuaded to be with her.
A woman should not have to fight for a man’s attention.
People should stay together because they love one another and want to be together.
A couple should not stay together out of duty or obligation, out of dependence, or for the sake of appearances.
Each person in the relationship should be confident that they can survive on their own.
A relationship should not be based on sex.
Partners should not become complacent in their relationship and take one another for granted.
Making and spending quality time with a partner keeps a relationship healthy.
“Making an effort” includes sharing fun activities, playing, sharing quiet time, talking about nonsense and about consequential things.
A good relationship is mutual and fair.
Problems should be brought into the open, discussed honestly, and brought to a mutual resolution then laid to rest.
5.4.2.3. Unhealthy.
Staying together for the sake of a child is not a good idea, because children leave eventually.
If parents are not connected to one another, then their relationship will crumble.
Neglecting or distancing oneself from one's partner is unhealthy.

5.4.2.4. Marriage.
Weddings are romantic and memorable, but marriage itself is not.
Married people become complacent and stop working at their relationships.
Marriage is not necessarily a good thing for a relationship.

Having stated Rachel's beliefs it is apparent that she certainly does have views on partners and relationships. Given this, the question begs as to what influences the development and application of these views.

5.5. Influences.
5.5.1. Identity.
Rachel considers herself to be a difficult person. She says "I expect a lot of love, and a lot of attention, and ... somebody must be on tap for me, like one hundred percent". She considers that these expectations are "probably selfish", and that they make her demanding and emotionally draining. She adds that she changes her mind a lot and "I'm very fickle when it comes to things like that". This last is in reference to her semi-conflict over leading a more 'sedate' lifestyle now than when she was a little younger. She is saying that she changes her mind about whether she likes it or not. Sometimes she enjoys the quieter life she has, but then sometimes the "bad girl" part of her pooh-poohs that life style. An example she gives of this mental fickleness is the ballroom dancing lessons that she urged K into. She says she dragged him there and then, after about a month, decided she wanted to go and do something else. However, she feels honour-bound to stay and to continue to show an interest in it, because K now enjoys it. For her, this indicates a change in herself, because when she was in her teens she says she would simply have wandered off to do her own thing and left her partner behind. She feels very guilty when she even considers doing this to her current partner.

She says of herself "I'm normally not a very accepting person. Particularly in relationships". She does not tolerate well a partner's deviating from paying her
attention and giving her a lot of love, or from being what she wants in a man. However, she says she is a lot more accepting of her current partner and his foibles than she was of other boyfriends. Perhaps she is also becoming more accepting of herself. In Kelly's terms, one might say that Rachel's construct system has undergone change in response to her experiences. If this was not the case she might well have changed her partner by now, rather than sticking with the relationship (Carver & Scheier, 1988).

Rachel recently stopped working full time. She says she feels more comfortable with herself since she made this decision. When she was working and was focused on her career she felt that nothing was falling into place. Then she came to the realisation that her job would not be there to comfort her and keep her company when she is older; her partner will, but only if she makes an effort to be a part of their relationship again. She also saw that she was missing out on her son's development, and began to want to be more in control of his upbringing. She says "I realise how much he can change when he's brought up by somebody else ... [and] I don't want him to become one of these spoiled little brats". So she decided that a change of focus and priorities was in order. She's somewhat concerned that people will see her as having no ambition or as going nowhere because she is working part-time and being more of a "little woman" in terms of fulfilling the roles of wife and mother, but she has come to the point where she asks herself if other people's opinions matter so much. This implies a growing sense of valuing her own ability to decide for herself and trust in herself. She is satisfied that she is doing what is right for her, because at the end of the day it is her son who would suffer from her neglect and she is the one who will be alone and lonely if she allows her career to consume her as it was doing. The above goes hand-in-hand with Rachel's view of herself as a separate individual from the roles that she fulfils.

Although she has re-prioritised her life to include a greater focus on her partner and her child, she has not in any way given up her identity as an individual. She says she does not see herself as "Mrs. B" (her partner's surname). She wonders if it annoys K that she corrects people who call her Mrs. B, but for her "I'm still who I am. I'm still Rachel L, and ... I'm not Mrs. B." For her being "Mrs. B" means being "a really old woman ... I get this picture of being ... old, thin, and ... normal... I mean everyone settles down, gets married, has kids, ends up with curlers in their hair and that sort of thing. It gives me that kind of image". Clearly this is not how she sees
herself. She does not want to give in to being old or frail or just like everyone else. Being different is important to her. Perhaps the implication is that she is holding firmly to a sense of youth and freedom when the rest of her life seems very “normal”: she is in a long-term, established, comfortable relationship, she has a child, and time is marching on. She says wryly (in response to my teasing that she does not marry because of a fear of house slippers), “not that I’m not wearing them now”, acknowledging that her life is very conventional and it is somewhat beyond her control. Clearly she is struggling here with a view of herself as conventional and boring, as suggested by her lifestyle, and her own cherished view of herself as unconventional and interesting. There is something of a dichotomy between the real and the ideal.

Her narrative on marriage also clearly articulates this dichotomy. Rachel says that a part of her is taken with the romantic imagery of a wedding, but she believes that reality is not the same as this rose-tinted fantasy. She thinks that as a person grows older and has more experience their ideas about relationships change from this fantasy-world type of construction of reality to a clearer and more grounded notion of reality - that “the world isn’t as rosy as big weddings and flowery wedding dresses”. In the context of her beliefs about relationships the suggestion is that if her own relationship is not ideal, she considers herself to be mature enough to distinguish between fantasy and what can be expected in reality. The foregoing serves to indicate the importance of a person’s construction of her experiences and how the constructs used in this process determine her thoughts, feelings, and behaviours (Kelly, 1955).

The fact that being different from the norm is important to Rachel is again apparent when speaking of why she and K do not marry. She says “maybe to me it’s an identity now - that I’m not married, and I’m still rebellious ... in our own little way that we being anti-socialistic”. Thus, she feels that her and K not marrying is their way of being unconventional and thumbing their noses at the establishment. As suggested previously, there is an element of the “good girl” and “bad girl” about Rachel inasmuch as she lives an apparently conservative life as “wife” and mother, but she also rebels against this identification of herself and is - by choice - unmarried, taking pride in being different from other women, and other couples (even if only in her own perception). Being unconventional and an individual is good. She respects
strength of character and will and has a certain sense of honour and being bound to act according to it.

She is not willing to change herself - who she is - to accommodate just anyone. However, later on she does say she would have changed her religion if K had been of a different faith and it had been an issue for him - but "only if it was K". The implication is that K is someone she values a great deal and she would "go through all these change things that you do to become whatever religion it is" because of how she feels about him in particular. Also, given that she does not place a high value on religion, perhaps she feels that changing her religion for K would not be changing who she is inside, only removing an obstacle to her partnership with him.

Rachel is quite clear on her priorities. Wealth is not as important as being involved in her child's upbringing and being available to him. It is not as important as being with her partner and being happy and together as a family. It is also more important to be happy and satisfied in one's work, than to accumulate wealth. To her mind there is more to life than material wealth. A materially governed lifestyle is superficial and frivolous, and she considers herself to be more practical and down to earth. As mentioned previously she offered to support the family to give K a chance to find a fulfilling work direction. She says "there's so many women who've said to me ... 'you're nuts...Like what are you going to do for money?' but to me what's really important is that we [are] all together and that there's food. And that's it." For her it is not an issue that she supports the family while K finds something career-wise that fulfils him and makes him happy. No major calamity can befall them because "we're in the lucky enough situation that we can't lose the house, we can't lose the vehicles [because they are paid off], and there's nothing in the house that we can lose, except maybe they could turn our water and lights off and our phones off". She does not see that her supporting the family, or perhaps not earning as much as K is a "big issue". It's what she considers fair play and the right thing to do, given that K has given her the opportunity to decide on her own path without financial pressures.

With Rachel one must consider what she feels she is different to or rebelling against and take that as what she identifies as a cultural or societal convention, rule, or prescription. In the case of the above statement she refers to "so many other women" who consider her to be a little crazy for offering to support her man
financially, for allowing him to pass the burden of financial pressures onto her for a little while: a woman should be supported by a man and not vice versa would appear to be the societal convention that Rachel is being different from. She herself does not state this convention in so many words, but it is clear from what she says and how she says it, that she is happy to ignore - or deliberately oppose? - any prescription she disagrees with. It is a mark of her affiliation with an individualistic culture that Rachel's behaviour is clearly a function of her own attitudes, rather than any norms she perceives (Triandis, 1996).

From the above, one gets a somewhat conflicting picture of who Rachel is, and how she views herself. She considers herself to be demanding and emotionally draining. She says she is fickle in her decisions and requires a selfish amount of attention and love from her partner. However, her actions indicate that she is quite clear on what is important in her life - her man and her child - and that she will do whatever she deems necessary to keep her family together and happy. In this regard she is very giving. When speaking to Rachel the impression gained is that while she is very giving and accommodating to K, it is because she loves him and cares about his welfare, and she is by no means subjugating what she wants for his benefit. What she says, and the way she speaks of the interactions between her and K indicate that she plays a strong role in their relationship. For example, she says she has forced him to be involved with their child, that she is the one who instigated their going to dancing so that they could be together and have fun together when she felt that they had begun drifting apart. She makes a great deal of effort to keep the relationship alive and not merely plodding along, and K, by all accounts, responds to this assertiveness in her by being the partner she wants and needs. The conflict in impressions stems perhaps from the fact that she holds firmly to her expectations, while simultaneously viewing herself in a negative light because of them.

She looks like a pixie with her elfin features and bright, coppery, cropped hair, and part of her wants to be young and free and unencumbered forever. But another part of her, perhaps wiser, acknowledges her need for human relatedness and guides her to make more mature decisions about her relationships. So she is an interesting mix of bubbling, joyful youth and quiet, wise maturity. She is soft and loving, but also quite resolute in what she wants and in getting it. Her priorities appear to flow more from the wise and mature part of herself than from the young
elf. What is important is one’s children and being there for them and to raise them. She gives an example of a family at R’s school who are very wealthy, “dad’s a very successful businessman ... they’ve really got money, and this kid misses his dad”, because his father is too busy at work to spend time with him. For her this is a no-no. Wealth is not a priority for her. It is important to spend time with your child. It is also important for her that one should be happy in one’s work, not simply doing a job to accumulate wealth. Here her example of the fact that K is not happy in his current work is relevant. The fact that she wants him to be happy, and settled with what he is doing, and that he has allowed her to find her path too, implies that this is important for her, something she considers a priority.

Her priorities lead one to see that Rachel values the individual person in each member of her family and also values her relationships with them. She says she believes that K will probably feel a lot better “if he takes the time off, and centres himself” indicating that one should pay attention to what is going on inside oneself, and make decisions that are true to oneself and that this will facilitate happiness and satisfaction in life. Certainly this appears to be what she has done for herself. She adds, “if he’s not happy, how on earth am I going to be happy?” indicating that she is closely bonded to her partner and that what impacts on him has repercussions for her. It is important for her that she and K are a unit and work at staying together, and if they have each other and they are happy as a family, then material wealth is not so important.

If making money gets in the way of being with the people in her life then Rachel would rather be poor and happy than wealthy and miserable or out of touch with those who are special to her. So, in a way, she is taking care of herself and helping to ensure her own happiness by insisting that K should centre himself and find a fulfilling work direction in which he is settled and happy. Independence and self-sufficiency are very important to Rachel. She feels a need to prove things to herself and perhaps to other people in her life. She does not appear to be with K out of dependence and feels confident enough in her ability to support herself and others to offer to provide for the family. She does, however, consider her tendency to become somewhat obsessed and “blinkered” about a job as a liability because it causes her family to fade into the background. What is apparent is that the constructs that Rachel uses to interpret events - such as “selfish”, “demanding”, “giving”, “accepting” - relate directly to her experience of herself and others (Carver
& Scheier, 1988). Again there is the impression that she is struggling a little to balance aspects of herself that she sees as negative with certain ideals that she holds. The foregoing discussion on identity allows us to pinpoint the main constructs that Rachel uses in structuring her experiences.

5.5.1.1. Themes.
Strength vs weakness; accessibility vs selfishness; dependence vs independence; individuality vs the norm.

Now that we have some idea of how Rachel sees herself and her own role in her relationship, we can move on to consider Rachel’s views on parental and cultural influence on her choice of partner and in her relationships.

5.5.2. Parents.
In attempting to gauge the extent to which Rachel feels her parents have influenced her choices in partners or relationships I asked if her parents had said anything in particular to her about either one. She said that she does not feel that they have given her any set of rules or any specific ideas on who or what she should look for in a man or in a relationship. However, this is not to say that her parents have had no influence at all. Generally speaking, Rachel believes that “you’ll always be influenced to some extent by your parents, they are your parents they brought you up, you always believed that what they said and did was right, but ... you get to a point where you think ‘Well, is what they’re doing and saying right for me?’ “

In terms of her choice of K she says “when [my mom] met K she hated K, and she kept telling me that K was...a bad person, and not the right person for me...I think probably if I hadn’t fallen pregnant with R ...we may very well have drifted apart if I’d continued to be as influenced as I was by my mother.” Thus, her mother’s influence was substantial. Rachel’s father had the opposite view. She says “My father... always kind of kept an apart side of things...when...K and I had been together a little while...my father turned round and said to me 'He’s a good guy...stick it out... I’ll back you up, if you want to leave him, but give it a bash first. I know what you’re like'”. Rachel’s parents’ responses to K are initially diametrically opposed.

As events unfolded between Rachel and K this opposition between Rachel’s parents in their views on K changed. Rachel says “We’d moved in together already
and I was kind of getting all these cold feet and whatever. My father was the one that said 'Look, stick it out'. My mother was going 'No, he's not good enough for you', ... and then funny enough, when I did leave K, my mother turned around like a month later...and she said to me 'You've made totally the wrong decision. K was a really good guy, and he was...the best person for you'. So now, it would appear that both parents approve of her choice of partner, and consider that he is good for her and to her. One wonders how much influence this parental approval has on Rachel's evaluation of her partner and their relationship.

In this regard, Rachel says "K still says to me that [my mother] still does influence me a lot today...she makes me feel really guilty about a lot of things", but Rachel says that with the birth of her son, she grew up a lot and this made her see her mother's influence in a different light, so that her mother now has a lot less influence than she used to. Also, Rachel feels she has K to help her see when her mother is exerting an influence that she perhaps should not.

In terms of the nature of the relationship between Rachel and K - the fact that they are not married - her parents again hold different opinions. Rachel says "My mother constantly nags ...that we should be married" and on the other hand "I really think my father's sort of accepted K and myself as being married. He's never said anything about it. The only time he said 'Maybe you should think about getting married' is times when I've...seriously mentioned that we probably are going to emigrate ... and I think it's more...he feels that I'll be more protected by being married, if we had to go over to a different country, and we had to get divorced." So, her mother feels they should marry, perhaps (given her mother's views on the stigma of divorce) because it is for her the socially approved thing to do, but her father is quite comfortable with them living as they are. He suggests marriage in terms of protection for Rachel if they should leave the country. This suggests that their marrying is a mere formality or convenience in his opinion.

This last point may be a clue to Rachel's interactions with her parents and their influence on her. She rebels against her mother - perhaps the person who stands for convention, but appears to have taken on some of the views of her father in particular with regard to her views on marriage. Thus, her mother's influence is perhaps more obvious inasmuch as Rachel explicitly rebels against it, whereas her father's influence is perhaps the greater inasmuch as it is more subtle, being more
ingrained in Rachel’s opinions. She says she does not feel that in the course of her upbringing her parents instilled “typical British values” in her. She evokes an image of old-fashioned, stringent, stifling rules “like tea at four, and ... children are seen and not heard and ... those typical Jane Eyre type of values” and says she feels her parents did not stifle her in this way - or any other. So, again, Rachel’s parents’ influence lies perhaps in the rather unfettered broadness of her views on people and behaviours, and in her consequent fairly easy-going approach to such things. This openness to people and events is borne out in her views on the influence of her cultural background on her relationship.

5.5.3. Cultural background.
As mentioned previously, much of what Rachel thinks is implicit in what she says rather than explicit, so that in some cases it is necessary to consider her words carefully in order to tease out her understanding of culture and it’s influence in her life. For the sake of clarity, I shall first discuss Rachel’s understanding of “culture” and her views on how it might influence a relationship, before dealing with how she views its influence on her relationship in particular.

When asked how she understands the word “culture”, Rachel said that “it makes me think more of ... almost religious connotations”, but this does not mean that religion and culture are one and the same thing. She adds “I think very much the same as the agnostics in religion, there are agnostics in culture, because our cultures have just become so ... flattened, by stuff like Western world influences, and European world influences, and now - living here - African influences. ... they all sort of meld in together.” Despite this “flattening” of cultures Rachel says “not from where I’m sitting, but ... generally I think that lot of people... are very influenced by...a very strong cultural background, very strong religious background, whatever relationships they go into will be influenced by those”.

In terms of the influence that a strong cultural or religious background has, Rachel says “I think if you have been brought up in those environments, you don’t really know any better, so it doesn’t matter”. What does not matter is that one only knows about one’s own cultural norms and religious prescriptions. The fact that she says people don’t know better implies that she feels not having a strong cultural or religious background is better for the person - and for the relationship, inasmuch as one is more open to variation. I suggest that if one’s background has been very
strict, one is more likely to conform since the option of non-conforming is not really an option, given the unspoken threat of ostracism from the group. Only someone who is not particularly concerned with fitting into a particular group will flout that group's prescriptions. Rachel's upbringing would seem to have inculcated in her just such an attitude of non-conformity and prizing of individuality. She adds "I think if those things [religious/cultural norms] have been very blurred in your upbringing... I think it'll stay blurred throughout". The implication is that cultural prescriptions are learned in the course of one's upbringing. I asked her to confirm if I was correct in my impression that in her opinion she was not raised with a particularly strong religious or cultural input, and that she, therefore, has a fairly broad outlook and she agreed with this impression.

This link to childhood learning of values is strengthened when I ask Rachel to identify her own cultural background. She says she cannot, but then goes on to say that "religion, and ... English values ... have never really been instilled", the suggestion being that such values or religion are instilled over a period of time - such as childhood - and also that she sees her cultural background (at least partly) as English. For Rachel "English values" means "Typical British values, like tea at four and...children are seen and not heard". In this vein she adds "when I ... say British values, I tend to think of a very stifled...very... children are kind of kept in the background, and not involved in parental...type decisions... not really part of the family. It's the parents and the kids, and they totally separate... I don't think that I was ever brought up like that." The way she says this implies that for her this is a negative way of raising children, and she thinks it is a good thing that she was not raised this way; she was not stifled by such ideas since hers was a more egalitarian upbringing. She, in turn, does not stifle her son. The statement also gives insight into what Rachel considers to fall under the topic of "culture". The things she speaks of relate to prescriptions for behaviour, what is considered acceptable or appropriate and what is unacceptable - for children and for their parents. As an aside, one could identify Rachel's religion broadly as Christian, although she does not feel she is a religious person at all.

I asked if in terms of the partner that she chooses or the type of relationship that she is in she perceives any particular cultural rules and she said she does not. She does not think that her cultural background, whatever it is, has any influence on her relationship or her choice of partner “unless ... there's a certain connotation
culturally to being White, and a certain way of being brought up”. She says she does perceive a difference in the way that Whites and Blacks are raised, or at least in some of their customs and values. For example, that White people generally only have one wife at a time, while Black people might have more than one. She does say, however, that she thinks this is more of a “social thing” than a cultural difference. The above quote again suggests that for Rachel culture relates to how one is raised and the values and prescriptions one learns in this process.

To illustrate her point on what is conventionally or socially acceptable Rachel says “If K had to run around and tell people that he had me at home and six girlfriends .... most guys would think he was hellishly lucky that I just accepted the whole thing... I think there would be a lot of women who would go ‘Oh my G-d, Rachel, how can you let him get away with this?’ And ... ‘it’s not normal’ “. This statement clearly points out that Rachel perceives a convention among White people to have only one partner at a time. Furthermore, it implies that a (White) woman has control over whether or not her man sticks to this convention. It is up to her to keep him in line, because he will not be monogamous if she does not insist on it. It would appear from this, and from other things that Rachel said, that she would go along with this view of men. However, she has also said that she does not mind if K has a fling on the side, provided she knows about it and it does not detract from the resources (time, money, emotion) in her relationship with him. One wonders if this is not perhaps a further manifestation of her penchant for being different from what is conventional, given that any relationships - even superficially sexual ones - necessitate a fairly large investment of resources, and this would certainly detract from her relationship with her man. Further demonstrating her rebellious streak Rachel says of why she and K are not married “Maybe we just don’t want to be the norm”. This statement pertains to her views on cultural influence inasmuch as “the norm” is a conventional pattern of behaviour - adult people get married - and Rachel is influenced by her cultural norms even if only because she opposes them.

In terms of how her cultural background influences her relationships, Rachel says that she does not feel that on the whole it has played a large role: “you asked me whether or not ... whatever cultural background K and I had come from [had any influence on the relationship]... the fact that both of us were White and ... came from sort of middle class families ... would sort of ... be one of the reasons why we got together”, but she adds later on “I think things might have ended up the same
way, regardless of what colour he'd been.” She continues “I suppose it would be more difficult .. if he’d come from a very strict religious background ... or very strong cultural background, like an African background, or the Muslims and the Hindus tend to have very strong culture... things probably wouldn't have worked out, because I'm just so relaxed about that, but yet I'm not willing to change me.” This statement has some revealing implications. Firstly, that Rachel feels race is not a problem - she says she would probably have formed a relationship with K if he had been a different colour. What she considers more problematic, is a person's religious beliefs - she refers to K's possibly being Muslim or Hindu as a problem, because it implies she would have to "change me" to fit in with him. Somehow, a person's being of a different race does not hold this same connotation for her, and is less problematic for that reason.

The quote also gives further insight into Rachel's view of culture. It suggests that race and cultural prescriptions or etiquette are related to one another - for example, Black people have certain customs, as do White people. Such customs and practices are separate from these people's religious beliefs - whether they are Muslim or Hindu. So, while religion and culture are similar - perhaps inasmuch as both concern prescriptions for living - they are also different, and this subtle difference is implied in the way that Rachel speaks of people's religious and cultural backgrounds. Rachel does not feel that her cultural background (or her parents) have influenced her decisions to leave K or to stay with him. A Western, individualistic influence can be detected, however, in Rachel's emphasis on love, and her feeling that duty or obligation do not form part of why a couple should be together. Her emphasis on love is a somewhat typical Western peculiarity, as is the fact that she as an individual plays a strong role in her relationship. Her emphasis on egalitarian child-rearing, sexual freedom (at least for K), expectations in terms of interpersonal dynamics, a partner as the primary source of intimacy are important indicators of her cultural affiliation (Triandis, 1996; Hsu, 1985). Indeed these show that while Rachel does not perceive a cultural influence, it is nevertheless present.

For the sake of clarity, Rachel's beliefs about culture can be stated as follows:

Cultural background is about how and where one is brought up.
Culture has religious connotations.
Distinctive cultures have been flattened by Western, European and African influences that all meld together.
Culture is about customs, propriety, and values.
Race and cultural prescriptions and etiquette are related.
Customs are separate from religious beliefs.
Strength of cultural background is related to the degree of influence it exerts.
A strong cultural background limits one's knowledge of alternatives.

Having now discussed Rachel's views on partners, relationships, and the possible influence of her own identity, parents and culture, we can turn to a consideration of how Rachel evaluates her current partner and relationship and her motivation for continuing with both.

5.6. Application.
In attempting to come to some understanding of the reasons why Rachel stays in her relationship with her current partner, one must tie together what she says about both. These threads are what she considers important, and the extent to which K and the relationship she has with him fulfil her criteria gives one insight into why Rachel maintains her relationship with him. What becomes apparent in the following is that a decision to continue a relationship with a particular person is not cut and dried. It is a balancing act, very much as De Angelis (1992) suggests when she argues that one should evaluate the importance of one's preferences relative to one another.

5.6.1. Current partner.
To begin with, much of what Rachel prefers in a man becomes evident through the way she speaks about her current partner. Therefore, one can assume that she finds he possesses many - if not most - of her preferences. What she considers to be healthy and normal for men in general also impacts on how she evaluates her current partner. In this vein, Rachel notes that on a physical level, her partner - K - is over six feet tall, skinny, and dark in complexion. She considers that there must be something about him physically, about his looks, that attracted her to him initially, although he is not the best looking man. Given Rachel's (non-)expectations of sex in a long-term relationship, this is not of too much importance to her. She says it takes a while for his personality to come through, and that he is not an emotional person. Rachel says of him that he does not open up to people very willingly. In fact, he is not a people's person at all. He says he can talk to computers better than he can to people, but Rachel feels that the fact that he is comfortable with her, and
she is there for him to open up to makes a difference to him. In other words, she believes that she has a place in his life. Since K is not overly emotional, Rachel says that she is usually the one who initiates hand-holding or some other demonstration of physical affection, but that K goes along with it. If he needs her he will initiate it, and she believes that that if he really did not like it he would find some excuse to take his hand away, but that he never does this.

K listens a lot, but does not tell her what he's thinking. "He doesn't feed back too well. In fact, he doesn't feed back at all". This is something that she finds quite unsatisfying. However, she explains his lack of feedback in terms of the fact that he has "really long thought processes". She has wanted him to be snappy and quick off the mark and he's wanted to think about things first and let them stew. Overall she has learned to adapt to and accept the fact that he is a slow and careful thinker. It is not that he doesn't make decisions, he does. He just takes a long time about it. K does not need a lot of support, but sometimes her presence allows him to make a decision and act on it. Also, in terms of the fact that she might ask him for a decision and he might take some time about it she adds that "He's got a head like an elephant, he doesn't forget", so that if she asks him something, she does not need to nag him continually about it, fearing that he has forgotten. Based on this fact, she has learned not to nag him about things, but to let him have his long thought processes and come back to her in his own time. That K does not open up very willingly or need a lot of support is also a double-edged sword, because she appreciates that he is not a needy person who requires her attention twenty-four hours a day, but it also leaves her feeling a little lonely and unnecessary at times. This may be why she is so adamant that her partner should love her and want her around, and make that clear to her.

She finds it frustrating that he likes to think carefully before acting, but she also appreciates this characteristic in him. The latter is shown when Rachel says that K is very clear and very level-headed. He is able to sort things out and get to the root of things. He is very frugal with his words, but he can sift through what she tells him and say a few words that just put everything in focus for her. So, he helps her get perspective on events and people. In terms of his role for Rachel, she sees that he fulfills his function as an emotional guide and support for her. While he fulfills that function for her, he will not make decisions for her. He forces her to take responsibility for her own decisions.
Her partner is not the type to surprise anyone, except for “character bits” and this adds to her sense of his stability. In explanation of K’s surprising “character bits” she says, “After seven years I still don’t know everything there is to know about K. There’s still some things that K does, that I just ... go ‘wow’. I didn’t know he knew that, or I didn’t know he could do that”. This is a positive thing for Rachel, since she likes a bit of challenge. So K is still something of a puzzle to her. The fact that he is a careful thinker and is able to see to the heart of a matter also means she cannot manipulate K, that he is not a “walk-over”. In terms of the preferences mentioned above, this is a point in his favour as it leads her to think that he is with her because he wants to be.

She sees him as sharing her rebellious streak, although this is manifested in quiet ways, because he is not “a standing out type of guy”. Also, she feels she can do anything with K, nothing is out of bounds. She gives as an illustration of what she means here the fact that with one’s friends one will usually do some things with one friend and not with another, there are boundaries to what is okay and not okay, but with K she feels she can do anything. She says “when you have a best friend and you don’t have a relationship with somebody ... you and your best friend do things together. And... that’s pretty much what we do”. In terms of her wanting to be friends with her partner, and to be able to go out and have fun with him, the fact that this is the case with K is important in the continuation of their relationship.

Also important is that, for Rachel, K is not at all self-centred, he is very giving. She feels that he has adapted to her character flaws, and accepted her as she is, in her entirety; another good point. Further evidence for Rachel that K accepts and likes her as she is, comes when she says that she does not think K would like it if she dressed up to the nines to go shopping - as she sees some women do - or had the lifestyle where she has her hair and nails done every week and loads of jewellery and so on. The way she speaks of this lifestyle implies that for her it is somewhat frivolous and superficial. She tends to buy more practical clothing and be more down to earth and the fact that she perceives that K would not enjoy her as a socialite implies that he likes her just as she is, and this sits well with her. What is apparent from the above is that Rachel makes her own sense of K’s behaviours and evaluates her interpretations in terms of her own values, expectations, and attitudes (Dunstan, 1996).
In terms of his character, Rachel says K tries to fix things himself first, then goes to a manual to see what he has done wrong. This is mentioned in the context of her liking a man who is self-sufficient, the implication being that she considers K to be self-sufficient. The fact that he took their Land Rover apart, besides suggesting his self-sufficiency, also suggests for her that he is good with his hands, something else she likes in a man.

She does not think that her mate is overly romantic. She occasionally misses getting flowers or being spoilt with gifts, but she feels that this is simply not who her partner is, and she cannot expect him to be someone or something that he is not. She does not take too dim a view of K’s not giving her gifts often. This is for two reasons. On the one hand is her belief that men in general are not terribly romantic, and that those who are have other character flaws that she would not like. Thus, K is just a normal man and his good qualities make up for his not being very romantic. The second reason why Rachel is not too upset about not being constantly inundated with gifts is that K does occasionally do something nice for her, like picking flowers from their garden, or as he did on one occasion, arranging a pedicure for her at the local beauty salon. She adds that “if I turn round to him and I say … I really like this or … that he’ll say ‘okay I’ll see if I’ve got the money’” and if he has the money he will send her off to get what she wants. So she certainly does not think that he is ungenerous. Rachel believes that K tries in his own way to treat her like a woman and to show her that he cares about her. He does it infrequently and, therefore, she finds his gestures more meaningful. In this regard it is also important that he does things “off his own bat”. She says “I think if he just goes off and does it himself, and he comes back with something, … it means a lot. It means that he cares”. She adds that she would probably get “peed off” if he brought her flowers every week, because he wasn’t bringing something else!

On a similar line, taken to indicate that K cares about her and wants to be with her she says he likes to go shopping with her. “If he didn’t want to do it he’d be out playing golf, or scuba diving every weekend, or even at work”. She considers the fact that K “goes ballistic” if she goes shopping without him indicates that he wants to spend time with her; that it is important to him. Saturday mornings are their major family together time and she feels that this comes from his side as well - not just from her - because if he did not want to spend time with her and their son he
wouldn't. To show how strongly K feels about their family together time, she tells of a Saturday afternoon when he had to go into work to finish off something, and he went to a great deal of effort to arrange permission to get Rachel and R through security and into the building, just so that they could all be together. As she says, he did not have to do that if he did not want to be with them. So, she takes this as proof that he believes in spending a lot of quality time with her and their son, and that he enjoys their time together.

Of great importance is the fact that K is devoted to their son (R), he loves him and does not consider his upbringing as "woman's work". He will do anything for R, and Rachel thinks that that is important. He wants to be there to watch his son develop, he wants to be involved and to know what is happening in R's life. Rachel says she forced him to get involved in R's upbringing initially, but that now he "tries to take time off so he can come and watch R do karate. You know, so when R tells him things, K knows what he's talking about", and that when she rescheduled some of R's activities K was quite upset because he is not able to come and watch because he is working. Rachel interprets the fact that K wants to be there for their son and participate in his upbringing and his activities to mean that he cares and that he is a good person. She believes that he does not want to be a spare part, or allow work to take over his life as it does for many other men. She does not think there are many people, or many men like K. She says that K is a good guy at heart, a good person. He is very good to their son and to her. He wants to spend time with his family, he is very stable: "K is a rock". He is good at the things he does. All these things about K outweigh the fact that he is not very good-looking, nor overly romantic or verbal in Rachel's estimation.

On a somewhat different track she says "he seems happy ... I keep saying to him 'you're the sweetest guy out' ...and ... he adores all these women and he thinks they all wonderful ... and not one of them likes K the way that he would like them to like him." This way of viewing K perhaps makes Rachel feel comfortable and unthreatened - it is also probably an accurate evaluation of what happens. What does this say about what she thinks of her partner? She thinks he is a sweet guy, but that he is not particularly attractive to the opposite sex. She feels that his looking at other women is more of a sexual fantasy type thing, but that what he has with her is more substantial. He bounces ideas off her, he can speak to her about his troubles, she is there for him, and she feels that he needs her. The fact that she
perceives herself as playing an important role in K's life is an important part of why she is with him. She does not think that he will find someone else to love him as she does if he leaves her. The preceding quote implies that she does not think much of K. However, the other things she has said and the way in which she said them indicate that she actually thinks quite highly of him. She is happy to be with him, and also does not think she will find it easy to replace him. Thus, it would seem that Rachel idealises K to a certain extent and is, therefore, happy to be with him (Murray et al, 1996).

From the above discussion, it is apparent that, as with Sadie, Rachel's beliefs about men and relationships help to shape what she looks for and expects from a potential mate and how she then evaluates him. For the most part she believes that K cares about her, but there are times when his behaviour makes her feel unloved and unnecessary. The foregoing discussion allows us an insight into how Rachel goes about evaluating her partner. How does this extend to her relationship?

5.6.2. Current relationship.

In describing her current relationship Rachel begins by saying "we have a pretty stormy relationship". This is not problematic, given Rachel's expectation that no two people are entirely compatible. She adds, "We [are] not married. We decided on not getting married right at the beginning. ... [the relationship has] been very on and off". The first "off" time was when she fell pregnant with their son. When she fell pregnant they had been together for six months and she feels she had something to prove to herself. She says "my parents really thought ... that I could not do anything on my own. In fact, I've often wondered if ... I'd need a little support structure behind me to be able to ...have the confidence to go out and do things... and make decisions ... on my own. So, maybe that's what I felt that I needed to do then. That I could have the baby, and support it, and survive. On my own."

At first, when she came back to K, they decided to "do the whole marriage thing", but she considers that this decision was based on pressure they got from outside of their relationship, and that when they had thought about it a little, they decided not to marry, because it was not important to them as a couple. Now she says they would marry if it became an issue for their son, but so far he has not indicated that their not being married bothers him at all. For her, having a child has not changed the relationship between her and K. R has been included or incorporated and
Rachel says "Maybe that's the reason why we don't want another baby, because ... it was easier to include one than it is to include two." So, R's birth was not viewed as more reason for them to stay together.

There are certain things that Rachel values very highly in a relationship. What is most important is love. Rachel says "love features quite a bit" in her evaluation of her relationship. As an indication of how important love is in Rachel's estimation take her statement that "last year when I left [K] ... was because I felt he didn't love me any more". She acknowledges that at the time she was focused on - even somewhat obsessed with - her job, or potential career in computers. She did not see much of K or their son, and this perhaps contributed to her feelings. Also, she says "I needed to sort of go out and go and see... what was out there...maybe I thought I was missing out on stuff as well, and maybe see what I was missing out on". The fact that K wanted her back, the fact that he was "torn up" over her leaving, and the way that he asked her to come back made her realise that he loves her. Rachel is with K now because she feels loved and wanted. For Rachel, love is vital in a relationship.

At the time of the break-up she said to K that she wants to get on with her life. If it was to be with him that would be great, but if not then he should just let her get on with it. This indicates that she is not tied to him because of dependence. Recently she says that K has started saying that he is not sure if he loves her and she has said to him emphatically that she loves him and she knows he loves her because of what happened when she left him last year. She does not want him being indecisive about her - either he wants her and loves her or he doesn't. She does not allow him to be indecisive or doubtful now. She ascribes his raising the issue of her leaving and his not being sure if he loves her to delayed reaction. When she left he panicked and immediately came after her but now - a year later - he has had time to consider things and is wondering if he made the right decision. She feels that if she continues with him that's fine and good, but if he does not want her or has some reservations, she can survive without him.

She was angry with him for doing this now, because she had come to some resolution and had rearranged her life to include him in her future, and now he is threatening to upset her apple cart. She does not appreciate that in the light of the fact that she discussed things with him at the time of the break-up and when she
decided to come back to him she thought that the issue had been resolved. In terms of her beliefs about problem-solving in a relationship Rachel does not want someone coming back to her at some much later date with recriminations or doubts. She says quite clearly "I don't want to discuss [the break-up]. As far as I'm concerned what's done is done, at that moment in time you [K] promised me that you'd forgiven me [for leaving] and that you really... wanted me back, no strings attached." This indicates that for her the issue was resolved, and she is unwilling to rehash it now. Despite her anger at K, she does not feel that she wants to leave him again.

Rachel goes through phases when she thinks it might be nice to have a romantic wedding and honeymoon, but then she comes to the conclusion that "K isn't like that". So perhaps her occasional wish for a big romantic wedding is simply a wish to interrupt the sedateness, and mundaneness of day to day living. She says their friends and family see her and K as married, and that they see themselves that way too, at least in terms of their being together for a very long time to come. She says "I see K and myself sitting in our rocking chairs together one day when we're really cranky and old... I see the two of us together." Nevertheless she and K do not want to fit the norm, and this is partly why they do not marry. Another part is an element of fear that if they should marry it could spell doom for their relationship, given the negative possibilities mentioned above. Here, her beliefs about the nature of marriage are quite plainly influencing what she expects to happen if she and K should marry.

In this vein she says "I seem to feel that K and I try harder than a lot of other people I've seen" comparing herself and K to a number of her friends who married when they were young and are now divorced. She sees that she and K have not married and that they still make an effort in their relationship. They do things like holding hands or putting an arm around each other in public, or hug or kiss. They seek out each other's company when they are at home, they spend time together doing things together - like shopping, or dancing - they try to be good to each other and make the other happy. So, "K and I do constantly try ... to keep things together." The fact that her friends are divorced appears to validate for her the opinion that marriage makes a couple complacent, and the consequent lack of effort leads to the relationship dissolving. Thus, at least one of Rachel's constructs has been validated over time by events that she has observed (Kelly, 1963)
She feels that K wants to be with her, and will come and seek her out in the same way as she seeks him out. She notes, however, that she and K "don't live in each others' back pockets, we've still got a sense of freedom and independence", but "when I was working... if he was going out to the pub... with the guys, he would phone me at work, and he would say to me 'Do you want to come with?' Not 'I'm going out to the pub with the guys...and it's got nothing to do with you.' " This indicates that in their relationship they are genuinely inclusive of the other. Rachel is a very independent kind of person and she would not want to have a relationship where she and her partner are like Siamese twins, but she does value togetherness and inclusiveness. She has both in her current relationship and this presumably is something she finds satisfying.

Something perhaps not so satisfying is her sex life. Rachel says, however, that "after seven years in a relationship, the sexual things tend to become very non-exciting." She says this with somewhat dry humour. It does not seem to be a major problem for her, not something that has a great impact on her satisfaction with her partner or their relationship.

She says that K also has something of a habit of saying - around Christmas or birthday times - that he does not know what to get for Rachel. I asked how it makes her feel when K does this and she said "Probably disappointment is one of the biggest things" because it implies for her that he does not know her yet, as he should, or that he does not care about her enough to bother. This is still, however, not a major problem for her, because it is balanced out by his good qualities. She says something she likes is "if he goes out to the garden and he goes and he picks me flowers...it's much sweeter, it's so nice, because it doesn't happen all the time". It implies for her that he cares about her. So, the times when K does something that makes Rachel think he does not care enough are balanced by times when he does something like picking her flowers and that makes her feel that he does care.

Something that had more impact on their relationship initially is Rachel's feeling that she is "the one that's always communicating and he's the one that just kind of keeps quiet about things and just stew." This used to make her angry, because she is not the type to sit quiet with something and she wanted him to be more verbal and expressive. However, she says she has accepted that he is not like that, and she
cannot expect him to be other than who and what he is. While she does not always like his quietness, she does - as previously mentioned - appreciate his ability to be objective. Particularly when this trait of his helps her find perspective in her dealings with her mother. For example, she says of her mother that "she runs big guilt trips." She adds "I notice I do that to R as well...and I try and do it to K, but he just knows me too well, that it brushes off". Thus she sees a parallel between herself and her mother, but her relationship with and attitude towards her mother has changed since she first started dating K. At that time her mother had more influence over her, but the birth of Rachel’s son made her grow up very quickly and realise, as she says, how little influence her mother should actually have in her decisions. Now she feels more able to resist the guilt trips from her mother, and she also appreciates the fact that K is around to point out when her mother is driving her crazy.

Of the way that she and K came together Rachel says "I think ... you either connect with somebody or you don't, and I think that if K and I...hadn't been forced for a couple of nights to sit down together, that we probably would never have ended up together...it never started off with this big spark love thing" they just sort of slid into the relationship that they have now. The way she said this gave the impression that if she had not been forced to spend some time with K she would not have taken time to speak to him, and she would never have got to know him, and would never have been inclined to get into a relationship with him at all. The fact that they went away on a weekend holiday with mutual friends meant that they had to stay in each other’s company, and this gave her a chance to see beyond his looks, and for his personality to emerge, so that when they returned she could see her way clear to spending some more time with him. From there, the relationship just developed easily on its own almost, by her reckoning. Now she agrees with the impression that their relationship is very relaxed, but very together. Thus, a defining characteristic of a good relationship - a sense of connection or togetherness - is present.

Their relationship is also very supportive, on both sides. Rachel says she is willing to do what ever she can to help K be happy. For example, she believes that he is unhappy in his current job and wants him to take some time off when his current work contract ends to decide what he wants to do so that he will be happy. She
says she does not mind supporting the family financially while he gets some direction, because she wants him to be centred, settled, and happy.

Rachel is content to continue with K as they are now, because their current status also allows her a sense of freedom and unconventionality. However, she appears to be struggling a little with her belief that her current relationship is a good one, all things considered, and the fact that her partner - while largely “adequate” - sometimes makes her feel that he is not entirely sure about where she belongs in his life. Consequently, she feels somewhat insecure about his affections and his wanting her, and this is not something she finds easy to tolerate. The suggestion is that there is a need for her construct system to undergo some change, but that her emotional response to this need is blocking it (Kelly, 1955).

Rachel does, however, perceive a change in herself - for the better - since she first started the relationship with K. She says that during the course of their relationship she has learned to compromise and to accept certain things about K that perhaps are not her ideal. So, she also stays because she perceives that being with K is good for her own growth - she has become more accepting, more mature in her priorities, more settled and comfortable with herself.

She feels that K also compromises and adapts for her. This reciprocity and acceptance is very important to Rachel. For example, when I asked Rachel what makes her stay in her current relationship she said “I think the fact that K understands me so well...the fact that we can still go out and go and have fun together, and that he doesn’t make ... the type of demands that I see some men make on their wives”. To explain what she means more clearly, she said that K is quite comfortable with her getting up and dancing by herself or with friends or even with another man if he does not want to dance. She feels that he does not expect her to sit quietly by his side and do what he wants. In this vein she tells a story of a friend of hers who had a great time when she was out dancing with Rachel and some other female friends, but who came to Rachel’s birthday party with her husband and sat and drank Coke and did not move off her seat all night - as if she were a different person from the one she was with her girlfriends. When asked how she evaluated this change, Rachel said that the difference in this friend’s behaviour on the two occasions was so marked that it prompted some of her friends to speculate that the husband might be abusing this friend.
She feels that K knows who she is, and that she is the same whether she is with him or out with her friends, and that for him this is okay. He accepts her as she is and does not require her to be someone different when she is with him. He grants her the freedom to be herself and this is a major point in his favour, considering how negatively she evaluates her friend's husband in the light of her friend's somewhat split personality on the two occasions mentioned in the story above.

This acceptance is mutual, as shown by the fact that Rachel often says she cannot - and does not - expect K to be someone or something different than what he is, even if who he is occasionally annoys and frustrates her. In this regard Rachel says that she and K “don’t have to go out to go and please each other any more, because we’re now a couple and we’re together...we can kind of accept the bad things as well as the good things”. They know each other and they are comfortable together, and Rachel enjoys this. Their knowing each other and being comfortable together also means that they can be honest about their likes and dislikes, they do not have to worry that they will drive the other away if they are honest about something about the other that they do not like.

Something else that is shown by this story, and mentioned by Rachel is that while she and K are a couple, and are together, they are not so tightly bound that they lose their individuality. They still do things on their own, and each has no problem with the other one’s doing that. They have a sense of freedom and independence. In terms of Rachel’s not wanting to feel tied down and settled - and old - this is very important. Simultaneously, while Rachel values her independence, her and K’s togetherness and working on their relationship is also important. For her it is significant that after seven years she and K will still hold hands in public, they still demonstrate the affection that they feel for each other. In Rachel’s scheme of things it is significant that they still make time for and have fun together, for example with their ballroom dancing (despite her divided feelings about this activity), or playing computer games together. She finds these aspects of her relationship very satisfying.

In terms of family, part of Rachel’s motivation to stay with K is because he is a good father to R. This is not because the child is a reason to stay with K, but because K’s behaviour towards their son raises her estimation of K, and makes her think he is a
good and caring person. Considering that she perceives that many men are not interested in participating in their children's upbringing, the fact that K is interested, and takes time to go and watch his son's activities, and wants to spend time with his son leads Rachel to conclude that he is a cut above other men. She believes that men like K are rare. This is why she is perhaps more inclined to take a lenient stance on some of the things that K does - and does not do - that she finds frustrating or unsatisfying. Here the importance of one's comparison level for alternatives becomes apparent (Sternberg & Barnes, 1985) as does the associated role of one's expectations in a relationship.

Given the foregoing discussion of what Rachel said about K and her relationship with him it is apparent that her evaluations play a major role in her motivation to continue the relationship with him.

5.6.3. Evaluation and motivation.

Rachel lessens the importance of the negative aspects in K by rationalising them. So, she says that he does not feed back well because he has such long thought processes. His not making decisions for her is good because it forces her to take responsibility for her own choices, and his not being overly romantic is simply because he is a man, and men in general are not romantic. What she says of K's negative traits and his coming back to her with a problem she thought was settled suggest that she is not entirely satisfied with K's behaviour or the state of her relationship, but not ready to move on. Primarily she speaks of the need to accept people as they are and not expect them to change their nature for one's benefit. She is perhaps putting her beliefs about the qualities of a healthy relationship into practice in this way, but there is also a suggestion that she struggles with not having absolute certainty about whether or not she is loved, wanted, and needed.

Besides giving an indication of Rachel's view of the process of a relationship, what she says about the process of compromise in a relationship also has implications for Rachel's motivation to continue in a relationship. The process is one of balancing out good and bad things in one's partner. It became apparent during the course of the interviews with Rachel that her interpretation of K's behaviour is not in black and white terms. She simultaneously likes and dislikes particular things about him.
Each characteristic or behaviour is differentially valued in the broader scheme of things, so it is not merely a matter of tallying up good points and bad points, one must also consider the relative valuing of things as De Angelis (1992) recommends. Thus, for example, if there is something negative, it is not only that it is negative, but one must ask, how negative, relative to other attributes of the person or the relationship. If the balance is tipped to the positive, one stays, but if it tips to the negative, one will be more inclined to leave. Here, the fact that a decision is based on social exchange rather than the needs of an in-group again suggests an individualistic cultural affiliation (Triandis, 1996). Rachel weighs up the good with the bad and decides to live with K's behaviour because on balance she prefers that a man should be self-sufficient, handy, level-headed, stable, and able to listen to her and offer her emotional support and guidance, all of which K is and does.

Rachel's narrative and the sense one gets when speaking to her suggests that she struggles to a certain extent with gaining a balance between idealism and realism. A part of her would like to believe that the ideal relationship is possible, but her more down to earth part argues against this. In terms of her own relationship, she strives for the ideal, but if and when her expectations are not fulfilled, she tends to write it off to the fact that the ideal world is a fantasy and it is better to make the most of what one has, rather than chasing rainbows.

What also becomes apparent is that while she is not entirely satisfied with her partner, her expectations for a good relationship are mostly fulfilled and she is inclined to continue the relationship with K given her belief that no two people are totally compatible, that K would be difficult to replace, and that no one is satisfied with their relationship all of the time. It is apparent that belief, expectations, and evaluation are tightly bound together. She has certain beliefs and consequent expectations about men and relationships that she uses in evaluating the state of her own relationship.

Based on the discussion above it is apparent that for Rachel the balance is tipped to the satisfying side and this is why she stays with K. It is not out of obligation to her son, or duty, or convenience, or for the sake of appearances. Her main criteria are satisfied - in particular, she believes that K loves her - so she is inclined to give some leeway and compromise on the few things that are not exactly as she would like. In this case, as in Sadie's, it would seem that Rusbult's (1980) conclusion is
supported. Commitment is based on the extent to which the relationship is satisfying, it exceeds the comparison level for alternatives, and the individual has invested inextricable resources.

This brings us to the end of the information supplied by Rachel, and we can now proceed to a consideration of the information provided by the next respondent, Philisiwe.
CHAPTER SIX

PHILISIWE: LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP

6.1. Demographics.
Philisiwe is a thirty one year old Zulu woman, originally from Natal. The interview with her took place on the 19th of September 1998 at her place of employment in Johannesburg, where she is a domestic worker. She lives on the property with her 5-year-old son, SS. SS is her son by her current partner, RS. She has two other children by her fiancé, R, who died eleven years ago - before they could marry. The oldest child by R is a boy, SM, who is fourteen. Their daughter, NM, is eleven. They live with Philisiwe's mother in Natal, and Philisiwe visits them or brings them to Johannesburg during school holidays. Philisiwe attended school up until standard one, but her father then did not pay for any further education. She is currently furthering her education by attending adult literacy classes twice per week. She and RS are not married, and have been together for eight years now.

In attempting to gain an understanding of what Philisiwe looks for in a man, and how she evaluates a partner in a relationship her view of Black men in general is of great significance, as is her relationship with her fiancé, R, who died. Add to these what she says of her current partner RS and we are provided with quite a clear picture of the evaluative framework that Philisiwe employs.

6.2. View of men.
Philisiwe's view of men gives insight into her comparison level for alternatives (Sternberg & Barnes, 1985). In Philisiwe's view "the Black man ... you don't want ask say 'Where are you going tomorrow?'... [he will] say 'me, I'm man. Mustn't ask me. I'm going all over if I want to go'". This quote indicates Philisiwe's opinion that Black men want to be dominant and unquestioned in their relationships. In Philisiwe's opinion many - if not most - Black men are secretive about their earnings, or they are miserly or irresponsible. Sometimes they have more than one girlfriend simultaneously without telling either woman of the other's existence. In other words, to her way of thinking many Black men are dishonest and fickle. It is apparent that her view of men in general is less than flattering. Consequently Philisiwe is wary of relationships and she also has fairly high expectations of a man she considers as a
romantic partner. Her experience with her first partner, R, has also played an important role in shaping her expectations of a partner.

### 6.3. Relationship with R.

Philisiwe was about sixteen when she met R, who would have been about nineteen at that time. They liked each other immediately and soon decided to marry. She says "I'm not take it long time, because R is next to me, is like friend, you know? Is everything for me is do". Although her mother thought Philisiwe a little too young to consider marriage, she went along with R and Philisiwe's wish for commitment, and her father gave his approval as well. So R began paying lobola for Philisiwe. Before he was finished paying she fell pregnant with their first child, SM, who was born when Philisiwe was seventeen. Three years later she had their second child, NM. At that time R had finished paying lobola but they had still not been married, they were only engaged.

Philisiwe says of R that "this one is very good to me, even I'm asking something is doing everything... you want to do it nice thing for me, because you want to tell me say 'you finish to get a baby. Now you can stop the baby. I want to take it back to school, to night school'... so that's why me I'm say is very good for me. God is give me the good man." Furthermore, Philisiwe says that when she was pregnant and R would go out "me I'm ask 'where are you going?' just tell me. Say 'if Philisiwe you not sure, just phone, or just go to call my friend and ask'. So is good for me." This is in direct contrast to what she says of Black men in general: that they are usually reticent about their whereabouts and do not consider that their women have a right to know where they are or how they can be contacted.

R was on his way back to work in Johannesburg three days after the birth of NM, their second child, when he died in a car accident. Philisiwe was heartbroken, because she had loved R a great deal, and because she believed she would never find another man as good as he was. She held R in high regard for the reasons mentioned above and also because throughout her pregnancies and their time together "R is happy you buy everything for the baby, every day I'm going to clinic is take me to the clinic. I never, never chase me in my life that time I'm preg[nant] ... Is not disturb me. Everything in my life I'm ask something you do with me ... Even I want to go outside, even I want something to wear it, even I want something to eat, you can do it 'everything'. From the above it is apparent that R was attentive,
generous in providing for her and their children, and concerned for Philisiwe's welfare. In short he was devoted to her. In Philisiwe's view, R's behaviour indicated that he was an exceptionally good man.

She says that when R died "my heart is sore. Because I'm know already say i'm never get same person like this". At his funeral she was stunned and unable to believe that he was gone. She believed her chance at that kind of happiness and contentment died with R. In the years following R's death Philisiwe's brother, E, suggested that she should go away from her parents' home - and all the memories of R - and try to find work, and perhaps a new man, somewhere else. She thought this a good idea and came to Johannesburg and found a good job where she is happy. She took to heart her mother's suggestion that this happened because "maybe your R is ... give you ... nice thing for you ... because this one my child is like you too much." In other words, R was watching over her. In due course, however, Philisiwe did meet someone new, RS.

6.4. Relationship with RS.

At first Philisiwe was not the least bit interested in her current partner, RS. They met when she had been in Johannesburg for about seven months. He first saw her at a supermarket and approached her, and she told him in no uncertain terms to go away, because she thought him too old, and mistrusted his intentions. Nevertheless, he persisted. He followed her in her walk home and then offered her a lift in his car. She was very suspicious of him, but his manner at the time convinced her he was not a "tsotsi" and she accepted the ride. From that time he would come and wait outside her home and persist in trying to talk with her and get to know her, and for her to know him.

Philisiwe was not at all sure how to proceed with RS. On the one hand he was much older than her, he had been married, and had four children from his previous marriage. All these things stood against RS. On the other hand, she found herself beginning to like him. She spoke to her mother during this early stage: "I'm tell mummy say 'I like [RS] mummy, but ... is tell me say have got wife, is make divorce. Why is make divorce?... Maybe is not tell me true, say this wife is drink ... Maybe this man just wasting my time". This quote indicates Philisiwe's doubtfulness and distrust. Would she end up getting hurt if she gave him a chance? Philisiwe was torn between her distrust and her liking of RS. In addition was the fact that she
believed that after R she would never find another good man, and she believed that RS was also too old for her as there is a seventeen year age gap between them.

Philisiwe said that the first three months after she first met RS, and during which RS would wait at her home, were something of a test to gauge his sincerity. She says that over that time, she watched RS to see what kind of person he is and that his actions at the time convinced her that he is a good man. He clearly was interested in her, despite her being brusque and "cheeky", so he was no fly-by-night, and this was in his favour. His persistence paid off, because she considered that if all he wanted was to get her into bed he would have gone elsewhere to someone who was more tractable. She says that in her opinion many men will say they like a woman, but then - if she does not respond, or once they have what they wanted - they will disappear. The fact that RS persisted with her and continued to tell her that he liked her although she did not go out of her way to be nice to him convinced her that he was sincere in his interest and affection for her. Thus, she interpreted her perception of his behaviour in terms of the construct of sincerity and her subsequent response was in terms of her own feelings, values, expectations, and so on (Carver & Scheier, 1988; Dunstan, 1996).

Philisiwe says that she decided after about three months of his persistence to give RS a chance and so, on the advice of her mother's sister - her "young mother" - she began to go over to his flat and meet his friends, and they would meet her, and all the while she would be getting to know RS better. She said that on one of these occasions RS said to her that he could see she did not trust him, to which she replied "Yes. I don't trust you ... because you old, because you make a divorce ... If you tell me say 'you don't trust me', say 'yes ... I don't trust you' because I don't trust anybody. Because here is Johannesburg. Me I'm coming Natal. So maybe you want girlfriend for one day, after that you run away." Her response to RS shows a number of things. Firstly, that she feels that his age and his divorce stand against him. She is not sure what he wants with her. It also indicates her opinion that some men only want a "girlfriend" for a brief fling. In addition, the quote shows that to her mind there is a difference between people in Natal and people in Johannesburg. Those in Natal are perhaps more trustworthy, whereas those in Johannesburg are liable to disappear after a brief fling. Lastly, her forthright response shows that Philisiwe is not a person who minces words. She is up-front with RS about what she thinks. Philisiwe is very cautious with men in Johannesburg, she does not want
to be someone's fling. So, at first she did not trust RS at all, but over time she began to see he was sincere and she began to trust him more.

Gradually over about six months she began to get to know him, and she says that strangely enough, a deciding factor in what changed her mind was the very thing that initially put her off him - his age. Her brother commented that she was clever in her choice of RS, because "You don't like the young boy ... The young boy is too much girlfriend'...". She says that young men tend to proclaim their love for a woman but then lose interest and disappear, and she thought that the fact that RS was so much older meant he would more likely be steady.

In speaking of the progression of her relationship with RS, Philisiwe mentioned that at one stage - when he proposed to her - she said to RS "If you sure, sure you like me, just go to my mother to tell my mother say you like me. But I don't want to married me". This indicates that for Philisiwe it is appropriate that a man should, at some point, meet a woman's parents and also shows that for Philisiwe RS would prove his honourable intentions towards her by going to meet her mother and father. She reasoned that a man would not bother meeting her parents if he was not sincere in his interest in her. So, after about six months Philisiwe took RS to visit her parents in Natal, and RS discussed his wish to marry Philisiwe, and to start paying lobola, with her father. Her father's response was to tell RS that he would wait for Philisiwe to give him the go-ahead before he accepted anything from RS. He was concerned about RS's age, and his divorced status, and the fact that Philisiwe had already experienced such heartache in her life. Given that they had only really been seeing each other for about three months, he wanted Philisiwe to be sure of RS before they proceeded any further. So she and RS continued their relationship in Johannesburg, with Philisiwe going to stay at RS's flat and both of them getting to know the other one better as time passed, and eventually Philisiwe told her father and RS to go ahead with the lobola negotiations.

After she and RS had been together about three years and RS had paid half the lobola agreed upon, Philisiwe agreed to have a child with RS, because as he saw it this would be a proof of their affection for each other. She says that for her part, she was happy not to have another child, because she already had her two children by R. Nevertheless, she went along with RS and had their son, SS. Philisiwe said she was very clear with RS that she expects him to provide for SS, and she would
be extremely displeased with him if he defaults on this agreement. To date, however, RS has maintained SS to Philisiwe’s satisfaction.

She considers that relative to other Black men RS is quite a good man. She says RS is not like most Black men. She likes the fact that they can talk honestly with one another, that he does not try to dominate her. She likes that he helps her with her children, and with the child that she has had by him. She believes that what RS does for her, he does because he cares about her and he wants to do things to make her happy and to make her life a little easier. She says he is honest about things with her. Philisiwe has said she is not in a hurry for him to finish paying lobola because she wants him to find a place for her where she can build her own home. She says “I’m see RS you like me, I’m see the expensive, of RS. RS is no secret with me”.

Although she would like RS to find her a place where she can build a home of her own, she knows his expenses and Philisiwe says she is not hurrying RS, because in truth she does not want to marry. She says that she has seen that RS is a good man, that he cares about her, but she is afraid that somehow if they are married he will change. Also, she is concerned over the possibility that RS’s ex-wife and his children might claim his house and possessions as theirs leaving her with emotional upset and very little else. Therefore she is wary of marriage. Philisiwe is happy with her relationship as it is, she says “I don’t want to married, because have got a child. Have got my mummy. Somebody I like to married with me is ... finished. So I don’t want any more.” As far as she is concerned there is not much reason for entering into a marriage; she has her children from the man she loved, and she has her mother to help her. Certainly, given the family complications and the potential for trouble in RS’s case, there seems to be good reason not to marry, but simply to continue as she has been doing with RS.

Philisiwe’s views on marriage contribute to her decisions with regard to her current relationship with RS, and also influence what she looks for in a romantic partner. In addition to those negative possibilities mentioned above, pertaining specifically to her relationship with RS, Philisiwe also holds some general views on marriage that influence her to remain single.
6.5. Marriage.

On this point, she says that "The most of ... woman... in the married.... Is tight. You don't do anything you want." For example, "Maybe now, you take your car to make shopping. So the man you tell you want to go make shopping, say 'No, me I'm go to make shopping'... Is not a life. Is not nice like this, you know". This restriction on a woman’s activities and her ability to exercise her own will are things that Philisiwe is afraid of encountering in her own marriage.

For Philisiwe marriage means that her husband has a legal authority over her and can enforce his demands or wishes on her. She is not keen on giving up her independence in this way. For example, she says that if she was to marry RS she would then have to live where he chose to live. Since he is originally from Zimbabwe, she fears he might want her to go and live there, and says she would have no choice in this matter, because as her husband he could dictate where they should live.

Furthermore, for Philisiwe marriage is a lifetime commitment. She considers that she will be with the man she marries until one of them dies, and she is, therefore, very cautious about committing herself. Given her views on the potential negative possibilities of marriage - in general - for a woman, and the particular family dynamic in her relationship with RS it is clear why she is reluctant to marry.

It is apparent from the above that Philisiwe - like all people - has developed networks of knowledge (or schemata) regarding intimate relationships, such as marriage, that tie self and other and each one's behaviour together into a whole picture, and that these help to shape her interpretations of social events. At this point, having discussed Philisiwe's views on men and marriage, and her narrative of her relationships to date we are in a position to extract the criteria according to which she might evaluate a romantic partner.

6.6. Partner criteria.

Philisiwe’s telling RS when he first asked to speak with her that he was too old for her suggests that in her opinion a person’s age is a relevant factor when choosing a partner. Given that Philisiwe is comfortable with RS who is seventeen years her senior, although she originally thought him too old for her, it would appear that
Philisiwe has changed her thoughts on the matter of the appropriate age for a partner - at least for her. This indicates that her construct system has undergone some change during her association with RS. So now a man’s youth may imply that he will be more likely to stray, where an older man would perhaps be more stable.

When speaking of her preferences Philisiwe said “I don’t like somebody coming outside... Because I don’t know for the outside country. I want somebody ... is here, from South Africa.” Philisiwe prefers that a man should be South African, because her family and her life are here and it is simpler to be in a relationship with someone whose life is also here in South Africa. Again, this appears to be a flexible area, since RS is Zimbabwean, and Philisiwe shows no signs of leaving him because of his nationality.

Philisiwe’s children are most important to her. Therefore she says “if somebody you like me, you don’t like my baby, forget about me... Why? Because... my baby is my part ... of me... so if you don’t like my baby... you don’t like me... “. Philisiwe takes her responsibility as a parent very seriously. Her children and their welfare come first with her. For this reason it is of vital importance to her that any man she might be interested in as a romantic partner should know about and like her children. As far as she is concerned, if a man is not interested in her children, and does not like them, he should look elsewhere for a romantic partner.

Furthermore, something that would appear to be of great importance is that a man should provide for her and their children. She thought very highly of the fact that R was happy to buy whatever was needed for his children. Similarly, she says of RS - when he asked her if she had any children and she told him about her son and daughter by R - “You going Woolworth, ... you buy the dress - for NM - you buy the jean for SM and the white T-shirt for SM, and the white takkie ... for SM. For NM you buy the sandals. Oh, me I’m happy. I’m sure now this boyfriend you like me. You buy my child you never see.” She was impressed by RS’s generosity to her children - whom he had yet to meet - by this act of buying them such nice things to take with for his first visit to her parents’ home.

It is apparent from what Philisiwe said about R and RS, that it is important that a partner should want to make her happy and he should do things that are nice for her. For example, she says of RS, “You see RS is good for me. Sometimes
'Philisiwe, mustn't cook. You can come to me my flat'. Is going maybe outside, to do nice thing... Is nice." In her current relationship she says she told RS that she does not want him to help her out of obligation; he should only do things that he wants to do. A man's doing nice things for his partner, and/or trying to make her life easier indicates that he cares about her, and for Philisiwe it is important not only that a man should want to do these pleasant things but also that she should be able to see that her partner cares about her from his actions. Here we can see the importance of actions as the basis of evaluations of a partner and a relationship. It is also apparent that, as Davis and Oathout (1989) maintain, it is the evaluation of perceptions and interpretations of behaviour, rather than the actual behaviour, that is salient in satisfaction with a relationship and a partner.

Philisiwe would consider it negative behaviour for a man to do "funny things". This means, for example, "Sometimes is going out, you don't know where ... Maybe you ask say 'Where are you going... tomorrow?'... Say 'Don't ask me this question, because I'm man'. In other words, a domineering man who does not believe that his partner has the right to know where he is going or what he is doing is not to Philisiwe's taste. The inherent lack of respect for her as a person is what she objects to in such an attitude. Thus, a partner should take time to talk to her, to pay attention to what she has to say. In other words he should treat her with due respect as a person, not as a robot that is simply there to cook and clean for him. When a man behaves as if the woman is not there, or is simply a servant, it is no good. Philisiwe says, for example, that if a woman tries to make conversation and her man ignores her, or is abrupt, or only appears for meals and then disappears, this to her is not a good way of behaving, and a person who behaves in this way is not a proposition as far as a partner is concerned. In a similar vein she says that a partner should appreciate the little things that she does for him. For example, "Sometimes you doing something, maybe you make nice supper, is come to you say 'Oh, today you make nice supper' not just eat say thanks." Feeling respected and appreciated are quite important in Philisiwe's scheme of things.

Philisiwe says that a partner should not keep secrets from her. She explains best why this is so when she gives this example: "Me, I'm girlfriend, have got a boyfriend. Sometimes my boyfriend, have the diary book. Maybe have got another girlfriend, is not tell me is girlfriend. Sometimes you phone, you want ... RS, me I'm ask say 'Who is speaking?' say 'is not your problem who's speaking, I want to talk to RS'.
Sometimes RS is finished to talk this, me say 'Who is that?' RS say [nothing]... "If a man is dishonest in this way Philisiwe says "you see somebody make twist you, you see. Maybe is tell me not true. Not tell me proper what is ... this". It is not a problem for her if a man has another girlfriend, as long as he tells her about it. The reason it is important that he should be up-front about another girlfriend, is that if she should find out about it from some other source she will be very hurt. She says "Say now have got a boyfriend, is good one... this one, your heart you like...so this one...you like you... but not the same...so that day ...you hear have got another girlfriend, what you do?...Maybe you sick. Maybe you thinking to kill yourself ... because this one I like it, so now is disappointing me already."

This points to another vital ingredient of a relationship, honesty, which for Philisiwe is the basis of any trust that develops. Dishonesty is the road to betrayal, hurt, and mistrust, since if a man is not honest in his dealings with a woman and she finds out about something - like another girlfriend - the wrong way, then "... Nobody help futhi [any more]. Nobody. Because is your heart ... if your heart sore, no tablets for your heart." As Philisiwe says, there is no cure for a broken heart, which is the product of caring for someone who is not truthful with you.

Also not acceptable, is someone who is insincere about his affections. To illustrate, Philisiwe says "Sometimes somebody ... you like you, but the action ... sometimes somebody you like you, just coming to sit next to you, you like you, is your boyfriend, but just something to attract ... to ... into ezojabulisa, something to happy for this". She is saying that sometimes someone that you like will use you for their own gratification. The translation of into ezojabulisa is "a thing that will make one happy", suggesting that this man will stay around because he wants something, rather than being genuinely interested in the woman. Thus his affection is not deep, his commitment is not sincere, and he will disappear as soon as he has got what he wanted. His actions and his words will not fit together cohesively. What is implied by this is that a man should be genuinely interested in a woman for herself, and not for what he can get from her. The suggestion is that Philisiwe favours an instrumental or intrinsic motivational orientation (Holmes & Rempel, 1989).

The above discussion of the qualities that Philisiwe considers important in a romantic partner gives insight into her evaluative framework. Further light is shed on this subject when one considers her views about the nature and functioning of
romantic relationships. In speaking of her relationship with RS and some of the issues that she has considered in this context it became apparent that Philisiwe has some very definite ideas about relationships that play an important role in the process of evaluation of her own relationship and the course she would like it to follow. Let us, therefore, turn here to a consideration of these views.

6.7. Relationships.

In speaking of the development of a relationship Philisiwe says that sometimes two people will meet and a man will tell a woman he likes her, but he will not do anything that convinces her of his sincerity. He will not do things to make her happy, or try to make her life easier; in other words, he will pay lip service to love, but not match actions to words. From what she spoke about, I suggested the following analogy to her with regard to the development and maintenance of a relationship. I said that when two people meet it is as if they plant the seed of a flower in the earth. As they progress in their relationship, all the good things that they do for each other are like nourishment for that flower, and if they both are sincere in their affection and suit words to deeds, then that flower will flourish. If, however, a person's words are not borne out by his/her actions, the flower will not receive nourishment and it will die. Philisiwe said that this analogy describes very accurately how she views the process of a relationship. A concern with sincerity and commitment is again indicated in Philisiwe's saying "So me I don't want boyfriend for one day... If you like me, you can like. And me if I like you, must like you." In other words, if two people like each other they should not play games, they should not disappear on each other, they should be sincere with each other.

However, relationships do not arrive full-fledged. People go through stages of getting to know their partners and learning to trust them. Sincerity is a prerequisite of building trust. She says "... you know sometime somebody is not long time to like, to ... boyfriend and girlfriend, is not easy to say... everything." Indicating that there is, at first, some awkwardness between romantic partners. She adds "If the boyfriend and girlfriend is take one year, is not see what you like, because why? Sometimes is not talk. ... Just ukwakha. [to build]". She is saying that it takes time for a relationship to develop. At first it is difficult because partners are not sure of one another and they must learn about each other, learn to trust one another, and build the relationship together. They do this mainly by talking to one another, and by observing one another's actions. In this way each begins to understand how the
other constructs reality and as the relationship progresses each modifies their interpersonal constructions somewhat (Kelly, 1955; Duck, 1973). Self-disclosure is risky inasmuch as it involves making oneself vulnerable to rejection and, therefore, it proceeds slowly as a couple feel more confident in one another's affection and acceptance, and consequently feel it is safe to be themselves.

Talking is also important in conflict resolution. When Philisiwe asked RS why he wanted another wife if he already had one, he told her that it was not that he did not like the woman he had married, but that the problem was that she drank too much. Philisiwe's response was "You can talk. You can sit down and talk". This indicates that Philisiwe thinks the appropriate way to solve problems is to talk them through. In Rusbult's (1980) terms, her problem-solving response is "voice". One of Philisiwe's expectations for how a relationship works is, therefore, that partners will talk to each other about any problems that crop up and attempt to solve them in a mutually satisfactory way. (Hence her dislike of domineering men who are not open to discussing things with her, or treat her as chattel).

In speaking of how partners should be with one another Philisiwe thinks that it is important that people in a relationship should get to know one another's likes and dislikes and should make an effort to do the things that their partners enjoy. She says, by way of illustrating her point, "I'm forget what is English one, is hobbies, or what. So if you like it your boyfriend, you know, my boyfriend you like tea, you know? Maybe is coming inside 'Hi, you want cup of tea?' ... something like that." Continuing in terms of how each partner should be in a relationship, Philisiwe says it is important to "Just give somebody chance. Not say ... have got a boyfriend, 'I want this, I want this' (snaps her fingers) you drive mad ...Sometimes is run away you like you... you like you, you know, but is run away for too much thing for you." Thus, a person should not be too demanding. It is fine to ask for things and to want things, but not to demand all the time or everything all at once. It is important to give a person a chance to satisfy your wants gradually.

Extrapolating from what she said previously with regard to marrying RS, it would appear that as far as Philisiwe is concerned, people may marry for a number of reasons. Among these reasons are to bind two people together, to beget children, and to insure that one will have someone to help one raise and care for those children. She is of the opinion that people perhaps marry out of fear that they will
lose the person they are with, and they are not strong enough to make it on their own, or do not believe themselves to be capable enough to manage alone. Philisiwe says that “the most of people you see is run to married. That time maybe is two years, three years have got a problem.” She believes that if people were a little more cautious and selective in their relationships they could avoid a great deal of heartache. As she says “...no matter is girlfriend and boyfriend, you can take a long time. Don’t run to do something... Maybe in the middle, you tired...What you do?... Because you married already.” On this line of thinking, Philisiwe says “you see, your brain say even I’m married this person, is nice to me”. She is saying that one judges from a person’s actions and his behaviour towards one whether he is a good person, and whether or not he will be good to one. One may marry if one decides that this man will treat one well, but it is better, in her opinion to take one’s time when seeing someone, before one marries.

Another reason for taking one’s time is “... you must work, you must keep your money. You can see your money, say is enough, I’m married. Because ... the married is too much thing... Is not same like ... you are single. Because sometimes you short something, talk to your mother. That time you married is not easy to talk to your mother, because your mother feel pain. Say ‘why my child is coming to ask something with me? Because is married?’”. One should take one’s time with a particular person so that one can see what kind of person he is, and also so that one can see what kind of life one will have with him - in a financial sense. The implication is that being able to provide adequately for oneself, and having a partner who will help with this are important since one’s actions and decisions have an impact on the well-being of others. Philisiwe thinks particularly of her mother. She does not want to cause her mother concern by making a rash decision. That is why it is better to be slow and cautious in choosing a mate.

There should be a sense of togetherness and harmony in a marriage and in a family. This is gleaned from Philisiwe’s saying - with reference to her own family - “... akuhlangeni ... Is not mixed, together.” Philisiwe has seen from her parents’ marriage and the dynamic of their family that marriage is not always a good thing; it can have unexpected consequences. Her father was married before, and had children from that marriage, and she sees now that these children cause her mother pain when they come to her mother’s house and lay claim to their mother’s things.
She also says about their marriage "akuhlangeni" meaning it is not connected or united. They are not "together" so to speak. If one abstracts from this, one can see that for Philisiwe it is important that people in a romantic relationship and in a marriage should be united or connected with one another. There should be a certain togetherness.

Togetherness, and harmony in a relationship are important to Philisiwe, especially marriage, because for her it is a long-term commitment. She says "Until the God is taking any one, between two. If maybe God is coming to take mummy, if maybe God is coming to take my daddy,... is free this time." The implication here is that marriage is until death. Her mother and father do not have what she considers an ideal marriage, and she is saying that when one of them dies, the other will be free. So for her marriage is a long-term, serious commitment, and one has to be very careful about who one marries, because one will spend the rest of one's life with that person.

So, it is Philisiwe's conclusion that perhaps it is better not to marry, " ...just boyfriend and girlfriend? Just forever, if you want... Because I don't run, I don't like it to married, my side. Just run to married. I'm supporting myself." For Philisiwe there is no real reason to marry. Marriage is binding and limiting. It appears that for her it is fine for two people to stay as boyfriend and girlfriend forever. Then both are free and it's "Just forever, if you want."

Given the preceding discussion on partners and relationships, we can now identify Philisiwe's beliefs about men and relationships in non-narrative form.

6.8. Beliefs.


Men want to dominate women.
Men are secretive, miserly, and irresponsible.
Men are dishonest and fickle.
Men waste women's time with lies.
If a man does not get what he wants from a woman he will go elsewhere.
Men are not trustworthy.
Men are out for what they can get from a woman.  
Men do not care about women as people.  
Men pay lip service to love to get what they want.  
Men are selfish and use women.  
Older men are more steady than younger men.  
A man's actions prove his sincerity.  
A good man wants to do nice things for his partner.  
A good man is concerned for the welfare and best interests of his partner.  
A good man is not reticent about his whereabouts.  
A good man is attentive, generous, a good provider - in short he is devoted to one.  
Good men are rare.  
A man's doing nice things for his partner and trying to make her life easier indicates that he cares about her.  
A man provides for his wife and children.

6.8.2. Relationships.  
6.8.2.1. General.  
Relationships have to be built, they do not develop on their own.  
In a new relationship, there is some awkwardness between a couple, because they have not yet got to know one another.  
In a relationship, the couple must learn about each other and learn to trust one another.  
Honesty is the basis of trust.  
A couple get to know one another mainly by talking to one another and by observing each other's actions.  
One should take one's time to see what kind of person one is with and to see what kind of life one will have with them.  
People can choose to live together forever rather than marry, so as to retain their freedom.  
In a serious relationship, a man should meet a woman's parents.

6.8.2.2. Healthy.  
A couple should get to know one another's likes and dislikes.  
Partners should make an effort to do things that the other enjoys.  
A person should not be too demanding.
Partners should give one another a chance to satisfy each other’s wants gradually. A man should respect his partner as a person and treat her accordingly. A man should pay attention to and appreciate his partner and the things she does for him. A man should do things for a woman because he cares about her, not out of obligation. Partners should not keep secrets from one another. In a good relationship a couple can talk honestly with one another. Talking is essential in conflict resolution. Problems should be discussed and then resolved in a mutually satisfactory way. There should be a sense of togetherness and harmony in a marriage and in a family. People in a romantic relationship should be united or connected with one another. Honesty is a vital part of a relationship. Deep affection and sincere commitment are part of a good relationship. Genuine interest in the other person is important. Sincere affection and interest endure over time.

6.8.2.3. Unhealthy.
Dishonesty is the basis of betrayal and mistrust. A broken heart is the product of caring for someone who is not honest with one. Being insincere about one’s feelings for someone is not acceptable.

6.8.2.4. Marriage.
Marriage is restrictive for women. Marriage is binding and limiting. When one marries one is not free. In marriage women lose their independence. Marriage means that a man has the authority to assert his will. When a woman marries, her husband behaves as if she suddenly became cripple and stupid. Marriage is a lifetime commitment. People marry for many reasons. People sometimes marry out of fear that they will lose the person they are with. People marry out of fear that they will not be able to manage alone.
Most people are in a hurry to get married, but then experience problems a year or two down the line.

People are in a hurry to marry, and then they are in a hurry to divorce.

A woman should only marry if she has taken time to observe that the man she is with is a good man, and that he will treat her well, and that financially they will be stable.

Marriage is more expensive than being single.

One cannot run to one’s parents for help when one is married.

Marriage is not necessarily a good thing; it can have negative consequences.

Having stated Philisiwe’s beliefs about men and relationships it is apparent that she - like Sadie and Rachel - has something like a prototype of a desirable partner and relationship. These prototypes can also be viewed as schemata that help to shape her interpretations of events in relationships. With this in mind we are in a position to consider the influence of Philisiwe’s parents and her culture on her evaluation of her partners and her relationships.

6.9. Influences.

6.9.1. Parental and family influence.

Unlike Sadie or Rachel, Philisiwe did not speak in abstract terms of the role of parents. Her comments were more specifically about how her parents relate to her. Her parents do not appear to have imposed their own wishes or demands on her. In the course of reading through what Philisiwe had to say about her relationship with R - and also with RS - it became apparent that her parents have had a somewhat “hands-off” policy where she is concerned. By this I mean that they have not imposed their own authority or will on their daughter. Philisiwe’s mother appears to have a more supportive role in her life than her father has, inasmuch as she not only helps Philisiwe to provide for her two children by R, but also raises them.

Furthermore, when Philisiwe spoke of when she and R decided that they wanted to marry, she said they first went to speak with her mother about this. Her mother at first said that Philisiwe - then sixteen - was too young to make such a commitment, “But R is tell mummy say ‘I don’t care. So long me I like it, anything Philisiwe you want to do, can do... So my mummy say ‘It’s up to you to do this’ “. Thus, it was her mother that Philisiwe went to consult first, and it was her mother who told Philisiwe that it was her choice to make a commitment or not.
Similarly, when Philisiwe needed advice about what to do about RS and his interest in her she approached her mother. Her mother asked her how long RS had persisted in his attentions to her, if he was already divorced, and how many children he had by his former wife. These would then be her mother's concerns, and judging from what Philisiwe said, they appear to have influenced Philisiwe to think along similar lines. Beyond asking these questions, her mother did not tell Philisiwe what to do. Her mother responded by saying "Philisiwe I don't say nothing. You can take yourself decision what you do". Given her responses to Philisiwe with R and with RS, it would appear that her mother does not interfere in her business. She gives some input, but leaves Philisiwe to make up her own mind.

Philisiwe's father would appear to follow the same route. She says of the time when RS came to see her parents and to make plain his wish to marry Philisiwe "My father say 'I don't want to take your lobola, because I waiting Philisiwe say you trust you, you like you. Because even now Philisiwe say you like you ... I'm not one hundred percent ... Because Philisiwe is tell me say you starting to talk Philisiwe is July. So now is October, I don't know what is happening with you, with Philisiwe ... Just sit with Philisiwe, Philisiwe you tell you say 'now my daddy is fine, you can take it your thing'". Her father is essentially saying that he will wait for Philisiwe to give him the go-ahead before he enters into any agreement with RS about the latter's paying lobola for Philisiwe. He is saying that they should take their time because he does not want Philisiwe to be hurt again. She adds that many - if not most - people are in a hurry to marry, but then they are also in a hurry to divorce. "So that's why my daddy is say like this. Because [RS] make already divorce, you know the divorce already. So me I'm not know the divorce. Even the married, is not married just engage. That's why my daddy you tell true say 'I don't want Philisiwe to take quick to lobola'... " From the above, it would seem that her parents' influence in her relationships and in the shaping of her views has been quite subtle. They have not been forceful in prescribing her behaviour or views, rather leaving their suggestions and questions to give Philisiwe something to consider in coming to her own conclusions. It is apparent from Philisiwe's concerns about RS's age, and his divorce that her mother's concerns have been assimilated, and from the fact that she is adamant about taking her time in a relationship that her father's emphasis has also taken root.
Although her concerns have been influenced by those of her parents, and she respects their opinion, that influence does not extend to Philisiwe’s acting as her parents - or anyone else - thinks she should. For example, her father and her brother are of the opinion that RS is a good man, and that Philisiwe should go ahead and marry him. However, Philisiwe says “I don’t want. Even my, I’m sorry to talk my parents, my daddy and my mummy say ‘No, Philisiwe this is good’, say ‘Yes, is good. You and mummy sitting in your house, but mummy tell me always my sister is do this, is do this.” She is referring to the situation that her mother is in, where there are family members from her husband’s previous wife who come and cause her mother heartache. Even if her parents and family think that RS is a good man and she should go ahead and marry him, she sees that the dynamic is set up very similarly to that of her mother and father’s marriage and she is loath to put herself in the same situation. Thus it would appear that while she takes her family’s opinion about RS - and by extrapolation any man in her life - into account, Philisiwe is very clear about her own opinion and her own plans. She does not “run to married” just because her family say this is a good man, or just because it is the done thing.

When asked if she considers her forward-thinking approach and caution in relationships to be typical of Black women, in general, or Zulu women in particular Philisiwe responds by saying “It’s not easy to thinking about this, is too heavy to thinking about this. Why? If your mother and your father is stay together, you don’t see, your brain is not thinking too much... You not see nothing, because home is a home”. Thus, she feels that what one has observed in one’s parents’ home will shape how one thinks. If there has been no upheaval or drama or anything unusual one will have no cause to consider potential problems “because home is a home”. It is clear here how the situation in her parents’ marriage has influenced the way in which Philisiwe evaluates the course she should take. Their relationship has taught her to be aware of potential problems and to be cautious in how she proceeds lest she should land herself in trouble of her own making. From the above it is apparent that Philisiwe’s parents have certainly played a part in the development of her views and her approach to life.

Philisiwe’s parents have not prescribed any particular kind of man that she should look for as a partner, although the way in which Philisiwe speaks suggests that there is some pressure for her to marry RS. This suggests that marriage is the
logical conclusion in a long-standing relationship. Remaining single does not appear to be the most appropriate thing for a woman. As Philisiwe says "The most of people, if you not married, is look down say 'what is your problem? ... What's wrong with you?' Sometimes you tell say you stupid. Like me, you see sometimes ... no friend come to me, because the most of my friend is married ... Is ask me say 'Philisiwe why you talking funny things here you don't want married'?... Me say 'Is funny to you, but my side, is not funny.' So, that's why me say I don't want someone to come to visit with me to talk about married, married. Because me, I'm know what i'm say. I'm not stupid." Thus Philisiwe perceives a certain social pressure to marry. There is a stigma associated with being single. Philisiwe's response is that while others may think she is stupid for not marrying, or not wanting to marry, she knows what her situation is, while they do not. She does not succumb to the pressure to marry - she does not take other people's opinions to be more important than her convictions. She lives according to what is best for her and not necessarily what will make others happy with her. It is apparent here that her behaviour is more a function of her own attitudes and her own goals rather than any norms or needs of her in-group. This indicates an individualistic rather than collective tendency (Triandis, 1996).

Having considered the role that Philisiwe's parents have played in shaping her evaluative framework in a relationship, we must turn to the role that her cultural background plays in this area.

6.9.2. Cultural background.

Although she did not state it specifically, the things that Philisiwe spoke about in connection with culture and cultural background suggested that for her culture is about customs, points of etiquette, and propriety. This is a notion she shares with Rachel and Sadie. She had very little to say directly about how her cultural heritage has shaped what she considers to be important in a partner or in a relationship. Much of what appears in this section is, therefore, gleaned from indirect comments made in the course of her narrative.

To a certain extent, the influence of Philisiwe's cultural heritage is apparent in her attempts to be different from what she perceives to be negative trends among Black people, or to find a partner who is not what she considers the norm for Black men. With regard to the latter, one must recall her somewhat negative view of Black men
in general, and the fact that she considered R, and now considers RS, to be fairly atypical. In terms of not following trends Philisiwe says, for example, that “Most of Black people have got lot of baby. You don’t...You don’t think. Is not go to family planning. The most of Black people is...I’m not blame my nation, but the most of people not want to go to family planning. You not care, say ‘My child is child. What I’m do if God is give me the child?’”. For Philisiwe this fatalistic attitude is not acceptable. She does not consider it appropriate to deny one’s own responsibility in the realm of pregnancy and child-rearing. To her this attitude is short-sighted inasmuch as God may grant one a child, but it is one’s own responsibility to provide for that child once it is born.

The way Philisiwe spoke suggested that she believes this attitude is peculiar to Black people. She mentioned that White people do not seem to have so many children, and that “the White people is not like too much boyfriend”. It is apparent in the way she speaks that for the most part Philisiwe does not differentiate among the various Black cultures. Occasionally, however, she does refer to her own heritage, for example when she says “my nation, me I’m Zulu, sometimes have got two wife, if you like, you know...If your first wife say you can take another wife if you like, is nothing wrong”. Thus, she does identify herself as a Zulu woman, and furthermore her cultural background would seem to have an influence on what she considers acceptable in terms of the structuring of a relationship.

Along similar lines to the structuring of a relationship is the structuring of a family. From what Philisiwe said with regard to marriage, it seems that a married couple should live together, and that a husband has the right to decide where that should be. With regard to the disposition of children it would appear that since RS has paid half of the lobola for Philisiwe, their child rightfully belongs with his family. The completion of the payment means that the man and woman involved must then get married. So it would seem that half of the payment is for the woman and half is for any children that might result from the union. From the way she spoke, it was clear that the tradition of paying lobola is entirely appropriate in Philisiwe’s frame of reference. She might question or rebel against the social pressure to marry, but it was apparent that the paying of lobola is an important part in the progression of a relationship. Apparently, the lobola rather than a marriage certificate assures the legitimacy of a child.
For the sake of clarity, let me briefly state the norms and rules that Philisiwe has identified

6.9.2.1. Norms and rules.
Black people have many children.
Black people tend to abdicate responsibility for contraception.
White people don't have too many children.
White people do not like having a lot of boyfriends around.
Lobola is a part of a marriage negotiation.
When lobola is paid in full a couple are bound to marry.
Lobola assures the legitimacy of children.
A woman should be married.
If you are single there must be something wrong with you. (This notion and that preceding it are things that Philisiwe perceives, not that she necessarily agrees with)
It is alright for a man to have two wives, provided his first wife agrees to it.
Married people live together.
Husbands have authority over their wives.
A man should meet a woman's parents if he is serious about her.

Based on the little that could be gleaned, it seems that in shaping Philisiwe's views her cultural background pertains more to the structure and progression of a relationship than to the choice of a partner. Perhaps the difficulty in isolating the influence of parents and culture in Philisiwe's case has much to do with who she is and how she is in the world.

6.9.3. Identity issues.
Philisiwe is not a person who minces words. In her dealings with RS Philisiwe has shown that she is a very strong and straightforward person who stands very much on her own two feet. She is not someone who courts problems and troubles and she will not allow herself to be dominated or pushed into something she considers to have potentially very negative consequences. Being a strong and independent woman, Philisiwe demands respect for herself as a person. She is not prepared to enter into or remain in a situation where she is treated as chattel. She has said that if she does something, or does not do something, she has her reasons, and she does not have much sympathy for a person who walks into a situation with their
eyes open and goes ahead and does something with negative consequences anyway. She is wary of being hurt - either intentionally or unintentionally. Therefore she does not give her trust easily, and is cautious about commitment. Given her views on the nature of most men, this wariness is further explained. Given the role that Philisiwe herself plays in her relationships I shall give some attention to the issues that appear to be most important to Philisiwe and find expression in the way that she lives her life.

6.9.3.1. Independence.
Perhaps the most salient of Philisiwe’s issues is her need for independence and to hold on to her own identity. This finds expression in the way she lives her life, and most certainly influences the decisions she makes regarding her relationships.

For Philisiwe, independence means "... anything you want to do, you can do, because you are not weak, you are not paralysed, you are not cripple... You are not stupid in your brain." It seems to Philisiwe that when a woman marries, it is as if she suddenly became cripple and stupid on signing the marriage certificate, because her husband treats her that way. She can no longer do as she wishes, but must bow to his authority over her and her wishes become somewhat irrelevant. She is afraid that even RS, who is a good man, will somehow change when and if they marry, and she will no longer be able to exert her own will. She says "I don't want the married certificate. Why? If I'm take mamed certificate, is too much trouble. For the house. Because if RS is married to me, must be go to RS's house. Must be... I'm like, I'm not like, must be. Because I'm married ... If you not married, you live any place you like, is fine. Because is your life ... If you married you must stay together, because you are married. You must go ... to your husband house, because you married. So now, RS is not allowed say 'Philisiwe, go to my house', because I'm not married".

In addition to the above, marriage has certain implications with regard to the disposal of property, and with reference to the latter and marrying RS Philisiwe says "I'm not worried. I'm not want, because I'm want Philisiwe M, like this". As she sees it “that time I'm married, everything for me is change... Now I’m working, maybe madam is ... give me this thing, for Philisiwe. That time RS is married with me, maybe my property in the house, the [ex-]wife for RS say ‘Oh, is for RS’... I don't want RS to take me married, everything for RS." As stated previously, she does
not want to marry because she foresees problems with RS’s family and the disposal of his property when he dies one day. While she is a girlfriend she is not a threat to the family or to his ex-wife and also, her property is her own. If they marry, she feels she will be courting trouble, because one day, when RS dies, his children from his previous marriage will come to her home and lay claim to their father’s possessions, and maybe her things will also be claimed as being his. She fears that if she marries him she will lose out in the long run, and there will be no one to stand up for her side of things when the time comes. She has seen from her own mother’s experience of marrying a man with children from a previous marriage that there is no peace for her mother. The children come and lay claim to their mother’s things and Philisiwe’s mother is hurt in the process. Philisiwe prefers to avoid this problem by maintaining her independence and autonomy now.

She feels so strongly about not rushing into a marriage with RS that she says “... I don’t mind, maybe I’m poor until die, see ... Maybe I’m no house, I’m no place, but in my life is fine. I don’t mind. I don’t want to rush to take the house ... Otherwise, after that have got a problem with me”. She adds “... Even I’m buy one blocks, one tile, one what, but I’m doing my things, you see... Nobody chase me, because is mine. Even my paper, my receipt is say Philisiwe. Even somebody want to come to chase me, say ‘Sorry’ “. Her life is her own, she is the captain of her own ship and she prefers it this way. So, “No matter ... I’m staying maybe one room, ... if is mine I’m satisfied, because is my money, is enough for me, is fine...I don’t want to sitting nice big house, have got light, everything, but have got a question mark in my heart”. Clearly, she prefers to be poor and untroubled by family disputes rather than wealthy and without peace. This is very much like Rachel. As well as indicating her wish to remain independent, the above also clearly reflects the importance to Philisiwe of taking responsibility for her own life.

6.9.3.2. Responsibility.

The importance to Philisiwe of independence and the associated responsibility one takes for one’s own life are indicated by the statement that “... your life, you can choose what you do ... But the most of people, you run to choose, but phakathi, in the middle you say ...” that you made a mistake. Thus, it is necessary for an independent person to take time to think things through and then take responsibility for their own choices, their own life.
With regard to the need to think ahead Philisiwe says "is me ... I'm thinking problem. You know, you must thinking today what you eat lunch time, and thinking tomorrow say what you eat tomorrow? So, if you don't thinking now, say 'Now I'm eat bread now', but tomorrow you not keep it for tomorrow, you see. No matter is nice your house, have got everything, but my heart is not satisfied, I don't want. No doctor to help my heart, except me". It is up to each individual to be aware of the possibilities inherent in any particular choices he/she might make. This suggests a focus on social exchange rather than group needs (Triandis, 1996). Philisiwe's opinion is that "I don't want my trouble myself, because at the time I'm making trouble myself, nobody to help me, because me I'm making my trouble self. If you kill yourself, who's say 'Shame'? Nobody. ... Because you, you do it yourself. You've got your brain, you've got your eyes". Thus one must take responsibility for one's life by being aware, and being strong enough to do what one knows is right for one.

As a further example she says, "That time you have the baby, God you give. But God you not give the food. You must work yourself... so if you do funny thing yourself, say 'Oh Nkulunkulu' never help you (laughs) never". It is apparent here, that Philisiwe believes that one cannot rely on someone or something else to take care of one; a person must take responsibility for his/her own well-being. She says - referring to making trouble for oneself - "This thing my mother is tell me is like, say, standing in the road the car hit you. If you standing in the road, you want car hit you... That's why me say, no matter I don't know. Maybe I'm wrong ... this thing I'm think. But my side, is fine".

Having learned from her experiences and being quite clear of her own responsibilities in her life, Philisiwe is fairly unsympathetic to people who land themselves in a mess. She has learned in her life to be thoughtful about her decisions, and to consider the consequences of what she does. She says, "I'm not worry about this people. If you make your stupid yourself, me I'm not say 'Shame'... Like me ... before, I'm make trouble, I'm make big problem for myself. ... I'm not think, that time I'm get a baby. The first, and the second one. I'm not think say God any time you take any person with you. If I'm thinking about this, I never get a baby... Now even ... I'm doing something, I'm ask. I'm ask my question say 'If I'm do
this thing, is right? ... if I'm do this I'm wrong? So I'm learning, you see my life like this, I'm learning". From the preceding discussion it is apparent that Philisiwe is someone who tries to go through her life with her eyes open. She takes responsibility for her own happiness, and values her independence. She is clear on what she considers important and why, and is not easily swayed by convention or by what others think is appropriate for her.

It is apparent that Philisiwe is very much her own woman, and that she lives her life with both feet planted firmly on the ground. Her experiences have not made her bitter or cynical, but have matured her so that there is an air of steadfastness and purpose about the way that Philisiwe approaches life and relationships. It is also apparent that she defines herself as an individual. While she acknowledges her parents and family in her decisions, her needs and values are not group-oriented. Her behaviour is definitely a function of her own attitudes rather than proceeding on the basis of norms. She identifies her cultural background as Zulu and conforms to some of the customs of this group - such as negotiating lobola. While African cultures are generally perceived as more collectively inclined, it is clear that Philisiwe falls squarely on the individualistic side of the collectivism-individualism continuum.

6.9.3.3. Themes.
Independence vs lack of autonomy; responsibility; Following one's own truth.

The discussion of Philisiwe's views on men, and her relationships with R and RS, as well as the contribution of her parents, her cultural heritage, and her own identity to her evaluative framework brings us to where we can move on to a consideration of how Philisiwe evaluates her current relationship, and what motivates her to continue with RS.

6.10. Application.
6.10.1. Evaluation and motivation.
Although she at first believed RS to be too old for her, Philisiwe now appears quite comfortable with the difference in their ages. Time has shown that an older man - at least this older man - is definitely more stable than a young man. With the passage of time Philisiwe has got to know RS better, and he has got to know her and they have built a relationship together. At this stage in time they share a sense
of being a couple. From what she has said of him and their relationship, it is apparent that RS fulfills the criteria that she looks for in a partner. Her relationship with RS, an older, non-South African man also indicates the relative importance of her preferences. His other qualities outweigh these somewhat negative elements.

RS has fulfilled his responsibility as a father to SS, as well as helping Philisiwe with SM and NM. Thus, he has proved himself to be a steady provider and father for his son and generous when he can afford it financially. Given the emphasis that Philisiwe places on her children and their welfare this counts a great deal in his favour. If we recall her expectations of men in general, it is not surprising that relative to other Black men Philisiwe considers RS to be a good man. However, she has said that she would not stay with a man merely because he provides for her financially. It is more important to her that RS is honest in his dealings with her, sincere in his affection for her, and that he treats her with respect. Here, the value that Philisiwe places on integrity is apparent.

In terms of her opinion that partners should be honest with one another and that they should express their wishes without being demanding, Philisiwe says that she has told RS what she wants from him - a place of her own close to her family. She is happy to give him time to do this given his financial involvement with his other children, but says she will not wait indefinitely. If he does "funny things" (is not sincere, or does not make some effort towards finding her a place) she says she is prepared to tell him to go away and leave her alone. In other words, she cares about him, and likes him, but not so much that she will allow him to take advantage of her. She is not saying that she thinks this is his intention, rather she says "I'm trust already now...Just give somebody chance". So she feels he is a good man, and that he cares about her, and she is therefore happy to be with him.

Given the importance of communication to Philisiwe, it is perhaps very important that she feels that she can talk to RS, that he is honest with her, and that he does not try to dominate her. Philisiwe's opinion is that talking through problems is the appropriate thing for a couple to do. RS's saying that he tried to speak to his ex-wife about her drinking problem suggests that RS also thinks this way. Perhaps this similarity in opinion over how to resolve problems contributes to Philisiwe and RS's staying together.
Despite all of the positive things in her relationship with RS, Philisiwe would nevertheless prefer not to marry him. It would seem that this has less to do with him as a person or a partner and more to do with her views on the restrictive nature of marriage for women, and the particular family complications inherent in her relationship with RS. With regard to her reasons for wanting to keep the relationship as it is now Philisiwe said "No matter is not married for me, I'm fine. I'm tell RS say 'if you make my house, and see this child, if you want to sit together with me, is fine, you can sit, but not ... to sign. If your will, just write Philisiwe M... and SS. That time is time to will, me I'm coming there, never to sign say married with you. Why? I don't want the baby for RS to fight me... I don't want it wife for RS to fight me." Thus, she has said to RS that she likes him and cares about him, but that in truth she prefers to remain unmarried. She says the family complications on RS's side of things and hers make the ramifications of marriage to RS - for her and her children - potentially very negative, and she is not interested in making problems for herself.

As she sees the situation, all would be fine if she and RS were both single with no children. However, she has three children and he has four by his ex-wife. She is concerned that if she marries RS and moves into his house their possessions will be combined, and one day, when he is gone - or even before - his children (and ex-wife) will come to that home and claim their father's things and perhaps also her things, and this will cause her much heartache. She is not so much concerned with the possessions in terms of their material value, but more with the unhealthy and hurtful nature of living in a situation where other people come into one's home and lay claim to one's belongings. The emotional consequences of such behaviour are what concern Philisiwe. It is apparent from the above that Philisiwe's beliefs about the nature of marriage in general as well as her observations of her parents' relationship play a large part in her expectations concerning marriage to RS specifically. Thus Carnelley and Janoff-Bulman's (1992) conclusion that optimism about marriage is associated with observations of one's parents' relationship is supported. Philisiwe is also certainly not following the norm of marrying in haste, but seems to be reacting against it.

It will also perhaps cause her children by R confusion and upset if they are moved to RS's house. She says "What I'm do? Because ... my mother's house is mother's house, and my father. So what about me, and my child? ... That's why me say I'm
thinking about my child.... Must have a place for my child. No matter RS is SS's father, because this one, if I'm take say this is your father's house, this one - SM and NM - what you say, to me? Say 'Where is my father's house, ma?'... What I'm say?". Philisiwe feels a strong responsibility for her children. While SS is taken care of because RS is his father, she must provide for her other two children, and she takes this responsibility very seriously. In her life she has learned about mortality and to consider her children's future if she or her mother should die. If she marries RS and he dies before she does - as is probable given the age gap between them - she foresees confusion and upset for her children because his children will claim his house as theirs, and her children will be left with no home to call their own. She cannot rely on her mother being alive to provide for her children by R. So, she prefers that she should have a place in her own name, so that there is no confusion about possessions or homes, and no chance that anyone can come and "chase" her. It is much less complicated for her to remain unmarried and continue the relationship with RS as it is now.

As things stand at the moment, Philisiwe is her own woman, more-or-less beholden to no-one, and she would prefer to keep things this way. She does not want to give up her independence and autonomy by marrying, nor does she want to put herself in the middle of the road so that a car - with RS's children and ex-wife in it - can come and run her over. The potential family complications of marriage for her and RS, would suggest that such a step is contra-indicated in Philisiwe's opinion, even though RS believes it would show their commitment to one another. She is very happy with the way the relationship stands at the moment, and feels no further need to prove her commitment to RS, nor for him to prove his commitment to her.

It is apparent that her beliefs and values lead Philisiwe to hold certain expectations of the nature of men and relationships that are applied in the evaluation of the nature of her own relationship and the person she is with. She is satisfied with the way the relationship between her and RS stands at present given that her expectations of a good relationship are for the most part fulfilled, and she considers her partner to be a good man relative to other men (Rusbult, 1980; Sternberg & Barnes, 1985).

This brings us to the end of Philisiwe's story, and we can now proceed to a consideration of the information supplied by Liza in her narrative.
CHAPTER SEVEN

LIZA: NOT YET DECIDED

7.1. Demographics.

The interview with Liza took place at the researcher's home on the 18th of October 1998. Liza is a very young-looking and vivacious forty years old. One gets the impression that she always on the verge of bursting into laughter, or at the very least a smile. She was born in Pietersburg, and now lives in Johannesburg where she has been working for the same employers for eighteen years. She attended school up to and including standard six and is currently employed as a domestic worker. Liza identifies her cultural background as Pedi or Northern Sotho. She and her brother and sister were raised by her mother after their father left them when she was in primary school. She and her partner - who is the same age as her - have been together for thirteen years and are not married. Liza has no children.

Before I can put forward an assimilation of Liza's preferences in a romantic partner and her opinions on the nature of such relationships I must first take a detour to her views on Black men in general, as these opinions contribute to what she looks for in a partner and what she wants in a relationship.

7.2. View of men.

Liza minces no words in making plain the fact that her opinion of Black men in general is not favourable. To begin with she says "Sometimes they liars". To this she adds that the men in Johannesburg "Most of them, I tell you the truth, they're crooks". She says the men in Johannesburg like drinking. They have many girlfriends and "they couldn't talk the truth". They do not come and visit when they say they will, and they do not call to apologise or to offer an explanation. In short, they just do not care about women.

Liza believes that among Black men it is common practice to beat one's girlfriend or wife. She believes that men do this because "they just think they're good, they're strong man... They just think everything that they do is good... who you are? You are a woman. The place of woman is in the kitchen, don't say anything! That's all, that's what they think". In such a situation a woman gets "pressed down" because she never has "a chance to open [her] mouth..." and to express her own opinion.
In addition to the above, Liza says that "Daddies just run away, they're rubbish". She says that Black men "go to the street, want to see someone, and keep giving babies all over". In other words, she believes that men are promiscuous, aggressive and irresponsible.

She says that a man will take a wife for his own convenience, he will have children with her and then disappear: "Because he is a strong man he needs the children, and their names, the family, is growing up. They just dump them there, is going somewhere else, and find families again. But, then they growing up, fed up, they going back to that old woman... to look after them. Changing clothes, doing washing and ironing, cooking ... mielie pap, and spinach (laughs)". So when he is down, when he has no job and no money a man will come back to his wife with an ingratiating manner, while all along it is the woman who has struggled to put food on the table for her children. She says "the most of them...the men with black skins, most of them nowadays, they're crooks. They like nice time. And once they coming back ... they want somebody look after ...them."

It is plain from the above that Liza holds a very low opinion of most Black men. The picture she paints of them suggests that she expects men to be selfish, deceitful, promiscuous, domineering, and aggressive, with little respect or caring for the women they entangle themselves with, and feeling little responsibility for the children they sire with those women. Since Liza makes it plain that she would rather be on her own than involved with a man who possesses the attitudes and characteristics mentioned above, it makes sense to ask what kind of man she would consider as a romantic partner.

7.3. Partner preferences.
As with the other respondents, the points mentioned in this section relate to De Angelis' (1992) work on domains of compatibility and their relative importance in evaluating the state of a partnership. To begin with Liza says "I like ... a very good person, good heart. Good person, nice... and tall and slender". When asked what she would look for in trying to decide if someone is a good person Liza began by mentioning good manners and maturity. Part of good manners, and a further indicator that a person is a good person, is that they show respect to their elders. A person who goes to church regularly and "is not a naughty" is also considered decent and good. So a man that Liza might be interested in should "like God. Some
other people don’t like God, I'm not worried about that". With reference to religion, Liza says a man should not be very religious, "just little bit".

Another thing that Liza looks for is "someone who work hard". Furthermore, this man should be intelligent, quiet, and not aggressive. Liza says "I don't like fighting peoples" and adds "I hate a ... guy smack ... a lady... I really hate that. I don't like it, can see that woman is crying from a man boxing, from a boxing man". A potential partner should not drink or smoke. She exclaims that if a man is the type that sits in a shebeen all day with other women, then she does not want him. She would rather be alone than be with such a man. She says of her own role in choosing a partner "I'm a fussy lady. I don't like the guys from the other side. I like my nation ". Thus she is expressing a preference for a Northern Sotho or Pedi man, or a man from Pietersburg - since that is her nation and her birthplace. Liza's preference for a Pedi man, or a man from Pietersburg, is related to her feeling that a person from her nation or her birthplace is more familiar and therefore more comfortable than someone foreign. She shares this notion with Philisiwe. The implication is that this similarity in backgrounds will help the couple to get to know and understand one another, and thereby develop a sense of closeness and camaraderie, fulfilling one of Liza's expectations of a healthy relationship.

It is very clear from the remarks above that Liza's view of men in general plays a large part in what she looks for in a romantic partner. It would appear that she, like Philisiwe, looks for characteristics or qualities that indicate that he is not a typical man, and will treat her with respect and kindness. Where most men are liars or crooks who are aggressive, unreliable, promiscuous, selfish, deceitful, and domineering, the man she seeks has a good heart, good manners, works hard, is quiet and not aggressive, does not drink or smoke, and is faithful to her. He is honest and respects her. In terms of her expectations of a healthy relationship, this man's characteristics suggest that honesty, openness, and emotional intimacy will be possible.

Liza says, referring to the dynamic she would want in her relationship "He will understand me and I will understand him". She adds that a good partner will "open his heart for me, then I can open his heart. I must know him, he must know me". When Liza says she will know a man, she means that he will have no secrets from her. She says "some other people ... they hiding something at the back". In other
words, they are not entirely above-board with her. So, if she is to know someone, she will know all there is to know about him. This goes along with a man being truthful with her, and not deceiving her. So, another quality she considers important is honesty.

Finally, she mentions that "if you marry with a man that’s a little bit older than you, he learnt little bit more. He can guide you sometime". At her age, she does not necessarily prefer that a man should be older, but considers that if one is young it is perhaps a good thing, since he will have more experience and be more mature and can help one at times when one is not sure of one’s course. This also implies that older men are different from, and somehow more trustworthy than, younger men.

These then are the preferences that Liza states in terms of a romantic partner. It is apparent that her view of men in general has a fairly large influence on her preferences, given that she is clearly looking for a man who is the opposite of what she expects from a typical Black man. It is abundantly clear that Liza is looking for someone she will be able to build a good relationship with where friendship, affection, consideration, honesty, respect, and trust - the characteristics she identifies as belonging in a healthy relationship - can flourish. She does not expect to be able to do this with a typical man who would oppress her and not give her an opportunity to express her own opinions. She, therefore, seeks someone extraordinary who will respect her and treat her well. With this insight in hand let us then move on to a consideration of what Liza has to say about relationships.

7.4. Relationships.

Liza is quite clear on what she considers important in the development and maintenance of a relationship. To begin with, relationships take time to develop. Liza says "He’s that time to learn me, what kind of lady she is. Oh, she don’t like this, she like this. ... And me I will say, OK, this guy he doesn’t like this, he like this. Then we can go together ... we be friend forever maybe." A relationship develops from the basis of friendship and a couple progresses in a relationship through getting to know one another's likes and dislikes. "We can be friends... if we friends sometimes... Things are happening, you see. Things are happening in your mind, in your mind. We friends, we're friends, say ... till we come to meet each other (indicates closing gap with hands)". What Liza is saying is that in the development
of a relationship a couple will begin as friends and gradually get to know one another and draw closer together as their knowledge of one another grows.

This closeness progresses in stages. Liza says "first of all it must be in my heart, then my mind. Then my body". She gives as an analogy of a relationship's development an example of going to the shops to buy an apple. One selects a particular apple because it looks nice, before one has tasted it. "Your mind tell you it's nice". Some people prefer red apples and others prefer green. If the apple tastes nice, you will want more. So in a relationship, one is first attracted to the outside - what a man looks like, and if his looks are what you find attractive. As you get to know him, if he "tastes nice" then you will want to taste/know more. This is how a relationship progresses.

Once a couple like each other and are seeing each other exclusively, Liza considers it natural for them to make love. As she says "Once you like him, you like everything, because it's that apple you taste it, it's very nice for you. It make you happy, you see. But if ... you don't like it, you just push yourself, you won't go be long. Just right there by the corner, it will be finished. Because you don't like that. You just push it, push yourself". Thus, a relationship and the closeness between two people should develop naturally, progressing from one's heart to one's head and then to a physical connection. So, Liza suggests that one stays with a man because he is to one's taste and because he makes one happy. If that is not the case, the relationship will not flow naturally, and any physical interactions will be forced. So a relationship will not last very long if participants are not to each others' liking or if they do not make one another happy.

When asked how long it might initially take a couple to get to know one another, Liza says that one cannot pin this down, because "Every day things are changing. Every minute things are changing". Nevertheless over time, people do begin to know how to read one another's moods. She says "sometimes you'll be very cross, with him... he must know...maybe after hours, after two days, she's fine, I can talk to her".

Liza's statement that "We must be friends. And sometimes we going to church together, and we can go to the shops ... just be open" indicates that friendship and perhaps some shared activities form a strong basis for a relationship, as do
In terms of the last two Liza says a couple “must be nice, and open. Nice to talk with each other.” Thus open and honest communication is an important ingredient of a relationship. Talking honestly is also a part of conflict resolution. Liza says “Why should we, should you smack somebody else? You can talk”, indicating that the appropriate way to resolve disputes is to talk them through. If a man disagrees with a woman, or if he is angry, it is not acceptable for him to beat her (nor is it appropriate for her to attack him).

On the point of honesty Liza adds that “If I like somebody, I like somebody”. The suggestion is that she is sincere in her affections; and does not pretend to an affection she does not feel. Thus, genuine liking for someone and sincere interest are important in a relationship, when getting to know someone. One should not lie to people about how many boyfriends-girlfriends one has, or about how one feels about the other person. In other words, honesty and sincerity are important ingredients in a romantic relationship. In addition there is a suggestion of comfortable camaraderie in what Liza has said about the nature of a romantic relationship at the point in its development where two people have become a couple.

A couple base their relationship on friendship, affection, consideration, honesty, and trust. She says “As long as I am happy, I don’t want to keep on thinking about him, where he is, with who, what he’s doing there. No. All I want to do is just to love him, and, okay he is fine where he is. If he’s got problem he must phone me to let me know where he is, no problem”. The suggestion is that there is consideration for one another which is borne out in considerate actions.

Another point that Liza raises that is important in a relationship is respect for one another’s space. Liza says a boyfriend “mustn’t come every day, every day to me. Must give me sometimes a chance, I can meet my things. I can do my own things. Because everybody’s got own things. Even you got your own thing that you want to do by your self”. Thus, a couple are two individuals who have their own needs, one of which is for some time to be alone, or to do their own thing without falling over the other person all the time. In terms of a couple having respect for each other and each other’s personal space, Liza says “he mustn’t push me to do what ... he wants me to do... If he wants something he must ask me... I got my things to do. I mustn’t push him ‘Hey, do this!’ (laughs)”. The emphasis that she places on this
point, suggests that for Liza it is not only the respect that is important, but also the partial distance that she maintains in this way and the fact that it is mutual. Liza's need for breathing space is similar to Rachel's not wanting a needy or dependent partner who lives in her back pocket.

The foregoing discussion allows us to see how Liza connects people and their behaviours together to form a prototype of a romantic relationship that she might use in assessing her own relationship (Fehr, 1988). It is apparent that for Liza a relationship should begin with sincere interest in a person and the cementing of a comfortable friendship between a couple. This friendship will, with time and getting to know each other, progress to greater affection for one's partner, and a sense of connection to him/her, at which time a physical relationship will be a natural step. Here it becomes apparent that the constructs used in making sense of interpersonal events will change with time (Duck, 1973). At all times a relationship is nurtured with affection, honesty, openness, respect, and trust. Based on the preceding discussion we are now at the point where we can extract Liza's beliefs and expectations about men and relationships from her narrative.

7.5. Beliefs.

7.5.1. Men.

Men believe that women's place is in the kitchen.
Men do not value women's opinions.
Men are liars and crooks.
Men do not care about women.
Men in Johannesburg like drinking and have many girlfriends.
Men think they are good and strong and can do what they like.
Men beat their girlfriends/wives.
Men like good times, and cannot be relied on in bad times.
Men do not respect women.
Men want a wife for convenience: to increase his family name and look after him when he is old.
Men are aggressive, irresponsible, and promiscuous.
Men are selfish, deceitful, and domineering.
Men feel little responsibility towards their children.
Men keep secrets.
Men cannot be trusted not to hurt one.
Older men have some experience of life and are more mature than younger men.

7.5.2. Relationships.

7.5.2.1. General.
A couple have to get to know one another.
Relationships develop over time.
First there is attraction to the outside or physical packaging, then people get to know each other.
If people like what they see and discover they will want to know more.
A couple learn each other's likes and dislikes and moods.
Relationships develop from the basis of friendship.
Relationships are about closing the gap between two people (i.e. increasing intimacy).
It is natural for a couple who know and like each other to make love.
You cannot force attraction and intimacy.
Getting to know someone takes an indefinite amount of time, because things change all the time.
A couple consists of two individuals.
Each partner has their own needs.
People need time to be alone and to do their own thing.
Over time people learn to read one another's moods, and to act accordingly.
Women in relationships are “pressed down”.
Women in relationships do not have the freedom to express their opinions.

7.5.2.2. Healthy.
A couple should develop a sense of comfortable camaraderie.
A couple should not be all over each other all the time. Each person should have time to him/herself.
A partner should not push one to do what he wants.
In a good relationship a man and a woman understand each other.
Good partners open their hearts to one another.
Honesty and openness are part of a good relationship.
Emotional intimacy should precede physical intimacy.
A couple feel close to one another.
People stay together because they are to each other's taste and they make one another happy.
Friendship and some shared activities form a strong basis for a relationship.
A couple talk with each other.
The appropriate way to resolve disputes is to talk them through.
Violence has no place in a good relationship.
Sincere affection and genuine interest in a person are important in the development of a relationship.
A good relationship is based on friendship, affection, consideration, honesty, respect, and trust.

7.5.2.3. Unhealthy.
What Liza said in the section referring to relationships in general about women being oppressed and lacking freedom to express their opinions is also something she believes to be unhealthy and, therefore, relevant here.

7.5.2.4. Marriage.
A wife cooks and cleans for her husband.

Now that we have this breakdown of expectations in hand - and in mind - let us proceed to a consideration of the issues and variables that help to shape Liza's beliefs and their application in the context of her own relationship.

7.6. Influences.
The influences on Liza's beliefs and expectations include her own identity, and her family and cultural background. To begin with there are certain individual values and issues that Liza holds that impact on her relationship. Let us consider these before proceeding to the influential roles of her parents and cultural background.

7.6.1. Identity: values and issues.
The issues discussed below have a bearing on what Liza thinks of herself, and also find expression in what she considers important in a relationship.

7.6.1.1. Communication.
To begin with there is the matter of communication. Liza does not have a lot to say on this matter, but what she does say makes her point quite clear. She says "Most
of peoples they like to keep themselves. I think because of, because problem is this, you cross inside...you keep it inside, you not talking, that's why tomorrow you, they say 'He's just kill himself'. They don't know what's happening, he didn't say anything to somebody else. It was inside himself. If you talking, I just pass the words, then you answering me, then, you know, it's like you iron your clothes (laughs)...you make it smooth, it's okay". She is suggesting that it is important to talk out one's problems so that one can then smooth them away. If one bottles everything inside and tries to ignore it, or hide it, one might not be able to cope alone and may act rashly - for example, by trying to kill oneself. This applies in a similar way to smoothing away the problems one might encounter with one's partner.

7.6.1.2. Trust.
A second issue, trust, is intertwined with Liza's sense of independence and doing what is best for herself. Liza is quite an independent woman and she does not take up with a man for the sake of having a man in her life. She says "I'm very happy. Nothing makes me cross, I'm happy. God made people must be two, but I can't just say because God made people to be two, just get the bad one, stay next to me.... No... I rather be alone then I can do my things by my own things. I can be very happy, maybe reading, and ... I like music. I can listen some music, and I can watch the TV. I'm happy". This being the case, Liza has been quite selective in her relationships.

Liza's selectiveness is not only due to her independent streak, it is also due to the fact that she does not give her trust very easily. This is hardly surprising given her view of men in general. It is apparent that this issue is quite deep-rooted, inasmuch as Liza has been with her current partner for thirteen years, and still does not entirely trust him. As far as Liza is concerned "I don't trust anyone 100%. This 100% must be mine, that's all". Thus, the only person she can trust completely is herself. In a relationship she might like her partner and trust him to a certain extent, but there is a part of her that is always a little bit suspicious and mistrustful.

Her reasoning for not trusting someone entirely is that "some ladies, they kill themselves. Some other people they kill themselves because of this. If ... you take all your mind, everything, you trust this person. You don't watch behind of him ... if, one day you saw what's behind with him you be very shock. You'll be die, want to
die. Maybe you get a gun, you shoot yourself, you just lie forever, because you
don't want to see... So you better give your space, chance a little bit. You trust him
that little better, you see, give yourself chance and space." So, for Liza it is better to
take one's time in getting to know someone, and even then it is perhaps better not
to trust a man entirely, because of the potential for great hurt that such trust holds.

To Liza's way of thinking, if one almost expects that a man will deceive one, or hurt
one, then when that happens one will regain one's equilibrium more easily, rather
than feeling that the world has ended and one should go and kill oneself. She says
"You say 'OK, I wasn't trust him 100%, I can get a balance,... I can cry, cry, cry, then
I wake up again". Thus, a part of her will still be alright after a betrayal, and that
part will help her to heal. If she gave everything of herself to a man, then there
would be nothing left for her if he should turn out to be a "crook". Also, it is perhaps
the case that bad behaviour is expected, so if/when it happens it is not viewed with
as much surprise as if it were not expected. Furthermore, such behaviour may be
written off as being typical or natural (and therefore it does not have the impact on
evaluations of a person or a relationship that it might have if it were not construed in
this way).

7.6.1.3. Children.
The final issue that Liza has is the fact that she cannot have children. She says "I
would like maybe to have one or two, but one is nice sometimes. Even two is okay.
So, one problem to me is this". Liza's childless state is a source of great pain and
frustration to her. She would dearly love to have even one child, but so far has
been unable to conceive. She has been to doctors who have not, it seems,
adequately explained to her what the problem is, and now she says "I'm getting old,
it's getting too late". In her life she says "I can be happy with everything, but if I
touch that point - I haven't got children - oh, it's a big pain. It's a big pain. Because I
try my best to go to the hospital, and all over ... big problem. And I enjoy to make
love, so what can I do ?". It would seem that this particular issue raises its ugly
head frequently in Liza's life.

This is especially so in terms of how it makes Liza feel about herself. She says
"You are a failure every day". Liza's inability to have children makes her feel like
less of a woman. She says that adoption is not something she considers for
herself: "My side, I like my children, from my body. I'll be very, very happy. My
sisters, my brothers have got children. I'm happy with them, but my own one is my own one”. In this regard she explains that “the pain [of childbirth], you are a woman like the other women... You are happy with that. You are a woman. You've got breasts, big breasts, you can feeding, you'll be happy with that. Every woman likes children, likes their own children”. So, being able to have her own child would make Liza feel more like a “successful” woman. She says “Me I think like that, maybe some other people they don't worried about it. But to me, I just think it's okay to have your own children. You just do your job in this world. That's okay. There can be one, you are happy. It's the one thing can make you happy”. A woman's job is to have, raise, and protect her children. Having a child makes one a successful and whole woman. It is plain that Liza's self-esteem suffers from her inability to have a child and, therefore, fulfil her job as a woman.

Liza is not concerned with whether or not others feel as she does about children; this is her priority and other people have their own priorities. Having a child is important to Liza not only because it would make her feel more successful as a woman, but also because for her a child is symbolic of the love between two people. In this regard she says “maybe you fight with the daddy, is divorce. But you have this. You want it. This is part of you...it's important. With the man you love, not any man”. Thus a child is the product of the love between two people. So it is not only that one wants a child, but that one wants a child with the man one loves. That is what makes the child special and precious - it is a symbol of the love between a man and a woman. As Liza says “you will love it...because you love the daddy. This is a special thing. You never forget it.” This is why, for her, “you can't just make children” with anyone.

From the way she spoke, it was apparent that Liza struggles with this issue of infertility. Despite all the time that has passed she still does not fully accept that she will never have a child of her own; she still holds a faint hope that she may yet conceive. Nevertheless, she is very aware of her advancing age and this is causing her some distress as she may finally have to give up hope. She is a woman who faces the world with cheerfulness and a laugh, but in whose heart there lives a sadness that will never go away.
7.6.1.4. Themes.

Trust; children.

Now that we have an idea of the identity issues that influence Liza’s evaluations of herself and her relationship, let us move on to the role of her parents and her cultural background.

7.6.2. Parental influence and cultural perceptions.

Liza has almost nothing to say about her parents’ influence on her relationships, or her choice of partners. What she says pertains more to certain perceptions or beliefs she holds about Black cultures in general. These views would seem to include her own cultural background, which she identifies as Pedi. I shall begin with the little that Liza had to say about her parents’ influence and then move on to her cultural perceptions.

Liza’s father’s desertion of his wife and children has occasionally led Liza to think “maybe... It will happen to me. I must watch out”. She believes her father’s desertion has made her less open, less trusting. She says “you got to...be careful. If you open like that, you be the same like your mum. If you been suffering when you young, do you want to be suffering when you older?”. Thus, her father’s action had a great impact on her emotionally, and it is also apparent that his behaviour influenced her opinion of Black men inasmuch as it has generalised to the view that a man will sire children with a woman and then desert her, only to return when he needs something. Beyond this statement, Liza did not refer to anything her parents specifically imparted to her in connection with romantic relationships.

This is not to say that she did not mention the role of parents in general in Black cultures. For example, Liza’s opinion that relationships can be rocky, especially among Black couples is influenced by her perception that “Most of Black peoples, our parents, they keep on fighting, to, we can look it. And most of them, mummies, mothers they always be with the children. And they always guard the children”. In Liza’s opinion women are the backbone of a family. It is women who stay with their children; mothers are the ones who are reliable and long-suffering, and it is they who provide for their children when men disappear. This last is perhaps gleaned from her observation of her own mother.
Part of the importance to Liza of children stems from her culture’s views on this subject. Liza states “you know, our Black peoples one thing they like is children”. She says “you married or you not married, you mustn’t be old without ‘my grandchildren’”. She feels there is a great pressure on Black people - from their parents and peers - to have children and as far as she is concerned “That’s a very big problem for us”.

She contrasts Black people’s attitudes to children with those of White people. For example, she says “they don’t worry, our Black peoples, you can, maybe I’ve got five children, different fathers... Doesn’t matter. But White peoples, oh, it’s a skaam jong (laughs). Is ‘n skaam. And they don’t like to have many, many more. Two, that’s enough”. When she spoke of this, Liza’s tone suggested that she does not agree with nor approve of Black people’s lack of concern for who the father of a child might be, nor with the tendency to have many children.

With regard to a woman’s capacity to have children, and the way she is treated on this basis, Liza believes that “most of our Black peoples, if I got no children, they just dump me. They going to get somebody can have children”. Again this is contrasted with her view that “White people are OK because they not worried. If you not married you’ve got no children, no problem. And White people, what I like it, you don’t have to get babies without married”. Furthermore “I like it, they don’t, they know ... children is from God. They don’t just dump the woman ... because they got no babies”. She seems to approve of what she perceives as White people’s practices in connection with children and women. It is conceivable that Black cultures’ emphasis on fertility is akin to rubbing salt on Liza’s wound inasmuch as her inability to have children would not be quite so painful if this issue was not so prominent among her people. It might also be that she would not emphasise the fertility issue if she were not childless. It would seem then that a chicken-or-egg situation develops here when one tries to ascertain the relative influence of Liza’s culture and her own identity on her expectations and opinions.

Despite the latter, Liza’s abhorrence for physical violence against women does seem to be influenced by her opinion that “boxing a woman... Most of our people they like to do that... Instead of talk... the truth is, most of Black peoples, they’re
same... the Northern Sotho... IsiPedi. Most of Black peoples, nearly same thing the cultures. Because the man is a boss of the house, that’s all. They can’t give a woman chance to talk.” She perceives this type of behaviour to be peculiar to Black people, because she contrasts this with what she perceives to be the case for White cultures in saying that “the White cultures I can see they give a woman chance to talk, and the... the woman, it’s her choice. The master, they don’t say anything, I think so”.

This favourable view of White people in general is further attested by Liza saying “I believe White peoples, most of them, I don’t know, I think they always talk truth, I think so”. She says that in her experience of White people “if they promise to do something they will do it. If you wait somewhere they say ‘Okay wait for me at B Lake, I’m coming to fetch you at 2 o’clock’. Exactly two o’clock they will be there. A White man or a White lady, exactly 2 o’clock will be there”. She feels that the same cannot be said of Black people “…sometimes you can be there for ... three hours”. As to why this should be the case, Liza says “Is the way we born, I think so.”

The implication of the preceding discussion is that Liza views Black people in general - including her own people, the Pedi, to be rather insensitive to a woman’s not being able to have children, since she will just “be dumped” in such a case. Furthermore, from what she has said Liza suggests that she believes her people to be aggressive in conflict situations, and unreliable in keeping their promises. Given these implications one can trace the influence of Liza’s cultural perceptions in her views on Black men and her preferences in a partner. She looks for someone who is not aggressive, and who is trustworthy and reliable. As for the issue of children, it does not seem possible for her to get away from or around this problem. She seems to have found a man who likes children as much as she does, and so they are at a stalemate.

In terms of information or prescriptions of her culture with regard to partners and relationships Liza says “you know, our mothers, Black ladies, it’s not easy they talk with the girls ... You know like today it’s easy for young womans, young ladies, that can talk with them. If I’ve got the children now it’s easier to talk with them. Okay ‘you must use this, ... you mustn’t have the baby earlier’ you see, something like that. ‘Wait for your straight man’. Before they wasn’t do like that. You a girl, ... you must look after yourself, and you must learn to cook. Because they like to eat.
That’s why they worried about to cook. But to talk about sex, it’s not easy to our mothers to talk about that. And you can’t just get a boyfriend and bring it home." So, as far as a cultural prescription in relationships is concerned, Liza feels she did not get much - if any - guidance, beyond the suggestion that she should “take care of herself”, she should not bring just any man home, and she should learn to cook (presumably so she could find and hold on to a man).

In response to the question “what is a boyfriend?” Liza said that ”The boyfriend, you know, our Black ladies, Black peoples... most of us, boyfriend is boyfriend you sleep with him... you can’t have just a friend, a boy... You can’t play with a snake, snake will bite you... This is poison, will bite you, and you can be pregnant. Be away from boys". This quote suggests a view of men as dangerous to a woman. It would seem that somewhere in her upbringing Liza got the message that one cannot have a man as a close friend; the relationship will always end up with sex for one reason or another, and then a woman might fall pregnant. Given the above it is apparent that Liza’s view of men as interested only in sex and of being fickle is influenced by what her cultural background implies in this regard, mainly via the cautions of her elders.

It would seem then that Liza’s culture prescribes against a young woman having male friends. However, she adds “Our Black ... cultures, you just get ... somebody there is a friend, you were at school you get friend. Good this is a friend, but you can’t go with me at home... You just stay there. It’s not a boyfriend, it’s just a friend, you see. You not go with me at home... They don’t want to see boys there. They just want to see girls”. She seems to be saying that it is fine - when one is young - to have female friends and have them come and visit one at home, but that any male friends are not allowed to come and visit her at her home. When one gets older having male friends is "your choice... Your mind will tell you ‘this is good, this is not good’ ". Thus, when one is older, one’s judgement has improved and one can choose friends for oneself.

Based on the above it is clear that Liza’s background has played a part in shaping her impressions and opinions where men are concerned, and how one should proceed in one’s dealings with them. In some instances - such as where children are concerned - this influence is expressed through Liza’s wish not to follow what she perceives as the trend among her people. In other instances - such as her
narrative concerning male friends - the influence comes in the form of Liza’s having assimilated the views of her parents and peers.

It is difficult to clearly ascertain Liza’s “location” on the individualism-collectivism continuum. In the way that she speaks and some of the things she says about her people she seems to be definitely individual, but at other times she seems to follow a norm rather than an attitude, and this muddies the water (Triandis, 1996). In abstract terms it is apparent from Liza’s narrative that for her culture pertains to the habits or trends among a group of people. It is also about what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. In non-narrative form, the norms and rules she identifies are as follows.

7.6.2.1. Norms and rules.
Most Black people in relationships fight with one another.
Black people like children.
Black people do not worry if one has many children with different fathers, but White people do.
White people do not like to have too many children.
White people do not emphasise the need for a woman to have children as much as Black people do.
White people prefer not to have children outside of marriage.
Black people hit a woman rather than talk through a problem.
White women have more freedom, power, and autonomy in relationships than Black women do.
White people are honest and reliable, Black people are not - in general.
A woman should have children.
A woman should learn to cook and to take care of a man.
A woman should have a man.
A woman cannot have male friends; sex will always intrude.

It would appear from what Liza had to say that she equates cultural background with racially variable preferences and practices, such as those she mentions above for Black and White people. It was clear from the way she spoke that she approves of the tendencies she sees among White people and does not approve of those of the Black people. It is apparent that Liza views “Blacks” and “Whites” as two separate, but equally homogeneous groups.
Having now considered Liza's view of men in general, her preferences where a partner are concerned, her opinions on the nature and development of relationships, and the influence of her identity and her background, it follows that one is in a position to discuss Liza's reasons for staying in her current relationship.

7.7. Application.

7.7.1. Evaluation and motivation.

Given that in Liza's opinion most Black men are not interested in what a woman has to say nor do they give a woman a chance to express it, it is important that she says of her current partner "he sometimes say to me 'You got right to say if you don't like anything. You've got right to say open your mouth'. Not just say ... 'Keep quiet! Keep quiet'. Is not good... Give me chance to say, I can say anything I want to say". The fact that her partner gives her a chance to say what is on her mind, and that he listens to her opinion is something that makes Liza very happy. She feels he respects her wishes, for example, if she says "no" to something, and that he is interested in her opinions: "He listens to me, ja. And give me chance to talk to him. And ... we give each other ... chance to talk. If he don't want something, he also he can say to me 'No, I don't want this', and I will understand". Thus there is communication and mutual respect for each other's opinions and wishes.

Furthermore, Liza says that "my boyfriend is a funny boyfriend. He doesn't like me to keep on cooking for him. Sometimes he's bringing food from ... around... If I cook he just say 'No, sit down, don't keep on cooking'... And I'm not making his washing, no, he's just take the washing from the laundry, give somebody to iron it. He know that he didn't marry me...We talk, we're friend". For Liza it is good that her boyfriend does not expect her to cook and clean for him, as she would do if they were married. He will go and buy food for the two of them, and then sit and talk with her and be friendly with her. So this inclines Liza to do little things because she wants to. She says "sometimes, if I got chance, I say '...let me cook for you. You can eat food from my hands' " . Sometimes he might ask her to do him a favour such as ironing a shirt of his, and she feels that what he asks of her is a small thing. She says "I'm happy. I don't mind." It is important to note here that he asks her, he does not demand. Nor does she demand things from her partner. This would seem
to incline both parties to make little efforts for one another: they are not required, and are therefore much easier to make.

The picture she paints is one of quiet affection, friendship, and contentment. Considering Liza's belief that healthy relationships are characterised by comfortable camaraderie, consideration, and respect, and that a couple should talk with one another and make each other happy, her relationship clearly fulfils her expectations and is, therefore, evaluated as being a healthy and worthwhile one.

Liza says of her relationship with her boyfriend “We are happy together” and “everything we got it”. However, there is a problem. Liza says “... We been together for such a long time. And I’ve got the problem, I want to tell you the truth. I think he’s just thinking why I’m not having children. I think it’s this point, he never told me, but I can see, sometimes when we talking, he’s keep on touching that”. Although she and her partner can talk about other things, they do not discuss the issue of children. She says “We never go down there. We just be friend. I am so scared”. It would seem that Liza’s fear that her partner will leave her if she makes it plain that she cannot have children precludes a direct discussion on the subject. While the issue is not discussed it does not require a decision, and this suits Liza, because she cares deeply for her partner.

She feels that if her partner can live with the fact that she cannot have children then she will be very happy to marry him, because all other aspects of their relationship are satisfactory. She says “I would really like to get married with him... deeply inside, you know, I would like to be with him forever... not someone else, just him”. However, she feels that her childless state stops him asking her to marry him. Liza admits that if he cannot live with this problem then it is better - in her opinion - if he finds someone else who will be able to give him children. This would make her very sad, but it is the way she believes things should be. She says “If this is the problem,... then he better go ...if he knows that this lady never have children... I say okay he can find somebody else”. Clearly, their shared valuing of children stands in their favour, but the fact that they cannot have children together is a major stumbling block.

Given the positive things her partner does and his manner with her, Liza concludes “I like him... I wouldn’t say he’s not a crook, but I just like him. I think he’s better.”
Nevertheless, she adds "I couldn't say at the corner, ... at the back, behind him, I don't know what's happening. Maybe if I can follow him, one day I'll see, and then I'll be very sad". Liza thus indicates that she is happy with her current partner, but she does not entirely trust him. She believes that even he, who is better than other men, might have other girlfriends, he might deceive her. She says she could never trust anybody one hundred percent. "I say 'OK, he is okay. As a man he's okay', but "at the corner, I don't know what he's doing. Maybe he will find a lady who's going to make children with him, and he will be very happy, because he wants children." So she believes that eventually "he will just pass like the other ones, this one", because she cannot have children. Sternberg and Barnes (1985) maintain that relationships succeed or fail because of what the self perceives the other to feel and this argument seems to be supported by what Liza says here.

From what she has said of her current partner and their relationship it is apparent that he and the relationship satisfy many - if not most - of the criteria that Liza considers important. When asked what motivates her to continue with her current partner Liza replied "I want to be with him because I am happy, and I like him". She adds "He makes me happy. I be happy if I saw his face, and I just happy for everything for him". She continues with her current relationship because for the most part she finds it satisfying. She finds it particularly satisfying that she and her partner can talk to each other, that they are comfortable, and that they make each other happy in a quiet way. Ultimately she stays with her partner because, as she has said, she loves him deeply, and they have everything she could want in a relationship. Except children. Since the last is not likely to change, Liza contents herself with what she has, trying not to dwell on her belief that one day her partner will leave her for someone who can give him a child.

It is apparent that Liza has found someone who comes close to her high standards, and whom she loves. In terms of her preferences, Liza's partner fulfils her desire for a good person with a good heart, and someone who respects her. If we return to her beliefs about men in general, it becomes apparent why she considers her partner to be a cut above the typical Black man. To begin with, he does not believe that her place is in the kitchen, since he does not require her to cook and clean for him. Where the average man does not respect a woman or her opinions, her partner gives her a chance to speak, listens to her, and respects her wishes. Where most men do not care about women, are aggressive and domineering, her
partner is caring and considerate and does not display aggressive tendencies. He exceeds her expectations of men in general and she considers him to be better than most. The only place where he does not score top marks is in the area of trust. Liza still feels a little wary, simply because he is a man and perhaps she cannot quite believe that he will never show the characteristics common to men. She also holds the belief that men want children to ensure the continuation of their name, and since she cannot have children, her partner will eventually find someone who can and leave her. Combined here are her belief about men wanting children and her belief that men leave.

Taken together, it is apparent how Liza's beliefs come to influence her evaluation of her partner. Beliefs about men and relationships underlie what is expected of both and help to shape how a given partner and a given relationship are evaluated. She will evaluate a particular man against her comparison level, in other words what she believes to be true of men in general, as well as in terms of her expectations of healthy relationship (Stemberg & Barnes, 1985). In Liza's case the evaluation is positive when he exceeds her comparison level, and he fulfils her expectations, leading her to conclude that she is in a healthy relationship with a good man. Given these conditions she maintains her commitment to both (Rusbult, 1980).

At this point Liza's narrative is complete. Let us proceed to the fifth, and final, narrative; that which belongs to Vanessa.
CHAPTER EIGHT

VANESSA: CALLING A SPADE A SPADE

8.1. Demographics.

The interview with Vanessa took place at her home on the 15th of October 1998. At that time she was twenty five years old. She was born in Zimbabwe to Portuguese parents. They moved from Zimbabwe to Portugal when she was about five years old, and came from there to South Africa in 1983. Vanessa identifies her cultural background as Portuguese, but also considers herself South African. She is a Christian, but emphasises that she is not Catholic, as her parents are. She is very lively, and gives the impression of holding in check an intense and volatile energy that is just waiting to burst out of her. Vanessa attended school up to and including standard eight, and then went on to do a six-month travel course. She has been working in that field ever since, attending further workshops and courses that pertain to her work as a travel agent. She and her partner, G, have been together for four years. They have lived together for three of those years, and in January 1998 they decided to get married. They have not formally become engaged, but plan to marry in 1999.

Before we can consider the criteria Vanessa might look for in her ideal partner, it is necessary to look at her views on partners in general.

8.2. Partners.

Vanessa believes that everyone is “trying to find that right partner. And I strongly believe that there’s someone out there for someone else, and all you have to do is wait”. Given this, she believes that “it’s when people try to be something that they are not, when they... [search for a person] that they think they should be looking for, then they get into problems. Because that is not what you’re looking for... it is what your mind... and your perception of what people expect you to find in somebody you try and find in somebody”. So, it is clear that as far as Vanessa is concerned “people these days spend too much time thinking about what other people think they should find in a husband. And it doesn’t work that way”.

She says one has to go beyond what other people think one should look for and “when you go deeper, you actually find that what you thought... you were looking
for isn't actually what you were looking for. Because, you know, your mind is a very tricky thing”. One might be with someone who is not what one at first thought one was looking for, but after some time “your stuff, the real you, starts surfacing to the top. And the real things that you expect from other people come surfacing to the top, and then you actually realise that this is who you were looking for your entire life ...”. She gives as an example her partnership with G: “I fell in love with a man I didn’t even like!... but you can dislike someone for as long as you like, if he’s meant for you, he’s meant for you”. So, to a large extent, Vanessa believes that one’s partner is predestined, but one is by no means passive in this process.

Each person has his or her own preferences for a partner. While a person might not be who one thought one was looking for, certain characteristics of that person must be present. Vanessa says one might think “Oh, so he’s missing one quality, I’m sure we can build it in’... you can’t build it in. As much as you try you can’t. That person is meant for someone else. ...you happy for the first couple of months...and then suddenly you wake up and you think ‘My God, I don’t like you. There’s nothing about you I like!’”. In other words, a person either possesses the qualities one needs or he does not; he is either the person one is meant to be with, or he is not. On the surface things may be fine, but the surface things are not what one is looking for. As Vanessa says, surface things wear away and then “thirty years down the line he turns out to be gay, and you turn out to be lonely!”.

8.3. Ideal partner.

One might not actively search for a partner, but if one should meet someone, one must have some basic ideas about what one considers important. In this regard Vanessa begins with the stipulation that a partner has got to be trustworthy. This means that Vanessa can “rely on him and ...can trust on him for ...matters of importance or just ...anything.” He is not only reliable - and in that sense trustworthy, but also trusts her. She says “I want him to trust my judgement...He’s got to trust me and believe in me.” She says that in a nutshell what she looks for in this instance is someone who respects her.

To this she adds that “he’s got to be understanding. He’s got to listen, but not only with his ears. ...”. Vanessa is a fairly volatile person, so she explains that when she expects a man to be understanding she means “He’s ...got to understand me. I’m a very complex person. I make no qualms about that. I’m more complex than people |
know'. When asked to clarify what she means by "complex" she says "I'm just confused!" and "There's just things that I do, that I do different to other people". So, if a man understands her she expects that he will get to know her sufficiently well to know the kinds of things that will annoy her, or please her. He should learn to know her mannerisms, and her habits. She says "he's got to know that the things he might do will annoy me, and then be able to take ... exactly what's coming to him". Vanessa illustrates her point by saying "I might fly off the handle over something stupid. Put a glass in the wrong place and that will just trigger my mind to go into an absolute rage. And he's got to be able to just ... handle that". This quote indicates her opinion of herself, and also what she expects from a partner. When she says "handle" something, she means he should not take it too personally if she goes ballistic over something he does that is minor - like putting a glass in the "wrong place".

Vanessa adds that if a man is to be an ideal partner "He's got to be my best friend... Friendship is very important. I want to be able to speak to him... like I would to any other normal friend. Be it about things that I know might upset him, you know things will happen, and I might tell him, and he might be upset over that. But he has to be able to ... you know, deal with that... take the criticism that I give as exactly what it is. Not anything malicious or vicious, but ... the truth." It is clear from this quote and those preceding it that Vanessa's ideal partner is someone who is mature enough and self-contained enough to be able to deal with her fiery nature and her volatility without taking things too personally. He is her friend, he respects her, she can communicate with him. To this list Vanessa adds that she does not "place an important ... bracket ... on sex. Yes, it is important, but it's not the basis of my kind of person". This section describes the most salient characteristics of a person Vanessa would consider as an ideal partner, and in so doing also outlines the dimensions of compatibility that Vanessa finds most important (De Angelis, 1992).

8.3.1. Boyfriends and husbands.

It was clear from the way Vanessa spoke that for her an ideal partner would become a husband. When asked what a husband's role is, she initially responded that "He's someone who mows the lawn... Honest. He's someone - just the plain, simple things about a husband, without getting too in depth - he's just someone who mows the lawn, washes the car, who goes to work...". In other words, he is just a person who does mundane things. She said that in her opinion there are no particular
things that all husbands should do, or should be, since "to say that would mean that I wanted them to change who they are. ... G is who he is. And when I marry him and he becomes my husband, he will still be who he is. I have no greater expectations of him as my husband than I do as my boyfriend, or my fiancé, or whatever".

To clarify what distinguishes a boyfriend from a husband Vanessa said that a husband is "your soul-mate. He is someone that you want to be with. He is someone that is caring, that is understanding, and, that he was when he was your boyfriend, but he's now, three times, four times, five times more... He is more than what he was when he was your boyfriend, because he has grown in all those different aspects". She says"... I expect from a boyfriend exactly what I would expect from a husband" but "...everything that I would expect in a boyfriend... in a husband...I would expect it to be more refined, more profound". For this reason, if she does not perceive the things she looks for in a husband to be part of a boyfriend's character and way of being, that relationship will not progress to the level where marriage is a consideration.

Given the above, it makes sense to ask how a relationship progresses to the point where marriage is the next step. This is what Vanessa has to say.

8.4. Relationships.

8.4.1. Nature of romantic relationships.

Initially, Vanessa said that the difference between a boyfriend and a male friend is essentially that one "sleeps with the one and not with the other". However, she amended that statement and went on to say that this does not adequately describe a romantic relationship. She elaborated by saying "it's not the same... there is an emotional... attachment, that you don't have with someone else that you've slept with and are now friends with". What distinguishes the two is also that "We communicate on a different level completely.....it's a more in-depth thing. There's more feeling involved than just having a six month relationship with somebody". By way of illustrating her point, Vanessa says "I've been with G four years now, and you, you grow in the relationship. You learn something new every day. And that also I enjoy; that I don't know somebody straight away. I think it should take a life time for you to know somebody, because they change all the time". Vanessa explains that knowing someone means that one knows "what triggers him", one
knows the mundane things like how he takes his coffee, and how he likes his things arranged. She says it's a matter of his "being easy for me to read, and not easy for other people to read". After a fair amount of time together, the bond between a couple becomes almost a 'psychic connection': "It's going further than a friendship, going further than a sexual relationship. It is a partnership... in the way that we run our home, we have friends in common, we run our lives, our businesses... I like to know that I can pick up on ...things without him having to say anything." In other words, it is the special knowledge that one gets from knowing someone over a long period of time that makes a relationship special, combined with a certain level of intimacy and communication that one does not have with a friend.

It is apparent from the above that relationships go through a process of development in which a couple must get to know one another and develop a sense of intimacy: a bond. Vanessa says that at first, "in the relationship don't expect too much ... because it's got to go from a little relationship, from a young relationship to a... mature relationship before you can ...get married. So that process in between has got to be a learning curve. So don't assume too much ... because it's when you do that that you miss your partner's behaviour, and you miss the little things that bother your partner...". For Vanessa, "It's those little things that are so important...because far too many people in relationships, they do far too much talking, and far too little listening. And it's not listening with your ears, it's that body language that is so important in a relationship". Little things that one learns about one's partner are important, because "it's those things. It's the things that I know, I know that he will always do them the same" that allow Vanessa, and by abstraction any other person, to get closer to their partner. That is the stuff of intimacy and intimacy takes time. It is apparent from the above that for Vanessa a relationship with one's partner is the main source of intimacy (Hsu, 1971).

In terms of the development of intimacy Vanessa says "Don't be in such a hurry. There's twenty four hours in a day, there's seven days a week, twelve months a year. That's a long time..." and one should use it wisely in getting to know one's partner, since that time - paradoxically - passes relatively quickly, perhaps leading to a false sense of intimacy when one has not taken time to pay attention to the little things that can make or break a relationship. One should, therefore, not be in a hurry to reach some final point, such as marriage, since one may well find one has made a mistake in one's choice of partner if one rushes to hold on to him or her
without giving due thought to whether or not he or she is actually the right person and whether or not the relationship is worth continuing.

8.4.2. Ingredients.

It is apparent from the above that a certain amount of independence as well as self-knowledge is required in finding one’s other half. Vanessa believes that a particular weakness in women is that “they go looking for their partners. They strive their entire lives to ... make themselves something they [are] not, until they find him ... and then they try to change, and then they move themselves to who they are, and they don’t get the reaction from the man that they think they would, because - obviously - that’s not what he fell in love with”. The implication is that one must be honest with oneself, and with a partner about who one really is. It does no good to pretend to be someone or something one is not for the sake of holding someone close. Sooner or later the truth will surface.

Truth and honesty go hand-in-hand with trust. As far as Vanessa is concerned the basis of a good relationship is trust “Because from there ... you branch out to everything else”. Trust is based on honesty. Friendship will flow from a trusting relationship in which people are truthful with one another. As far as the sexual side of a romantic relationship is concerned Vanessa says that “if you can be sexual with someone else, you can sure as hell be sexual with your partner. Because if it works with one, it works with the other.” What distinguishes a special relationship from a friendship or a sexual encounter is trust: “It’s trust that is so different. And you trust different people, in different ways... I wouldn’t trust a friend of mine the same way that I trust G. By no means. It’s a totally different thing. I wouldn’t say things to a friend as I would say to G... but on the other hand, you could say something to G that you would have said to your friend”.

Trust and friendship go along with respect. Respect for one’s partner is important and it extends to having some consideration for them and recognising the things that they do, as well as appreciating those things. Vanessa believes that “women like ...having someone... realise that they are doing something that they do every day. That someone notices that they do that tedious job every day. Because all house work is tedious”. She says “for someone that lives in your house, to notice that you’re doing [the housework] alone and offer to help, it’s just simple, it’s just nice. That’s all it is, just nice. And you know ... if I’m washing the dishes and he
collects all the cups that are lying around the house, perfect. It's something [and] you feel he's doing his share...". Thus, when a partner pulls his or her weight and helps out, it makes the other person feel that they are not being taken for granted, and that their partner is caring and helping.

Vanessa says that each partner can find different ways of making their other half feel acknowledged, appreciated, and cared for. For example, "women know that they can never help a man with the mechanics, ...but..."Would you like a cup of coffee? Can I go to the shop for you?" women do that automatically, because they know, they know what their husbands need without them even saying it". In truth, she believes that "women don't want men to help them in the kitchen. Very seldom that that happens. But a simple 'would you like my help? Is there anything I can do? Can I take out the rubbish?' and she'll obviously 'Oh, ja, take out the rubbish', and those little things. But in the back of her mind she's 'Oh, he's so sweet'. And he'll do it every single night, and the woman will have the same, she'll have the same thought: 'Oh, he asked. Isn't that sweet', because that is the way we are". In this way, a small gesture goes a long way to cementing a relationship.

Given that small gestures are important in a relationship it is significant that in Vanessa's opinion "Men don't do that. Men take it for granted that women just do things when they married for the sake of doing them. That it's their job, it's their duty, it's their role as a mother, or a wife, or whatever. Men take that for granted". Vanessa believes that "Men have to be more in tune to [the things women do]. They... have to be more wired to their wives" and acknowledge the little things that get done every day if their relationships are to flourish. She states that "you've got to appreciate each other all the time. It's not just something that grows out with age... I think that is a misconception of a lot of relationships. They think that once they get into the four years and the ten years...that those things fall away. They don't. Relationships are worked on every single day'. This is because "if you don't work in your relationship then you become complacent. You become two boring old people that live in the same house for the sake of living and growing old, because there's nowhere else to go....and it's not like that. It should be exciting"

So, for Vanessa, a relationship has to do with "trusting, and understanding, and actually just... paying attention to the little things...being in tune with your partner...". Being in tune with a partner involves "Knowing when to be quiet. ...Very
difficult the relationships, because you always think you've got to catch up". For example, one's partner might have just come back from work, and one rushes to talk to him or her and catch up on the day's events. Vanessa says "Be still. Lie like broccoli. Relax... Be quiet. Enjoy each other's silence".

The ability to be quiet and relaxed relates to one's sense of independence. Vanessa is of the opinion that "people in relationships must actually stop being so dependent on their other partners... because any number of things can happen. Not just break-ups, but drastic things can happen. If you are not an individual who believes that you can stand on your own, and that you can go on... you actually are in a lot of trouble, because you will actually not survive the trials and tribulations that come with being close-knit with somebody". Thus, a relationship is two individual people coming together, living together, growing closer together and growing individually. It is apparent here that Vanessa defines herself - and others - as individuals who are inherently separate from one another (Hatfield & Rapson, 1993; Triandis, 1996).

It is because we are all individuals that relationships do not run smoothly. Vanessa says that part of the development of a relationship is "knowing that some things will annoy your partner... and then, I wouldn't even say try not to do it, because it'll only work for about a week! Just know, that if you're going to do something that annoys your partner, be ready to take... the wrath that is coming". Trying to avoid doing things that annoy one's partner is futile because "the minute that you expect your partner not to do it you changing him... To be a different person. And he's not". That is why any such attempt will only work temporarily. The implication is also that one must accept a partner for who s/he is, without trying to change her/him.

Given that Vanessa does not think it a good idea to try and change anyone and her view that attempts to avoid doing annoying things will be only temporarily successful, it is clear that conflicts will arise. Vanessa has a fair amount to say on the topic of conflict and its resolution.

8.4.2.1. Conflict and resolution.
To begin with she says that there is "nothing like a good fight in a relationship. Because you let off all that steam, you know. The stress levels just drop!". She adds "I think it's really, really healthy to have a good, serious argument. Because
only then do you take the scabs off, and you sort of like dig in deep and you bring out all of that stuff that’s there. And then you come to the solutions, and you resolve all that stuff and then it’s finished”. Clearly her problem-solving response of choice is “voice” (Rusbult, 1980) and this is significant given Metts and Cupach’s (1990) conclusion that voice is positively correlated with relationship satisfaction.

In terms of the development of a relationship, Vanessa believes that “once you come to a... situation where you can both scream at each other .... And you can go to sleep together in the same bed, and wake up like nothing’s happened, you got it made”. However, “It’s when you go to sleep...on an argument, and you wake up you still got that sour face, you got yourself a serious problem. Because it was yesterday’s argument. Today’s a brand new day”. Thus it is apparent that for Vanessa, conflict is healthy, and natural, but it does need to be resolved completely. For her there is no point in allowing an issue to fester because it has not been dealt with in its entirety. If that happens, one is headed for trouble. She says “if you leave it for the next day, it will usually fester into something very, very much bigger than it should be and, and sometimes you ...reach the point of no return”. For this reason “if you’ve got something to say you really have to...get it off your chest. Just...let it out. Don’t go to sleep until it’s done...”. Here Vanessa indicates a belief in verbalising and negotiating her problems, needs, and wants as an individual rather than avoiding conflict. Thus she suggests affiliation with an individualistic culture (Ting-Toomey, 1991; Triandis, 1996; Triandis et al, 1988).

In her opinion there are no two people who never disagree, “but there is a different way of arguing. There is a different way of having a fight. Yes, you can have a fight. Yes, I think it is very healthy. Yes, I think it is going to happen, and yes you need it. ...but you’ve got to be mature enough to know that it is a fight over a subject...and once it is resolved, and you’ve come to a finishing of it, that it is finished....the chances of that person doing it again are very seldom, and if he does it, he’s an idiot!”. So, issues should be resolved and then allowed to rest in peace.

Despite the fact that issues will be resolved, Vanessa believes that there will always be something that crops up. She says that “you will know for a fact that other stuff will come along...that’ll make you angry again. But it is something different, it’s something new, and it’s something you’ve got to tackle. Don’t add that problem onto last night’s problem so that you’ll come home and have a big, fat shindig
because it doesn’t work. It just gets you so angry, and so… beyond the point of having a proper discussion. Because then you not discussing anymore. You just hurling insults and, and ridiculing each other. Then just give it up”. As Vanessa says “The minute that you start hurling insults at one another… that you not even arguing the subject any more…you haven’t resolved the stuff that was six years ago… I’m talking about serious stuff. I’m not talking about the laundry, those things will always come up. Those are house things. House things always come up”. So Vanessa is saying that an argument can and should be constructive, and that serious matters should be thoroughly dealt with and resolved. If a couple are just flinging insults at one another over an issue that should have been resolved long ago then it means that they have lost respect for each other, and that means the relationship is in deep trouble.

It is Vanessa’s opinion that relationships get into trouble because people do not completely work through a problem or because they make excuses not to deal with their issues. She says that “to fester over something …stupid is what ruins relationships in our day and age, because no one communicates any more. And no one can say to me ‘Oh, but my husband works late’ because no one’s husband works later than mine! Unless he’s in the restaurant business it doesn’t happen… So because your husband goes to a meeting and comes home at 9 o’clock, you still have a hell of a lot of time to argue”. In other words, there are no excuses for not resolving a problem. One can always find some time to deal with it.

While dealing with genuine issues is healthy, Vanessa adds that “what people always try to do to their relationships …is they try to find problems that are not there”. She believes that if a couple who ordinarily do not fight suddenly begin to do so, “it usually means that there’s something not right there that should have been happening all along, but you’ve been so comfortable with this [relationship] that you’ve forgotten all those things.” While Vanessa feels it is fine for some couples never to fight, for herself, she prefers a good fight every now and then.

With regard to the development process of a relationship, Vanessa does not believe that it is all smooth sailing, as is abundantly clear from the preceding discussion on conflict. However, conflict can be healthy if “everything that you go through in a relationship … gets you back to the point where you want to be… then everything was worth it. Because if you hadn’t gone through that process, you would have
never known these things. You would have never discussed these things, and you would never... actually get out what needs to get out before you can carry on to a higher level, or a better relationship”. In other words, a relationship is a process. A relationship develops from a young relationship to a mature relationship and in between these two points is a learning curve. It is the process of moving from, for example, not speaking about issues and assuming things - and then having those backfire in your face - to a point where you either break up or you move on to a higher level of intimacy. Thus, as a relationship changes and develops perceptions of features that are applicable to it also change, as do the interpersonal constructs that individuals use to make sense of events (Fehr, 1988; Duck, 1973).

Part of resolving conflicts and living in sync with another individual is compromise. Vanessa states that "It is very important that you compromise or else [you are] going to be at heads with each other”. One compromises in the process of decision-making and also in other areas. For example, compromise extends to when each member of a couple is buying things for themselves, like clothing, or music. They each consider the other's tastes because they have to live with each other. The implication is that one takes one's partners tastes and feelings into account when one is in a long-term relationship. With regard to decision-making, Vanessa says "if you are really properly and truly rooted in this relationship, you usually come to the right decision together... taking bits from your decision, and bits from the other decision, you come with a solution, that works. Because a lot of the times, you know, when you make a decision, you make the decision for me, me, me...because that's what personal means. And the other person as well: me, me, me, me, me. And only when you come together ...do you actually realise, that a lot of the things work for both of you....and it actually becomes...a much better thing".

She adds that while “A lot of the times we agree on the same thing, ...you still have to come to that agreement on your own”. The reason that this is important is because “A lot of people [in relationships] stop being who they are as individuals and they become something together. And that is usually where you encounter problems. Because six years down the line, you think to yourself, ‘This isn't who I am. This never was who I am. I don't like the choices that we have made’. ...You have got to think with your own mind. You have both got to have a different opinion and come to a compromise”. Thus, “personal growth is very important. I don't believe that you get married, and you become Mr. And Mrs. Whatever, and that you
conform to one set of rules. That is very narrow-minded, because...we are all individuals... ...when you get married, that doesn't change. You don't both stop being who you are and become this other person, together”. This very clearly shows that for Vanessa a relationship is about two individuals coming together to form a couple, and learning to live as a couple while still remaining individuals. For Vanessa, when two individuals find one another the bottom line is that they have got to learn “to be in tune with somebody”.

In terms of learning to co-exist with someone Vanessa says that “life is full of little things. Every single decision that you make about what you going to do is little. It’s not humongous...and that’s it. That is what a relationship is. When those ...humongous problems fall away, and you get little worries”. Vanessa's narrative suggested that in a relationship at first a couple have to find a way with each other, they have to find out who the other person really is: what they like, what they do not like, what will trigger their moods, learning to cope with their habits, and so on. That is what is involved in the development of a relationship to the point where a couple consider marriage. Since Vanessa and G have apparently reached that point, what does Vanessa have to say about marriage?

8.4.3. Marriage.
When asked why she wants to get married, Vanessa at first responded humorously by saying “Why do I want to get married? Oh well there's got to be something after here. I mean, you know, I've got a stupid surname I'd like to change it!”. However, she then continued by saying that one marries someone “because you love them, and you want to spend the rest of your life with them. You want to grow with them...”. As far as she is concerned “when you're not bonded...by a godly marriage, you are not bound, you are two people who live in the same house”.

It is clear from the above that in Vanessa's opinion a relationship reaches a stage where marriage completes the picture, and without marriage, something is missing. She verifies this when she says “I'd like to be married because I would like to ...make it legal. You know I don't live a legal relationship [in religious terms]...and that's important to me”. For Vanessa, it does not feel entirely right not to be married. Her marrying G somehow makes the relationship right for her. She explains by saying “let's put it to you this way. If I never got married... I would still live with G, things would not change. People would perceive us as being a
couple... but that's to everybody else. But you see, I am somebody who doesn't care what everybody else has to say... I want my relationship with my husband to be one that is bonded in... the eyes of God...". For Vanessa things are different than for everybody else. It is not a stigma or anything like that that drives her, but rather her own feelings of what works for her and what does not.

As to why marriage feels right, Vanessa explained that she feels that "to get married is to unite ourselves, closer with each other". Furthermore, the piece of paper "makes it solid. It puts that seal of approval on it. It, it sort of says that... we've come a long way and this is the prize... This is the thing. This is what we get if we can actually make it through this whole process. We can actually get married and stay married". Marriage is something very positive because it is symbolic of the success of a relationship. Vanessa expands on this by saying that marriage is a serious commitment: "Marriage means together forever until death do us part... there's no in between here. Marriages are not things of convenience. You know, divorce is so easy to do, so let's just get married. It doesn't work that way... It's got to be something that you decide it is the time that you can do it, because from now on you will stay together forever. There's nothing... that can come between you... all the little holes have been filled in, and this is the piece of paper that proves that you can do it...". By "all the little holes", Vanessa means that a couple have survived all the ups and downs in their time together. They have been able to overcome past troubles and create something new and now they know that "there's nothing that can stop us together to have a perfect life together, forever." That perfect life is being married and knowing that nothing can come between you. It is knowing that "you can confront the hurdles and the obstacles as they come, together". You no longer have to face life's troubles alone. It is not that people lose their individuality, but that they have a certain unity and someone to lean on and "no matter what happens you are still, together as one".

From the above it is apparent that Vanessa views marriage as the logical conclusion for a good relationship. Since she would like to marry G, it is safe to assume that she views her relationship as a successful one. However, before we can consider what she says about her current relationship, it is necessary to consider the somewhat turbulent history of the relationship between Vanessa and G. This will further elucidate her beliefs and expectations as well as providing insight into Vanessa's motivation for staying with G, and wanting to marry him.

Vanessa says that when she first met G, she did not like him. She thought he was “pompous, and that he was actually rude”. She adds “I don’t think he liked me very much either... Because, I just wouldn’t stand for his ... bullshit, actually”. They were working at the same restaurant - he was a manager, she was a waitress - when they met, and Vanessa had organised her shifts so that she could leave in time to go to her second job. This bent the rules somewhat, and G did not like that. She told him that was just "tough". There was no open hostility between the two of them, mainly because they more or less ignored one another. She says that she and her colleagues used to go out after work, and one day G began to come along. Vanessa was living in a commune and dating someone else at the time and did not take any particular notice of G. Then she broke up with that partner and G asked her out for lunch. She agreed and they began speaking, and he began to spend time at her house, which was closer to the restaurant than his place. So Vanessa invited him to move in. Some time after that the commune dissolved and by that time Vanessa and G had been seeing each other for some time, so they moved in together.

Shortly after that G changed jobs and as Vanessa says “he decided that trying out his waitresses was okay”. In other words, he began cheating on Vanessa with one of the waitresses. As to why he cheated on her, Vanessa suggests that “Maybe he was afraid to be tied down, you know, the relationship was fairly new. We sort of, like, got stuck together for the sake of finance ... and then maybe he was looking for something else, maybe a little bit of excitement...maybe someone who would listen to him speaking, because, you know at that stage, he was coming home I was sleeping, I was going to work, he was sleeping. So it got very much where we didn’t communicate much...We didn’t see each other, quite frankly”. As for her part in why G looked for another woman Vanessa says that before she and G broke up she had “stopped giving the things I would normally give to you freely. I started keeping some of that stuff for myself, my emotions, my feelings, my anger, my sadness. Very much to myself...I would presume maybe this was why he went looking for something else. I can’t tell you that, I don’t know”.

She says that when she discovered that G had been cheating on her she felt “saddened, I was angry, I was ... I felt violated. Very much violated, because I
thought, you know when you get into this kind of a relationship, which was the first time I'd ever gotten into this type of relationship - living with someone, and trying to build a home - I thought that everything would ... be like ... a forever relationship....I just felt betrayed”. In other words, living with a man is a serious step in a relationship implying some commitment or permanence. In terms of her feelings Vanessa adds “I felt like I wasn't worth anything. I felt that this person was better looking than me ... spoke better than me, you know, and yes, in a lot of ways she was all those things”. Vanessa says “I didn’t know. I’m not stupid, but ... because the blinkers were on... I thought I was, the woman.” Humorously, but also somewhat angrily she then says “I was the woman that used to cook, clean, shit, shave, and shampoo!” meaning that she was a glorified housewife who was taken for granted.

Vanessa says the whole incident came to a head gradually. She and G had been going along alright and then “his attitude changed. Everything I used to say, he used to snap at me, he used to say things to me that he would never say. We used to argue all the time, more than normal. And then one day I got home and I said ‘This isn’t going anywhere, is it? We not actually in the right direction. You want something, and ...At the moment, I can’t give it to you’. ... and he said ‘Yes’ and he said ‘I’ve decided to leave’. And it was when he said he’d decided to leave, that I had this panic attack. This absolute ... grabbing of my stomach, and turning, and I was afraid. For the first time in my entire life that I was that afraid, to be left alone. And I thought ‘Oh my God, what do I do now? How do I make him stay? ...Do I tie him to the bed? Do I, do I just lock the doors?’ ... and he left and when I was alone in this humongous house I thought, ‘Oh my God, what do I do?’”.

She says that when G first left “it was a very rough time for me... I didn’t do well. And I begged him to come back, and I was like... it was pathetic. I would say I was quite pathetic”. By way of explanation for why she felt she was pathetic, Vanessa states “I couldn’t live without him. ...I started drinking! I mean, can you cope? I was going to die, my life was over. I couldn’t do it without him. How was I going to survive? It really, I was quite pathetic. That’s the only word to use...I had no self-esteem. I had no drive, no ambition... no gumption, no sex drive, no sex appeal, no, no mind! It was all just fizzled. It actually just came to a dead end”. In other words, she depended on him for her existence. She says her life took a really bad turn “and then I had to go to work! Because the rent had to be paid, and the bills
had to be paid...". This state of events did not go on forever, of course. Vanessa says that "after a while I actually woke up and said to myself 'You know, this is actually quite ridiculous. The only way that I can win him back is by being what he wants me to be. Big mistake. Because it's not what I want to be, and who I am, first, to begin with'". It is clear from Vanessa's tale that her construct system has changed as a result of G's leaving her, and consequently she has come to a different interpretation of the experience (Kelly, 1955; Adams-Webber, 1970). At first G's leaving was traumatic for her, but that when she had had some time away from him, it actually became an experience that strengthened her. This is borne out in what happened when they got back together.

Christmas came, and the woman that G had been seeing left him to go back to her boyfriend, and "then he has a motorbike accident. And I'm the only one that is there.... and I take care of him, and ... I take him home, and ... it just started again from the beginning! Where we just, I just went through the motions of, of being the housewife, and ... being the girlfriend, and it was just, it went through this whole process all over again". Essentially, they got back together because Vanessa was the only person around at the time to help G after his accident, but nothing had been resolved.

She says "...we got back... into that routine of everything being hunky-dory, not discussing how the break-up happened to have come along, so everything was put in the back seat and we went on as usual". That did not work for very long and Vanessa then left G. She says of the time that she left G that "I spent a year by myself, and I learned that I like myself, that I could be alone, that I could be okay, that I could take care of myself". After about a year, she and G began speaking to one another again, and after a while Vanessa "started looking at him in a different way, and then everything else that I saw in the beginning came back. His listening, his conversation, his...habits". She says that this time since they got back together, their relationship has been different.

One change is that they have learned to communicate better with one another, and have learned to discuss issues that bother them. One such issue was that G "was, many years ago, in a relationship with a woman who is now married, and she used to phone and tell G that she wanted to come back to him, and he would listen to her troubles, but not confront her about her wanting to come back to him. Vanessa's
opinion on the matter was quite clear-cut. She says "Being her friend, and consenting to what she is saying and doing are two very different things". As far as she is concerned it is a good thing to remain friends with an ex-partner, but it is not acceptable to encourage that person in thinking there is a possibility of renewing the romantic relationship while one is involved with someone else. Even if one is only subtly encouraging such a belief by not confronting the person on that issue. Thus, the problem is not in G remaining friends with this woman. Vanessa says "it depends on what... that past partner wants... This woman has an ulterior motive, and there is where the damage comes in". Vanessa's statement suggests something about her expectation that in a relationship it is not acceptable for one partner to create a sort of menage-a-trois by allowing or encouraging an outside party to interfere in the intimacy of the couple. Vanessa says "there is a relationship between two people, and she is not part of that". What she is also suggesting is that people must have a certain integrity and live by it. Thus, as mentioned in chapter two, Vanessa shows that she has certain schemata connecting self and other and each one's behaviour in the context of a relationship into a whole picture or expectation (Carver & Scheier, 1988).

Of the incident referred to above, Vanessa adds that "It made me very angry that he thought that I was stupid and naïve not to pick it up. Because it was very much in hiding, and it was very much something that he didn't discuss with me... I picked it up by letters that I found in our house... And it was the things that she said in this letter that I thought to myself, you know, he has never once confronted her, he has never once told me about it, because if he had told me about it then she would no longer... be a threat. Because then I would know." However, Vanessa does not feel truly threatened by this woman because "If she wants to leave her husband, and come here, and try and take my husband-to-be, she's more than welcome to. Because if he goes with her, he was never meant for me".

At this point we can bring together Vanessa's beliefs and expectations about men and relationships, before proceeding to a consideration of the influences on those ideas. (Some of her beliefs about Portuguese men in particular will be expanded upon in a later section).
8.6. Beliefs.

8.6.1. Men.
Men take the things women do for granted.
Men are afraid to be tied down to one person.
Men look for excitement.
A Portuguese man wants a wife who will cook, clean, have children, and stay at home to cater to his needs.
Portuguese men are close-minded.
Portuguese men have a barefoot and pregnant mentality where women are concerned.
A Portuguese man’s home is his domain and his wife does as she is told.
A Portuguese man will rope a woman into marriage with false pretences.
A Portuguese man turns his wife into his mother.
Portuguese men hit their women.

8.6.2. Relationships.

8.6.2.1. General.
There is someone out there for everyone.
Initial reactions to a person are not necessarily an accurate indication of the potential of a relationship.
Relationships take time to develop and the truth (about a couple’s potential) will come out in time.
Surface things wear away.
Sooner or later the truth will surface, so there is no point in trying to hide who you are, or in pretending to be someone you’re not, just to get or hold a man.
A person either possesses the qualities one values or he does not.
There are different levels of relationships.
Relationships can be superficial and fleeting or they can be more substantial and hold the potential for marriage.
The difference between a boyfriend and a male friend one has slept with is the nature of the attachment that one has with the former and not the latter.
There is a level of intimacy and communication in a romantic relationship that one does not have with a friend.
You learn something new every day.
People change all the time so it takes a life time to know them fully. Relationship development involves getting to know the other and building a sense of intimacy and a bond. A relationship is a process. Relationship development involves a learning curve. A person's behaviour is a clue to their character, so paying attention to body language and listening to the other facilitate learning. Assumptions cause trouble, especially in the beginning of a relationship. Intimate knowledge of the other facilitates closeness and bonding. It is better to take one's time and be thoughtful in making relationship choices and decisions so as not to make mistakes. Sex itself is not special. Trust is what distinguishes sex in a relationship from a casual encounter. Being close to another person is not trouble-free, because we are all individuals. There are no two people who never disagree. Conflict is inevitable. Problems are not without value if their resolution brings a couple closer together. At crisis points in the process of relationship development a couple either break up or move on to a deeper level of intimacy. Compromise does not mean becoming a single entity or not thinking for yourself. A relationship is about two individuals coming together to form a couple, and learning to co-exist while still remaining individuals. The bottom line is that two people in a relationship have to learn to be in tune with one another. Long-term relationships are about little things because the major decisions and issues have been sorted out. People are meant to be together or they are not. If two people are meant to be a couple, nothing and no one can separate them. A relationship exists between two people, and there is no place for a third person in that intimacy. People have to consciously choose to make a relationship work. Being with someone does not mean that you love everything about them or that you never annoy one another. It is about accepting a person as s/he is because on the whole you like them and want to be with them. No one can move all the obstacles out of their partner's way so the s/he never encounters difficulties, nor is this desirable.
A person must grow within themselves.

8.6.2.2. Healthy.
People have to take responsibility for their own part in a relationship's development. You cannot change a person to suit yourself. Choose to accept the other as is or not, don't expect them to change to suit you. A relationship with marriage potential is more in-depth, involves more feeling, partners communicate on a more intimate level and are closer than in a superficial relationship. In a relationship you grow. It's more than sex. Over time the bond between a couple becomes almost a psychic connection. (i.e. involving an intuitive understanding of and sensitivity to the other). Knowing someone means they are easy for you to read and not easy for other people to read. The detailed and intimate knowledge that one gets from knowing someone over a long time makes a relationship special. A relationship is a partnership. Relationships need honesty. The basis of a good relationship is trust. Trust is based on honesty. Friendship will flow when there is trust and honesty. Do not pretend to be someone you are not. [NB: there is a difference between compromise, accommodation, and consideration and changing who you are] Although fate/destiny has a hand in relationships, people should not be passive. They must make decisions about whether the person and the relationship are worthwhile. Independence and self-knowledge are required in finding one's other half. One must be strong enough as a person to cope with negative responses of others. Respect for one's partner extends to consideration and recognition of what they do. Appreciation stems from recognition. It is nice when your partner notices the work you do in the house and offers to help. It helps one feel that he is doing his share and one is not being taken for granted. Find ways to acknowledge your partner and show them that they are appreciated and cared for.
Small gestures go a long way to cementing a relationship.
Appreciating and acknowledging one another does not stop at some point in time.
Relationships are worked on every day.
A relationship has to do with trusting, understanding, paying attention to little things, being in tune with your partner.
Knowing when to be quiet is important, as is enjoying each other’s silence.
One must accept the other as s/he is.
Acceptance, mutuality and individuality are all ingredients in a good relationship.
It is healthy to argue, because then you bring out all the bad stuff and resolve it.
Resolution of problems is the key to healthy argument.
In a healthy relationship, a couple can argue with one another without fear of ending the relationship.
Healthy argument over a particular subject is a sign of maturity.
A fight should involve proper discussion, mutual resolution, and a laying to rest of the issue.
Both parties must have a different opinion and come to a compromise.
The process of getting to know one another and learning to accept each other is mutual.
Relationships are about sharing yourself, your feelings, your life with another person.
Relationships are about being special to another person.

8.6.2.3. Unhealthy.
If you do not work on your relationship you become complacent.
Do not try to change yourself to suit someone else.
Problems occur when people in relationships give up their own identities and become something together.
Problems that are not dealt with honestly and completely fester out of proportion, because they accumulate, and can lead to a break-up.
If people lose respect for one another their relationship is in trouble.
Hurling insults instead of discussing issues is a sign of lack of respect for the other person.
Keeping secrets from a partner amounts to threatening the bond between you.
It is not acceptable to encourage an ex-partner to think there is a chance of rekindling a relationship when one is involved with someone else.
Relationships can get boring if they are left to stagnate.

8.6.2.4. Marriage.
An ideal partner becomes a husband.
A husband is your soul-mate.
A husband possesses the same characteristics as a boyfriend, but in a more refined and intense form.
One marries someone because one loves them and wants to spend the rest of one's life with them.
One marries because one wants to grow with the other person.
When one is not bonded by a godly marriage one is not bound, you are just two people living in the same house.
Marriage does not mean becoming a single entity and conforming to one set of rules.
Marriage means uniting yourselves closer together.
The marriage certificate makes a relationship solid.
Marriage puts a seal of approval on the relationship.
Marriage is a prize for making it through the difficulties inherent in the development of a mature relationship.
The marriage certificate is proof of one's ability to make a relationship work.
Marriage is something positive, because it is symbolic of the success of a relationship.
Marriage is a serious commitment.
Marriage means together forever until death do us part.
One should not marry for convenience.
One has to decide that the time is appropriate to marry.
Being married and knowing that nothing can come between you and your partner makes life perfect.
Marriage is not about losing one's individuality; it's about a sense of unity and having someone to lean on through thick and thin.
Marriage is the logical conclusion for a good relationship.
A wife should take care of her husband, because he takes care of her.
It is a wife's duty to take care of her husband, but this does not mean she should become a doormat. Nor does it excuse him from responsibilities.
A husband keeps his wife financially stable, he provides her with security and comfort that she could not acquire on her own.
Having thus isolated Vanessa's expectations we are in a position to discuss the influences on her frame of reference.

8.7. Influences.

Included here are Vanessa's parents and cultural background, and her identity as an individual. Let us begin with her parents and cultural background. In this regard Vanessa says that the picture of marriage and relationships that she has from the Portuguese community goes hand in hand with the values she has got from her parents. She says it is quite difficult to distinguish between the two, and they are equally important. Let us first explore what she says about her parents' influence.

8.7.1. Parents.

Vanessa describes her parents as educated people. She says her mother was divorced, and both parents are only children. In terms of cultural background, her parents are Portuguese, with a "very Catholic background", and both are very family orientated. Vanessa says of her parents that "it's quite phenomenal... they are the, the two least people I would aspire to be anything like". This is not to say that she does not love them, but she would not want to be like them in any way she could help.

She certainly does see her parents' influence in who she is and how she behaves. She says "I am a lot like my mother, and yes I am a lot like my father, but unfortunately those are the genes, I can't take those back". By way of example she says "I fidget a lot, and that's my mother... I am loud, that's my mother. ...I'm very abrupt, that's my father. Those are things that I have ... from who they are together. But I wouldn't want to be anything like them, on the outside, that I could help. Definitely not". Precisely why this is so becomes clearer in what follows.

Vanessa believes that children - and the adults they become - model their ideas about relationships from their parents' relationship. So, "let's say your husband is a ... a bit violent. Let's say he blows his top. You will expect that ... you will expect that from everybody else that you come into contact with. You, let's say, have an argument with a friend, it happens. You always anticipating that big, fat blow that that person will give you. That doesn't always happen, but you always live in this state of anticipation. Of the worst things to come". In terms of her parents'
influence on her, Vanessa says "my father used to hit my mom...I would be lying if I say that wasn't common in Portuguese homes... but I can never look at my father and see my father as someone who beats my mom. Because they normal now. But yes, my father used to beat my mom... and saying that... you would think that I would be a very... timid child, a very afraid child. I'm not". Vanessa does not feel that her parents have cowed her in any way. She is most certainly not a timid person, is not afraid to voice her opinions, or to deal with the consequences of doing so. In Vanessa's case, the influence of her parents seems to come into play in two ways. It comes from the things that she has assimilated and come to believe during the course of growing up, and also from the fact that she uses their relationship as a model for how her relationship should not be.

For example, Vanessa notes that "it's not written in the marriage laws that once you get married you got to wash, clean, and, and look after your husband, but... it is what I have been perceived as growing up with, with the family that I have, that my mother has always done for my dad. You know my mother doesn't moan about putting his clothes away, my father leaves his clothes everywhere". She continues that "my father will dirty a cup and he will leave it wherever he is going. My mother cleans after my father, because that is... her wifely duty... I strongly believe that a wife should take care of her husband in every single aspect". This is simply fair play in Vanessa's opinion "because he takes care of her in a very big way. Not only does he keep her financially stable, he provides her with security and safety that she would not get by herself. Yes, he provides the financial comfort, the security comfort, he's also... her soul mate, her other half". While Vanessa believes it is a wife's duty to take care of her husband, this does not mean she should become a doormat, and this is clear when she says that while a wife might cook and clean "it doesn't single the man out to just sit on the couch and do nothing".

Vanessa says that her parents "still have humongous arguments about the stupidest things... but it just proves to me that they never got to know each other. So I come from a background where they got married for the sake of getting married - my parents had to get married, my mom was pregnant - so that, to me, already... encourages me to get married for other reasons". Vanessa's emphasis on getting to know a partner very well can be traced to her opinion that the arguments between her parents arise from a lack of knowledge. The fact that she and G have arguments over little things perhaps stems from the fact that Vanessa's model of a
relationship includes such things as normal. To a certain extent she uses their relationship as a model of a Portuguese marriage, and this also helps to explain her avoidance of Portuguese men. She feels that marrying a Portuguese man would be asking for a replication of her parents’ marriage and she does not want that. So the influence of her cultural background and her parents can be clearly seen in Vanessa’s beliefs about the nature of Portuguese men and what she wants for her own relationship in terms of her beliefs about healthy relationships.

In terms of the models that Vanessa uses for relationships, what she says of G’s parents is significant. It indicates that parents - hers and his - contribute both directly and indirectly to her relationship. She says, for example, that “G’s parents are... the perfect couple... when you look at them, you look at them as individuals, and together... They are so... bonded to each other... they really... belong together... and that, it’s that kind of, that drive, that you can actually look at them as individuals and think ‘You know, they actually have someone else that makes them those wonderful individuals’. There’s someone else there. There’s an individual that keeps rubbing your back, that says ‘you are wonderful, you are great’, and that individual believes it, and it shines through. And the same with the other partner.”

Vanessa’s contrasts G’s parents’ relationship with that of her own parents. She says “My parents do not like each other. It is plain to see... Why they stay together I don’t know. But that’s me, new age Portuguese girl. My parents, the old school. You see, they stay together for the sake of staying together. In that... thing that... the old days used to do to you. You stayed together, and that’s just the way it was. And I don’t want that. I want more. I want more than what my parents have. Actually I even want more than what G’s parents have”. From these two paragraphs it is clear that Vanessa’s observations of her parents and of G’s parents suggest to her how relationships should and should not function. Thus, the parental influence is indirect in her relationship, coming via the framework of impressions that Vanessa has built about relationships from observing her parents and G’s parents.

Parental influence on her relationship is also more direct. In speaking of the fact that she and G are not married and are living together, Vanessa says “I know my father doesn’t like it. And I know that G’s mom doesn’t like it. My mom and G’s dad, they sort of come in with the new school... They go along with it. My father and his mother, the old school... This living together without our being married; it’s not on.
It’s not right. It’s not religious”. One can detect that parental influence does play a part in Vanessa’s decision to marry, and her views on marriage. This is borne out when she says that “I want to get married so that I do not feel embarrassed every time that I go to [G’s mother’s] house. That I don’t feel awkward in saying that our bedroom is nice...It’s, it’s the uncomfortableness of it, that I don’t want to have with her...”. Here the influence of her and G’s parents is quite direct. Vanessa feels that it would not cost her much to make her father and G’s mother comfortable by marrying G. There is also the suggestion of a collective cultural tendency in her acting to satisfy the needs or desires of family - rather than only her own needs (Triandis, 1996).

However, Vanessa is not only marrying for the parents’ benefit. Vanessa says that in her relationship “It doesn’t feel right [not to be married]”. As far as she is concerned, this is largely “because of my upbringing”, rather than because of any current pressure on her and G. She says “I reckon if I came from a different household, I don’t think it would bother me much. But coming from the background that I come from. My parents are still married, although they don’t like each other very much, and that my grandparents are still married... I would like to get married”. Thus, her view that marriage is a lasting commitment that makes a relationship between two people solid would seem to stem directly from her observations of marriages in her own family. Given her optimism about marriage, despite the negative impression gained from her own parents it would seem that Camelley and Janoff-Bulman’s (1992) conclusion is not supported. Yet the preceding paragraph does, however, seem to offer support for their argument.

Now that she and G have decided to marry, parental influence has entered a different realm as well. Vanessa refers to an argument that came up over where she and G would be married. Vanessa wanted to get married in a garden, but her mother and G’s mother both insisted she should get married in a church, for various religious reasons that Vanessa feels are daft. She says “God lives in your heart, he doesn’t only live in a church”. Nevertheless she is compromising. She will marry in the church or chapel, but she has stipulated that she will not tolerate the full Catholic wedding service, with kneeling and two hour speeches or prayers, and no icons or frills. She agreed to have G’s family priest do the service, because she feels he understands her viewpoint on religion.
She says "yes, we getting married in the Catholic church. That little chapel is beautiful, it's really beautiful... and that's that, I've compromised. ...and G knows exactly where I'm coming from. And as long as he knows my religious ...beliefs, then that's okay. And he's said to his mom 'I will not allow that Vanessa compromises the way she feels, because it's not fair'. Because I said to her 'You know, Mrs. M this, at the end of it, is very unfair. I go to church, your son doesn't. You want me to get married in a Catholic church, and I go to church...So I should actually have more say here, because I am the one that goes to church, not your son. And I'm marrying your son, not you'. But then I see G's point of view: He wants to get married in the Catholic church because that's his background...and his way. You know he was baptised, he wants to get married in the Catholic church. Fine. Compromise done. Everything settled. Now we can get married". She feels she has now done her bit in keeping the peace and has compromised. It is apparent, however, that she is in no way intimidated into this action. Clearly she is not timid about voicing her opinions, or standing up for what she wants.

Based on the above it is apparent that both Vanessa's and G's parents have played a role in their current relationship, either directly through making their feelings about Vanessa and G's relationship apparent, or indirectly, through Vanessa - and presumably G's - views on relationships as assimilated from their parents' relationships. As stated previously Vanessa feels that the distinction between the influence of her parents and of her culture is a tricky one. Let us therefore consider what she has to say about her cultural background.

8.7.2. Culture and religion.

Cultural background, for Vanessa, means "the way I was raised...where I was educated, ...being religious-wise". While Vanessa identifies her cultural background as Portuguese, she does not feel that this identification is as strong as it might have been. She explains that she "never went to Portuguese school, ... never socialised with Portuguese people, ... never went to a Portuguese church. I didn't socialise with Portuguese people. And when I arrived here, I was too young ... to know the difference. So now I am a South African. With a Portuguese background, based on my parents". This link with Portuguese people is also weak, because Vanessa has deliberately turned her back on the community and the hypocrisy she perceives among its members.
Vanessa's views on the Portuguese community are intertwined with her religious convictions. She takes her faith very seriously. She says "I am in tune with Christ. That's all, that's all there is to it. There is no imagery, there's no stained glass windows... It's just plain and simple bible work, that's all it is... We do reading and things like that". Of Portuguese Catholic women in general she says "I very much doubt whether anyone's read their bible cover to cover and understood what it means. It's going to church for the sake of going to church, hypocrites that they are, to see who's wearing what, to see who's getting dressed in what, who's doing what where and when". In other words, such women are going through the motions, but their soul and their spirit is not in it. This is the perception that Vanessa has of Portuguese Catholics.

And it is a strong perception: "Terrible. Church-going folk, mm. And they wonder why I'm not Catholic!". Vanessa says this in reference to "back street little vroujies, in their little dresses and their grey hair" who have "nothing better to do" than pick on other people and "put misery in other people's lives" with their gossip. Vanessa says such women can ruin other people without those people even leaving their homes: "they've never stepped out of that house, but all the stories that come out, and everybody else believes it... because there's nothing else more exciting to do." She says these women don't go to church to pray, they go to spread gossip.

Given that Vanessa views Portuguese Catholics so negatively it is little wonder that she states that "when I realised that God could hear me, and see me, without anybody (snaps fingers) I switched off. Because I don't need to go to a total stranger, who knows exactly who I am, although he's not seeing my face, and giving me penance. If God wants to punish me, he knows how to do it well... and that is why I turned my back on that religion. There is nothing about it that I believe. There's nothing about it that I like, there's nothing that I trust. Nothing. Because of the people who go there". So, Vanessa says she does not "keep the Friday and... things like that... you know, I eat pork on Easter Sunday just to rile my mother... I will never eat fish again on a Friday just because... It's just the way it is. Because it is not a food that goes into your mouth that makes it a holy experience. It's not what goes in your mouth, it's what comes out of your mouth". This gives some insight into Vanessa's character. She does not do things simply for the sake of doing them. She holds strong beliefs and sticks to them. She turns her back on things she finds meaningless and hypocritical. Thus, it would seem that her behaviour is a
function of her own attitudes rather than the norms of a group, suggesting an individualistic cultural influence (Triandis, 1996).

Vanessa says that living here in South Africa is quite different from living in Portugal. She says that "when you live in Portugal... you will marry a Portuguese man and you will then live your parents' lives, because... it just goes in a big, fat circle. But what my parents have done that makes me very proud of my parents, [is that they] have moved to a foreign country, and they have accepted the fact that you will not find a Portuguese person here... that you will find in Portugal. They try to be [as strict and traditional], and in trying to be they're twice as terrible as they are in Portugal... because ... you have to grab on so much harder here, because the roots are not there".

She adds that "In Portugal it's a way of living. Here, here you have to maintain that, that community. And ... staunch Portuguese people, they keep that community. They [insist that] their daughters will not go out with anyone who's not Portuguese. Their daughters will stay at home until they married. Their daughters will see their boyfriends in their home and they will be home by ten, and yes, you do have a very staunch Portuguese community in this country". This gives some insight into some of the rules that apply to Portuguese girls in relationships. Vanessa says, however, that "My parents do not belong to that community... It deprives my parents of bonding with their own kind, but yet my parents have decided that, they are here, so yes they have Portuguese friends, but they also have South African friends, and they see how they grow up and how they behave and how they live". So she says her parents have allowed her and her brother to choose what they want "for a South African Portuguese-based living". Vanessa's choice of a partner whose background is not Portuguese is a testament to the fact that her parents have allowed her the freedom to make her own choices.

Her parents have not dictated that she or her brother should only date Portuguese partners and Vanessa says that she "would never go with a Portuguese man. Never. Because that would mean that I would have to conform to my mom and dad's relationship". Given what Vanessa has said of her parents' relationship in the preceding section, her aversion to Portuguese men makes some sense. To explain her distaste further she adds that Portuguese men are "close-minded", and have a "barefoot and pregnant mentality" where women are concerned. She adds that for
a Portuguese man "his home is his domain and [the woman] does as she is told". She believes that a Portuguese man will rope a woman into marriage with false pretences. For example, "they wine and dine you, they give you gifts...but marry them and (smacks hands together to indicate 'finished') and they start nagging you. Because then they turn you into their moms. Because you have to be their mommies, because Portuguese men and their moms are very bonded".

She says that a Portuguese man's mother "cooks, cleans, has the children, doesn't work, is at home" and this is what a Portuguese man wants in his wife. She adds that "he'll most probably hit her ...because father did it, and mom took it, and mom's cool. And .. it's a cycle, that some Portuguese men are able to break and others just don't want to, because it's so cool". It is clear that the picture that Vanessa has of how Portuguese men are does not fit the picture of how she wants to live. She says "I cannot picture myself barefoot and pregnant" and she adds emphatically that "Any woman that wants to live like that is an idiot. Rap her over the head with something hard!". In this way Vanessa makes it clear that she reacts against what she views as the picture prescribed for a marriage in the Portuguese culture. Things like trust, honesty, and friendship are what she looks for and what she considers alien in that scenario.

In terms of any specific prescriptions that her cultural background has for relationships, Vanessa said that "My background dictates that I should marry someone who's Portuguese, and who's Catholic". She adds, on a humorous note "not that he necessarily has to own a café". In other words, a partner has got to come from a similar background as she does. The reason for this is "so that my parents can relate to his parents in the same language". The implication here, which Vanessa agrees with, is that her background dictates that her husband should fit in with her family. Vanessa states rather succinctly that "if he doesn't fit in he's not with the program". So a partner has got to get on with her family. She says that Portuguese people do get along "Because if they have that language in common everything else follows suit. You know, they eat the same food, they talk about the same things,... they socialise in the same circles, they go to the same church, things like that."

She has found that with G things have worked out fine although he is not Portuguese. Vanessa says "My whole family gets on with G like a house on fire..."
My grandmother adores G. And they communicate”. She says that her grandmother communicates with G in broken English, and the two of them understand each other, and they have a conversation. She says “I always thought I was going to ... find someone like my dad. Portuguese, fat, ugly... That is what I thought I had to look for ... No. It's actually what I thought I'd end up with, because you know they say you always end up with your fathers”. So, while Vanessa’s cultural background does dictate certain things in romantic relationships, her experiences have shown that these dictates are not always necessary for the smooth functioning of a relationship. It would seem that Vanessa is of the opinion that cultural norms or rules function differently in different contexts. Portuguese rules do not work as well in South Africa as they do in Portugal. Here, the societal support for various norms is not as strong, because the society is so culturally mixed.

With reference to the latter, Vanessa says that “Cultural things are so, they’re so wonderful. You can, you can make yourself a nice fruit salad. It’s so wonderful to just pick up cultural [traditions]”. Of her own relationship with G, she says that “I am Portuguese. ...I follow Easter. I go to church, but I go to my church ... we have traditional dishes, and I like that, and G likes that because it’s something different. G is German, from a German mom’s background, so we have that”. In this way her relationship is “multicultural”.

The foregoing discussion serves to contextualise the influence that Vanessa’s being Portuguese has on her relationship. While her roots have played a part in shaping her views, to a large extent she has distanced herself from the Portuguese community in South Africa, because she views the members of that community in a negative light. Similarly, while she considers herself Portuguese, and appreciates many of the traditions, she views many of the habits and norms of Portuguese people rather negatively. Again, as with parental influence, much of the contribution of her cultural heritage is due to the fact that Vanessa reacts against what she perceives as cultural norms. For the sake of clarity, let me summarise Vanessa’s perceptions.

8.7.2.1. Norms and rules.
Portuguese women go to church to see who is wearing what, and to gossip, not out of faith.
Men hitting their wives is common in Portuguese homes.

Marriage and children is the norm.

Marry someone Portuguese and Catholic, i.e. with a similar background.

Mothers cook, clean, raise children, do not work outside the home.

Daughters do not date non-Portuguese people.

Daughters stay at home until they marry.

Daughters see their boyfriends at home or are home by ten.

A woman alone cannot get the kind of safety and security that a husband provides, so she should marry.

The way that Vanessa - and the other respondents - speaks suggests that culture is about the customs or habits of identifiable groups of people, such as the Portuguese community.

The final piece in the picture of Vanessa’s evaluative framework belongs to the role that she herself contributes in terms of her identity as an individual.

8.7.3. Identity.

It is apparent from the preceding sections that Vanessa’s personality contributes to the course of events in her relationship. Vanessa says she agrees with the impression that she is quite a passionate, volatile kind of person who, for example, might come home and find that there are six dishes in the sink that were there last week, and go completely nuts, and then ten minutes later think “but it’s nothing”.

She sees herself as a complex person. This means that she does things differently to how others might do them. One way that this is so is that she will get very angry very quickly, but then subside just as quickly. She says “when I am finished, I am finished... And if I am angry now, five minutes later I am no longer angry, because it’s finished”.

Vanessa says “I want to shake this booty until I die. I want to go on holiday, I want to live my own life, I want to go shopping by myself, I don’t want to be reliant on my mother, on my children... Be self sufficient... Have fun. Do stuff. Just because you’re old does not mean you dying”. She says “I look at my grandparents’, you know, cultural background. They old, so they think their lives are over. They think because they’ve lived over the age of seventy life is over. That is rubbish!..... I say to them ‘If you are waiting to die, we can fix it’”. She believes that her grandparents
are like this because "They saw their parents getting old" and now they think that because they are old they cannot do anything. She says she sees the same thing happening with her mother: "My mother sees her mother getting old, and she's also getting into the habit. She's fifty, she says she's dying! I said to her, 'You're not dying, you're only fifty. You've still got another forty years to go!' ".

On the other hand, Vanessa contrasts her parents with G's parents. She says "I look at G's parents, they're so different. I mean, G's parents are sixty-three and sixty and bloody hell, they go on holiday three, four times a year...and they still having sex!...and that is so important...and they communicate. They go out, and they go gardening, and they go shopping, and they, they get together. They have dinner parties...". Essentially "they are still living", and that is what Vanessa aims to do.

She says "I've never been anything that I didn't want to be, or said anything I didn't want to say. I've always been who I am". This strength and individuality has, to some extent, come from her experiences in childhood. She says "There was a period when I didn't live with my parents...and they didn't give me the guidance that, as a small child, I needed. So...there's a gap there". Vanessa lived with her aunt for two years between the ages of six and eight. Her father's business venture had failed and her aunt "came along and took me away", because "we lived in squalor".

8.7.3.1. Trauma and growth.
While she was with her aunt she was molested, but says "my parents don't know, and my parents will never know, because it is unnecessary to do that to them. They did not put me there knowing that this was going to happen. They did it for my best". Nevertheless, she feels that she missed out on "those vital two years of a child's growing, where your parents, sort of, instil in you their values, and I was filled in with someone else's values that were not that wonderful...so I grew up trying to adjust, very much. I was always the rebellious one, I was always the mean one, I was always the one that didn't fit in. Because I didn't know how to fit in". When she says "mean" Vanessa explains that she "used to say things to people that were mean and hurtful. They were the truth, but it was mean! You know, you don't just come out...and say things to people when you're a child."

She says that later "I was about eighteen [and] all this stuff that was buried came to the surface, and I dealt with it. And it was a long process, it was a crying thing, and,
it was emotional for me. But I learned that, my parents values, were still there...and I always leaned on the fact that my parents did love me. ...So I grew from that experience. Very much so. So that's why, when I look at people that have been abused and they turn into real, absolute dregs of humanity, I have no sympathy for them. Which maybe is a bad thing, but I think to myself... it is actually what you make of it. Yes, it has happened, and it is a terrible thing. ...But if you do not pull yourself out from the gutter and say 'it is not going to get me down', and you use all that anger and all that frustration, and all that hate, to build you up to where you want to be... then you have lost. You have lost, and those people have taken everything from you. Everything. They have left you with no self-respect, no dignity, no courage, nothing... Don't let this be an excuse for you to be nothing, for you to suck people dry. Because it is not an excuse. It's happened, it's over, it's finished, pick up the pieces and ...go on". This eloquent statement makes it quite clear that Vanessa is a fighter. She is not a person who allows others to get her down for very long.

She says that if you let an experience such as being molested "stay in your lives it just festers and festers and festers, and you don't go beyond that. You become so pathetic, that everyone owes you something. No one owes you jack. Someone else did this to you. Get over it. Get over it... this is just a body. I'm not taking it with me, it ain't going nowhere with me...they can kill your body, but they can never kill your spirit. Never. And it's when they do that that you are finished". Vanessa's tendency to face her problems head on and deal with them is quite apparent here, as is her expectation that other people should do the same thing. In a similar way she indicates that each person should take responsibility for their own mistakes. She says "Why you going to carry this baggage with you your entire life? Get rid of it! Take it back to the people who gave it to you... Say 'here...you keep it, you live with the fact that you did this to me' ". Thus, each person must carry his or her own burden.

Dealing with one's experience does not mean that it will disappear or that one should hide it away. Vanessa says that in every special relationship one embarks on "you tell those people that this has happened, because that stuff will be with you forever". She says, for instance that "This is a subject that with me it is finished, it is complete, but it has the tendency to surface from time to time. In my down moments, in my more emotional moments, I do tend to think about it and it does, it
does hurt. You feel betrayed still and you feel that people that you supposed to trust and build your values didn’t. They took advantage of you”. So, the subject of her molestation does arise occasionally, but she says that she has told G about it and “because G is aware of it, he knows how to deal with it...And he knows that when I need my space and my time, he has got to give that to me”.

Vanessa says that “The way that I am now today has got a lot to do with back then... I was violated, this will always stay with you, you will always feel that sometimes that people owe you something, that yes, people should feel sorry for you. And yes, sometimes I do, I do feel ‘Ah, you should feel sorry for me, I was hurt’ but it’s, it’s a passing thing. As I get older it's quicker and quicker, and very seldom”. Another way in which her experience has influenced her is that “because I’m older and I can say ‘no’ and I have my own voice, I do voice it...If I don’t like something I will tell you. And if I don’t agree with something I will voice my opinion. I am no longer quiet and submissive, the way I was until the age of eighteen where I was this way because there was that, that thing that I hadn’t dealt with. And I always thought it was my fault, you know, and that blame, and all that stuff that you keep inside. As when you deal with it, then you deal with it and you carry on from there”.

Despite the fact that she has worked through her experience, she says she still perceives a difference in how she interacts with women, because it was her aunt who molested her. She says “I don't get on with women a lot, and women and me always have this distance. Always have this distance”. However she feels very comfortable with men, "because I know exactly where a man's coming from. With women I never know ...”.

The influence of her experience on her views of how one should be in a relationship is apparent when she says that “you learn that you can’t just always trust everybody. That, you must pay more attention to what people are saying, and what people are doing, and what people are thinking. Including yourself. You know, that is all it is. Don’t take everything for granted”. The influence of the molestation on Vanessa’s capacity to trust can be clearly seen in this statement. Her experience also somewhat explains her emphasis on trust and honesty in a relationship. She adds with regard to relationships that “you do have to be careful...Don't leave yourself to be hurt in other areas - it’s not just sexually. Just... take time in learning, in getting to know people".
Based on the above discussion one can see that Vanessa's experience of being 
molested as a child has had a part to play in shaping her views on relationships, 
and has influenced how she behaves in that context. It is also apparent that she 
has turned the experience into a growth opportunity, and does not seem to dwell on 
it unduly. She is a person who has plenty to say for herself and who is not afraid to 
live her life as she wants it. In her philosophy "yesterday is gone, today is here, 
tomorrow is tomorrow's problem. Don't make tomorrow's problem today's problem, 
you got enough today!". There is a sense of purpose and determination about 
Vanessa, and it becomes quite clear when speaking to her that she has enormous 
conviction about her principles. This conviction finds expression in the way that she 
lives her life and, for present purposes, in her beliefs about relationships.

8.7.3.2. Themes.
Strength vs weakness; truth vs hypocrisy; living by your principles.

The information provided by Vanessa in all of the preceding sections allows one to 
understand the framework that she uses in making sense of her relationship and 
her reasons for staying with her partner. Let us now turn to a consideration of how 
her beliefs and expectations are applied.

8.8.1. Preferences.
The characteristics that Vanessa mentions in terms of her preferences in a mate 
can be seen to relate to what she wants and expects from a relationship. To begin 
with there is her belief that trust is fundamental to such a relationship, so it is not 
surprising that she wants someone trustworthy and reliable. The fact that a man is 
sensitive, perceptive, listens and is understanding all suggest that he will be in a 
position to get to know her well, and furthermore to accept her. Detailed and 
intimate knowledge of another and acceptance are also ingredients of a healthy 
relationship. Furthermore, a man possessing such traits is unlikely to be close­
minded or domineering, and this is important to Vanessa, inasmuch as it suggests 
that she will have freedom to be herself and to pursue her own desires, rather than 
being chained to her home and to serving the needs of her mate.
The fact that her ideal mate trusts and respects her, as well as believes in her suggest a relationship where there is a sense of partnership and appreciation. His being a best friend relates back to her expectation that friendship flows where honesty and trust are found. Again, Vanessa's wish to avoid the model of a typical Portuguese relationship is evident. Thus, her experience of her cultural heritage is indirectly influential in her relationship inasmuch as she reacts against what she perceives to be the norms of her culture.

Given that Vanessa is not someone who is necessarily diplomatic in voicing her opinions, it is a mark of her self-awareness that she looks for someone who is mature, who does not take things too personally, and who can take her criticism. This aligns with her beliefs that a person must be themselves and be strong enough to cope with negative responses if they are to survive being close to someone else. He should be able to face the consequences of his actions because she expects that he will be himself and that, because they are both individuals, he will sometimes annoy her. Knowing herself well, she believes that the consequence may very well be a quick, fierce, anger and he will need to be able to cope with that.

Keeping the above in mind let us consider what Vanessa had to say about her current partner and relationship.

8.8.2. Current partner and relationship.
As mentioned previously, when she first met G Vanessa thought him rude and pompous and did not like him. Now, however, Vanessa describes G as “a very laid back kind of person ... He's very observant. He spends a lot of time observing people. He doesn't have to speak to you to know exactly what you're about”. She adds that he “never does anything to cover up anything that he’s done. And... if he tells me 'I will never do it again' he will never do it again”. Thus, Vanessa feels that G is honest with her and that she can trust him to keep his promises. Thus he fulfils her preference for someone trustworthy and reliable.

Vanessa describes her relationship with G as “Perfect in the sense that G and I have, that we've actually come a long way. That we've been through a lot of ups and downs ... I have broadened my horizons, and I think that he [has] as well. We have grown within ourselves, which I think is very important... and we always seem
to... come together as in that kind of thing that you know that you're meant to be”. The foregoing are important positive point in their relationship that aligns with Vanessa's beliefs in personal development, that crisis points can make or break a relationship, and that if two people are meant to be together then nothing can break them apart. Clearly these beliefs contribute to her conclusion that she and G are meant to be together. They keep coming back to one another.

Vanessa says that what makes it perfect is the fact that she and G have been able to communicate better as the time has passed. For example, G “used to buy me things to keep me happy ... and then I said to him 'stop buying me things, to shut me up, because it's not going to work'. It'll work ... only for a short time. But it'll fester”. Vanessa says that they never used to discuss things, like what was happening in their lives, or what they needed from one another: they just went with the flow. When they got back together this last time they began to sit down with one another and discuss these kinds of things. She says “we have actually sat down, and talked about the things that we need from each other and that we want from each other, and that we want to get together, and as individuals”. They have weathered some pressures on their relationship and seem to have learned a new way of being with one another that is more healthy for both of them.

For example, Vanessa says “I don't keep things bottled up any more. If something is bothering me, be it whatever, I will discuss it with him, and him vice versa. He tells me about his work and I will listen, whereas before I wasn't so quick to listen to his work, and the same with me. If I've got something that bothers me at work, we'll come home, and we will discuss it, and we will find a solution”. Thus, her expectations of intimacy and communication are fulfilled.

Some issues seem to crop up quite regularly, and while Vanessa would be glad if these would change, she does not really believe that they will. Nor does she really believe that they are a big problem. She says, for example, "I want to try and educate, not only myself, but my husband, that this isn't ... the old parents' home... This is something new. This is somewhere where you share responsibilities, and, and you know, if you have to wash the dishes once in a while, then do it. Don't let them pile up there. Like when I go on educationals [for work] - which I do quite a lot - I come home, and the same cup, that I left in the sink a week ago is still in the sink....now that ... will just set my whole day to an absolute ... hell-bent, I'm going to
kill, mood... Because it doesn't take a lot to just wash that cup, or the cups that you've used during the week. He will just pile them in, and pile them in, and pile them in. And basically, what that tells me, is that 'not to worry, next Saturday the maid will be here' and I'm not the maid".

Despite her initial irritation at such slob-like behaviour, Vanessa believes that women - herself included - "can't accept the simplicities of life...[like] the dishes in the sink. Very simple. They are just dishes in the sink...They've got to go further with it. ...I do it all the time! I do, I honestly do, but you know what? It's just 'cause I'm looking for a fight". Thus, she sometimes feels taken for granted, but believes that it is her issue. Her belief that men generally take the things that women do for granted is also used to make less of her feeling and explain G's lack of acknowledgement or effort around the house. She says she knows that G does not really view her as the maid "I know that. He just doesn't want to do [the dishes]! ... I just want to make myself angry. Because only when I'm angry do I then blow off steam, and then maybe he will listen". So, she brushes off this type of scenario as being a result of the difference in the natures of men and women.

Vanessa accepts the fact that some of G's habits annoy her. She says, for example, that "I know that when he comes home from work, he will put his pants on top of the wash basket, and they will sit there, until I take the washing...doesn't bother me any more. I take his pants, I put them in the wash basket. If I don't feel like it, they will stay there for a week...He will come home and he will sit on the couch. I will be cooking, we'll have people coming, I'll be running my head off, and he'll be sitting and watching TV. And then I'll be speaking to him and he's not listening, that's when I usually throw something at him...It's no longer anger. I know that he's going to do it. I know him so well, that I actually scare him!" She adds "I'll say to him 'Please be home at five', I know he's going to come home at five past five. And that irritates me, because punctuality for me is very important. But you know what? It's who he is" and she accepts him as he is.

This process of getting to know one another and learning to accept each other has been mutual, because Vanessa says that "just like I've grown, to get myself in tune with him, he has now accepted the responsibility that he has got to get in tune with me, if we are going to make this relationship work....He will finish my sentences for me... I will shift from chair to chair, and he knows I want a glass of Coke...I will shift,
I will do something with my arm or with my eye, and he'll know I want a cigarette". Given what Vanessa says here about certain behavioural cues she notices in G, or he perceives from her, it certainly appears that they have got to know one another very well, and can read one another's behaviour fairly accurately. This satisfies Vanessa's expectation that in the development of a relationship one gets to know one's partner, and builds a sense of intimacy and a bond.

Their comfortable status does not, however, mean that their relationship is an uneventful one. Vanessa says "I like to fight with[G]. I do. I do all the screaming and shouting and just says "Yes, not a problem..." and he doesn't scream. The more he doesn't scream, the more I scream... I just want him to listen ... and then once I've finished then it's fine. ...For me it's actually a stress releasant. It's like a drug. I want to scream and shout... and I can't really do it at work, and I can't do it with family, and I can't do it with friends... but at home [I can]." She feels that at home she has a space where she can just be herself, and she trusts G enough to just let loose. She does say, however, that "I shouldn't ... I'm not justifying it. [G] sometimes doesn't like it. He says 'You know I don't understand why you, come home from work, stressed to the hilt, and you take it out on me'. I say 'I'm not taking it out on you, I'm actually just ...releasing the stress. And unfortunately you are the only person here, and, you're the only person that I trust to do it with'. So, they both have habits that the other is less than thrilled about, but they seem to have learned to live with these habits.

Vanessa does not expect to like everything about her mate, so that when his habits annoy her, she does not put too much weight on it. Given that she believes it is futile to pretend to be someone other than oneself to keep a partner, or to try and avoid habits that annoy one's partner, their occasional clashes are not a point for concern. Rather, she may well consider it a positive point inasmuch as they are being themselves, warts and all. This would certainly make sense given her view that conflict is inevitable, that argument is healthy, and that maintaining one's identity is essential.

It is apparent that Vanessa's responses to some of G's habits, and her own habit of "letting of steam" would seem to prevent their relationship from settling into boredom. Referring to her and G's life together, Vanessa says that "This household is very ruckus. I must admit. ... I wear the pants in this house. And that's not a bad
thing, it is so, because I am here so much more time... so, everything that you see is placed in the place where I am comfortable with. The kitchen is set to my liking. The bedroom is in my way. Everything in this house is my way. I'm not being selfish that way, it's just that when we moved into this house, and every single move that we have made, I have been the one to move. I have been the one that keeps the home, because of G's job. He has his place here ... and he is very comfortable with the way that things are". G's working hours change on a weekly basis and Vanessa says that "if I can survive a relationship with a husband in the restaurant business, then anybody can survive with an accountant or a lawyer or with whatever, ...because I do not spend a lot of time with him... I spend one week with him and one week without him... it works for me. It works for the both of us". It would seem then that they have come to a mutually acceptable living arrangement.

With regard to her home being her sanctuary, Vanessa says "At home I'm at home. I'm comfortable at home. This is where I am who I really am.... No frills, no niceties. If I don't want to smile I won't, if I don't want to say anything, I don’t...you know, and sometimes G will come home and say hello, and I will not say three words to him until we go to sleep.... which is 'good night, I love you'. That's it. And he knows. He says, 'are you alright?' and I say 'Ja, you know what? I'm just a bit tired, I just want to relax". In this way Vanessa feels that G allows her space to just be herself. He is the same, she believes, so that when he comes home and does not want to talk, she lets him be. This suggests that acceptance is part of the relationship.

Vanessa says her relationship has changed from a young relationship to a more mature relationship. She says "Enjoy the little relationship, because it's so fun. I don't have that any more. You know, I don't have the cards every anniversary, and I don't have the presents every Valentine's day. That's gone, it's finished. It's, it's the baby stuff. Now I get a pan for Valentine's day. I get a house for Christmas". When asked how G's buying her practical things makes her feel, Vanessa says "it doesn't bother me...if I need a frying pan I get a frying pan...". She adds that on days like Valentine's day if she gets something like a frying pan "I don't mind what I get. Because ...if I need a frying pan, I will get a three hundred rand frying pan, I will not get a twelve rand frying pan." She says "My birthday is my day... That's when he gets me things for me" such as charms for her charm bracelet, or clothing, or perfume.
She says that G "listens to what I am saying. And then he will never forget...like for my birthday, I really wanted a pair of Buffs, Buffaloes, and I really wanted them, and I wanted them, and I wanted them. And he said to me 'V, look. I don't think we can afford it this, this, this, so early, can it wait till Christmas?' I said 'Yes. Not a problem'. It's not a problem, I know our financial situation as well as he does. My birthday comes, I get my Buffs!". So, as far as Vanessa is concerned G "goes the extra mile for me. And it's that effort that I really learned to appreciate. I appreciate him every day. ...And he appreciates me. Even if it's just remembering to tell his mom that he has to pay for his car or just remind him to go fetch this or that, he appreciates those little things, because he wouldn't be able to remember himself".

She also feels that G trusts her. She says, for example, that "G makes a hell of a lot more money than me... but if I go to G and say 'I want a hundred rand', he'll give me a hundred rand. He never asks me what it's for, because he knows, it usually goes to a damn good place".

She says that "I'm the kind of person, if you ask me to do something I'll do it straight away, G will have to think about it first....he does some serious thought, and then he will tell you what he thinks about it, and then he will do it". Furthermore, "that is the way, that he, that he will ... do anything. He gives a lot of thought to a lot of things... he doesn't do something if he's not one hundred percent sure of all the facts...and that I find very solid, and that roots me. ...I don't like someone who's always very jumpy, and just does things for the sake of doing them, because I do it". So, she feels that G anchors her with his carefulness. She adds that if she asks G to do something "he will do it. In his own time, and in his own way, and that is what I watch: how long it takes him to do something, and how he does it. Because when he does it once, he will do it always. The same way". This consistency also contributes to her evaluating him positively, because it is taken as a further sign of his reliability.

Vanessa says that G is open to suggestions, and he is also a careful person. She, on the other hand, is somewhat impulsive. So if she wants to do something she will listen to what he has to say on the subject and she says "I'll think about it, and I'll do it his way, because I know that he would never do anything, or say anything, or make me do anything that would be harmful, to myself, or us". This last indicates
that Vanessa trusts G absolutely. She believes that he is interested in what is best for her and for them as a couple. In this regard she says "I do respect his opinion, because I know where it comes from. It comes from... a deeper place than to just keep me happy". In other words, she does not think that G tries to pacify her. She believes that he will give her an honest opinion because he respects her and "If he doesn't like something he will tell you".

If she does something and the consequence is "not what I expected it to be. He never tells me 'I told you so'". For example, she says "I'll make a decision...and it's wrong...And you know, he knows when to actually tell me it's wrong, and when to just let me find out for myself...and you know, that is important. Because...no one partner can move all the mistakes out of the other partner's way so that he never encounters confrontations, or encounters difficulties, or hurdles, or whatever you want to call it. You...you've got to grow within yourself". Furthermore, she feels that G "listens. He pays attention...he doesn't miss details... there's room, in him, to let you grow".

Vanessa makes some compromises for G. For example, she says that when she does their shopping she buys a particular toothpaste that he has been using since he was a child, and she happens to dislike. She believes that, just as she compromises for G, he does the same for her. By way of example she says "he would really like to go gambling, and he comes home...He would really like to get a motorbike, and he won't...He really wants to go to this restaurant, but he knows I don't like it, so we won't go...he knows I don't like some of his friends, so we won't get together...And he knows he doesn't like my friends, and that when he comes with me it makes me uncomfortable, so he doesn't come. Yes, he does compromise for me, very much so". It is apparent here that there is a sense of mutuality in the relationship and this adds to the sense of partnership that Vanessa identified as being part of a healthy relationship.

Vanessa believes that "In the relationship that I am in now, in the position, in the time and space that I am in now, it's the little things [like what to eat for supper]. Because the big things have been resolved. They are finished, they are buried, they are sorted". "Big things" include G's relationship with his past girlfriend who kept calling him and saying she wanted to come back to G - while he was with Vanessa. She feels that "all those things are finished. ...they'll never go away, but
they can be spoken about...in an adult fashion knowing that there is no problem". After all the troubles that she and G have overcome, Vanessa believes that "right now, at this point in time - I cannot speak for five years from now - but, right now, I really think that we'll be together forever". She adds, however, that "if something has to happen to G, be it an accident, or he decides he doesn't like me any more, he's more than welcome to leave...It'll hurt, of course it'll hurt. If it didn't hurt I wouldn't be human, but it actually doesn't faze me. I will ... pick up the pieces and ...carry on". This indicates that while her outlook for the two of them is positive, she is not staying because she is afraid to be alone again.

When asked what makes her want to stay in her current relationship Vanessa replied "I'm comfortable. ... I don't try as hard to bring my point across...because those are all the building blocks that are down, so now I just build on them". Vanessa says that the "building blocks" she is speaking of are things that G now knows such as who she is, the things that trigger her and will make her angry, or sad, or happy. She said that those are things that had to be put in place from the start of their relationship, and she had to find different ways of getting G to understand. Now that phase on their relationship has passed, and they build on that knowledge that they have of one another. She says "I like comfortable. I really like it. There's nothing wrong with comfortable... Comfortable to me does not mean boring. Comfortable to me does not mean dead. Comfortable to me no longer means being dependent on somebody. Comfortable means I am comfortable with who I am, who he is, who we are. That's it. Comfortable is just right. Just relaxed, calm ... tuned in". She is comfortable because she has established for herself that G meets her criteria for a potential husband. In her narrative about G and their relationship she indicated that she feels she can trust him, she feels he respects her and cares about her. She feels safe to be herself - good or bad.

She is also comfortable because in their relationship she finds that she and G have grown as individuals and as a couple. They are not dependent on one another, but live together - mostly - harmoniously. They can fight with one another without fear that they will break apart, and they can just be quiet with one another as well. Essentially, they accept one another and complement one another. Thus, taken together, the things that Vanessa says suggest that for the most part her relationship fulfils her expectations of relationships in general and of a healthy relationship and that G fulfils her preferences and expectations for a mate. In
addition, given what she has said of marriage, it is significant that she has decided to take that step with G.

She added that “the pressure is off. Now you have a relationship, you no longer building a relationship” and that “now we just decide on things, it’s not a pulling-pushing match any more. To see who wins”. They share a mutual affection, respect, and consideration, and they can live with one another’s habits. So she feels that their relationship has all the qualities necessary for a lasting commitment. She feels that with G she has found her other half, that he is the one she is meant to be with. She says that they “blend... We get on. We understand each other” and that is what motivates her to stay with G.

Again, as with the other respondents, it is plain that the beliefs that Vanessa has about the nature of men and relationships contribute to her expectations of a relationship and how she evaluates her own partner and relationship. The extent to which these expectations are fulfilled contributes to the evaluation of the relationship as healthy and worthwhile or not. Based on the foregoing results and their discussion it is apparent that Vanessa is committed to G and their relationship because she evaluates both as satisfactory relative to her expectations and, therefore, worth her efforts (Rusbult, 1980).

This concludes Vanessa’s narrative. We now have at hand all the information provided by the respondents in their narratives, and this brings us to the end of chapter eight. We are now in a position to draw conclusions based on the foregoing chapters.
CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSIONS

Based upon the analysis in chapters four through eight conclusions will be drawn concerning the nature of expectations in romantic relationships and their role in the evaluation of such relationships. The chapter will conclude with suggestions for future research possibilities.

In the first chapter of this study, it was made clear that one of the objectives of this work is to begin to answer the questions of what people - in this case, women - actually believe about and expect from partners and relationships. Another objective of this study was to assess the associations between expectations, cultural background, and perceived relationship satisfaction. In other words, the possible influences on expectations and their development. The sections below indicate the extent to which these objectives have been met, and suggest pathways for future investigation.

9.1. Beliefs and expectations.

It is clear from the chapters detailing the results and their discussion that the respondents each have many individually held beliefs about men and about relationships - the good, the bad, and the ugly so to speak. It is also apparent that the way in which expectations are associated with cultural background and relationship satisfaction is quite complex. In chapter two the theoretical groundwork for understanding these associations was laid. It was made clear that constructs - being ways of feeling, thinking, knowing, valuing, and behaving, are the terms in which experiences are interpreted. Constructs underlie expectations, which are internal mental representations of what is anticipated in a given situation. As Rowe (1973) states, personal constructs are like funds of expectations that we use to structure our experience. Beliefs have been shown to be the basis of expectations and, as suggested by Dunstan (1996), the latter are involved in the process of prediction where people will have a positive expectation for a situation as well as a negative forecast. The more often an expectation (or forecast) is fulfilled the stronger the belief underlying it will become. In this way, one will be more likely to interpret future events in terms of that belief than if the associated expectation was not fulfilled.
The beliefs that have been identified in the preceding chapters can be viewed as the structure of interpretation and understanding that the women have developed in response to their observations and experiences. Themes and issues identified for each respondent can be viewed as the "meta-" or dominant constructs of a person's construct system. They are about each woman's deepest fears and most valued principles. Their role in evaluation is fundamental inasmuch as they are the organising principles of her frame of reference. Given the hierarchical organisation of the construct system, events and behaviours will be construed in terms of these broad themes. As shown in the results and their discussion, beliefs about men and relationships underlie what they expect from both, and suggest the ways in which they make sense of relationship events. Thus, the sections in chapters four through eight that state the respondents' beliefs about men and relationships speak directly of their expectations and thus accomplish the first aim of stating precisely what it is that people expect from romantic partners and relationships.

The analysis in chapters four through eight also indicates that the respondents' beliefs about relationships are not one-dimensional. Rather, they have beliefs and associated expectations about static characteristics (such as integrity, or friendship, or trust) that are part of relationships, about dynamics between a couple (such as the fact that they share activities, or that they accept one another), and about how relationships function or are maintained - for example, that relationships take time to develop, or that they need to be worked at, and that this involves making time to be with one's partner, and so on. Some of these beliefs are statements of fact, and others are in the form of ideals. The latter are a vision of how things should be, and suggest both what is considered important in a healthy relationship, and to some extent what is considered lacking in relationships in general. Given the important role that such ideals play in relationship evaluations, further study is indicated. The balance of beliefs and ideals varies for each respondent. There is both a general and a specific element to beliefs and ideals. Beliefs about how things are in general are combined with ideals about how things should be - and should not be - to provide a framework of understanding that contributes to beliefs about one's own relationship in particular. In this way, as Crittenden (1990) suggests, internal mental representations help to shape interpretations of events.

As mentioned above, assessment of the association between expectations and cultural background falls into the realm of the influences on one's frame of
reference. The following section gives an indication of the extent to which the second objective of the study has been met.

9.2. Influences.
Influences on one's beliefs and expectations include many variables. For the purposes of this study the focus fell primarily on cultural background. However, it became apparent that one's parents play a part in the transmission of culture and in relationships.

9.2.1. Parents.
In the course of this study it became apparent that evaluation of parents as people impacts on the evaluation of their values and teachings. For example, Rachel and her mother's relationship is difficult, therefore, Rachel does not value her mother's ideas. The ease of interaction between her and her father facilitates the assimilation of his ideas. Similarly, Vanessa has a difficulty with her parents and does not wish to be anything like them, but views G's parents much more favourably, and partially models her own relationship on theirs. The implication is that one is either similar to one's parents in one's views or one differs from them - either radically or only slightly. In terms of romantic relationships, one either wants a relationship like that of one's parents or their relationship is a model for how one does not want to be.

The findings of this study indicate that Sadie and Vanessa have a positive view of marriage, while Rachel and Philisiwe do not. Liza does not specify sufficient beliefs about marriage to support a conclusion one way or the other. The fact that Vanessa is optimistic about marriage but uses her parents' relationship as a negative model conflicts with the work of Carmelley and Janoff-Bulman (1992) dealing with optimism about relationships and about marriage. Their conclusions are, however, supported by Rachel's and Philisiwe's cases where less-than-wonderful parental relationships are associated with negative views on marriage. Thus, a mixed picture is presented.

During one's life from childhood onwards one observes others in relationships and one is taught various rules of conduct that help to shape the broad beliefs one develops about the nature of relationships and - for women - the nature of men, in general. Some beliefs are implicit in one's thoughts rather than being consciously
examined. Since, as humans we possess the ability to be aware of our own thoughts we may at some stage come to examine our beliefs consciously. Both Rachel and Sadie mention that children grow up and assess the teachings of their parents. If, in the course of this investigation, one decides that what one has been taught is correct and appropriate given one's observations of others and one's own experiences, one's ideals will accord with the lessons one has learned from parents and the broader society and one may seek a man who fulfils what one has been taught is desirable and appropriate in a relationship. If, on the other hand, one comes to the conclusion that what one has been taught is erroneous or not entirely valid, one's ideals will most likely be the opposite of - or at least quite different from - what has been perceived as the norm.

The suggestion here, based on what the respondents say about their parents, is that the relationship with one's parents colours one's evaluation of them as people which in turn influences the evaluation of their values or lessons. It is clear from what the respondents had to say that one will assimilate parental ideas or rebel against them, but that they will influence the one's relationship one way or another.

9.2.2. Culture.

In chapter three cultural background was defined as context of customs and civilisation of a particular group or people in which a person was raised and with which she is most familiar. In the course of the interviews, it became apparent that the respondents shared a view of culture as being concerned with norms and rules about appropriate behaviour in different situations, as held by identifiable groups of people. This supports the definition offered in chapter three. It also became apparent that the women do not usually consider their cultural background as part of their relationships. Cultural influence is generally implicit in people's statements and their views rather than being clearly perceived and expressed.

Culture is something like the wallpaper behind a particular picture. It is a woman's parents who hang the wallpaper, and she will either like it or not, but it is there. Thus, one's cultural heritage is an inextricable part of one's identity and it finds expression in one's values and habits. In this light, Sadie sees herself as Jewish and South African with a strong English influence. Philisiwe identifies herself as a Zulu woman from Natal. Liza identifies herself as Pedi from Pietersburg. Vanessa identifies herself as South African with a Portuguese background, and Rachel sees
herself as White, but does not pin down any cultural roots beyond mentioning that “typical British values” were not instilled in her. She is, to a certain extent, the WASP representative in this sample.

While Philisiwe and Liza identify their own origins specifically as Zulu and Pedi, when speaking of cultural background and norms in general they do not distinguish between the various Black cultures in their generalisations, but seem to consider them all as quite similar. They also do not differentiate between White cultures, but tend to see “White people” as a consistent group. Rachel also mentioned race when discussing the influence of cultural background on relationships. Thus, the women share the notion that culture is associated with certain racially variable practices. The women’s identification of the norms of their culture suggested that norms are not necessarily agreed with. Particularly in Rachel’s case, identification of what she rebels against leads one to her perception of a social or cultural norm.

Philisiwe and Vanessa also reacted against perceived norms. Each of the women had their own reasons for non-conforming decisions and behaviours. Thus, it is apparent that one may agree or disagree with cultural dictates, but they will nevertheless have an impact on one and, by association, on one’s relationship.

Given that the influence of culture is more likely to be implicit than explicit, one must consider what is not said, but suggested by the respondents. Hsu (1971, 1985) notes that culture can influence where people seek intimacy. Thus, a woman’s focusing on her partner as her main source of intimacy - rather than on her parents or family - speaks of a Western, individualistic cultural influence. All of the women in this study tended to share this focus on a partner as a primary source of intimacy.

As mentioned in chapter two, a cultural syndrome is a pattern of shared attitudes, beliefs, categorisations, self-definitions, norms, role-definitions, and values organised around a theme. The cultural syndrome of collectivism versus individualism can be traced in each case through the respondent’s views on 1) the meaning of the self, 2) the structure of goals, 3) behaviour as a function of norms versus attitudes, and 4) a focus on the needs of an in-group versus social exchanges (Triandis 1996). In each case, as discussed above, the women exhibited a tendency towards individualism rather than collectivism along these dimensions. In Sadie’s and Vanessa’s cases, there appeared to be a fairly substantial collective element as well, while in Liza’s case, the picture was difficult to clarify completely. Given the above, it would seem that the women’s personal
identifications of their cultural heritage are less important than the tendencies revealed by their beliefs and preferences, in terms of the association between cultural background and expectations.

In terms of an association between a given cultural background and relationship satisfaction, the data do not support any firm conclusions. The section below on the application of expectations in the process of relationship evaluation does, however, lend support to conclusions about the association between expectations and perceived relationship satisfaction.

9.3. Application.
The information supplied in chapters four through eight is sufficient to conclude that there is an association between what a woman expects from a man and a relationship and the degree of satisfaction she expresses with that man and that relationship.

In terms of how expectations come to impact on perceived relationship satisfaction, the discussion indicates that one's own relationship is assessed as normal (or not) with reference to expectations of relationships in general, and healthy (or not) with reference to expectations about healthy relationships. The degree to which expectations are fulfilled largely dictates what this evaluation will be, and this decision impacts on the degree of satisfaction one feels with regard to the relationship. However, satisfaction is not the only relevant factor in the endurance of a relationship.

As mentioned by Rusbult (1980) and Fehr (1988) commitment is also relevant to relationship success. Commitment is based on satisfaction which, as we have seen, is associated with positive evaluation relative to a comparison level - such as a relationship belief. According to Metts and Cupach (1990) relationship beliefs are fairly stable expectations about the nature of relationships and partners. Certainly this study supports the view that evaluation proceeds by way of comparison to an expectation and that commitment is based on overall satisfaction. However, the data also indicate that the women do not consider their relationships to be composed of all the criteria they identify as good or healthy. Thus, they tend to balance out positive and negative aspects to come to an overall evaluation much as
De Angelis (1992) suggests one should do with one's partner preferences. The suggestion is that they are not entirely satisfied, but are staying nevertheless.

As mentioned in chapter two commitment is also related to the degree to which a person has invested time, money, or emotional resources in the relationship. Rachel's belief that in an established relationship there is more inclination towards compromise is relevant here. The suggestion is that one will be more inclined to interpret behaviour in a favourable - or at least less punitive - light, with the passage of time. Certainly, the way that Rachel and Vanessa tend to rationalise less favourable traits of their partners lends credence to this suggestion.

In some cases, for example Philisiwe and Liza, beliefs about men are negative, while beliefs about relationships are mostly positive. There is a clear distinction between what one can expect - realistically - from a man, and what can be expected in a good relationship. Men who are primarily good are considered to be available but rare. Thus, if one finds a man who does not display the tendencies of a typical male one will probably evaluate him in a more positive light than if one's beliefs about men were mainly positive. If one interprets one's partner's behaviour in such a way that he is evaluated highly relative to other men, or one considers that it would be difficult to replace him, one may begin to change one's beliefs about relationships rather than exchanging partners. In this way, fulfilment of expectations has implications for one's frame of reference, by way of the impact of validation of beliefs on that frame (Kelly, 1955). The sections on application, particularly with reference to Rachel, provide support for the above conclusions which accord with Duck's (1973) argument that individuals in relationships modify interpersonal constructions as the relationship develops.

Beliefs about the nature of relationships in general form a backdrop for expectations of a specific relationship. If those expectations are fulfilled then the beliefs underlying them are strengthened. If expectations are not fulfilled this may be rationalised in terms of less-than-positive beliefs about relationships. In other words, the woman truly expects certain negative features to be associated with a relationship, so that when her positive expectations or hopes are not fulfilled, she falls back on the belief that relationships are not that wonderful anyway and that whatever is occurring is to be expected. This accords with Dunstan's (1996) statement that people have a positive expectation and a negative forecast for given
situations. Alternatively, she falls back on a particular principle she values: for example, if a partner does not fulfil one's expectations, rather than moving on, one will invoke the value of acceptance. It is a little like a self-fulfilling prophecy, although, depending on the strength of the underlying belief, she will either keep the belief and change the partner - and therefore the relationship's potential, perhaps seeking to validate a belief anew - or she will keep the partner and change her belief.

Mixed up in this is what she has learned is natural and acceptable in terms of comparison and in terms of what she should be satisfied with from her parents and her culture. Here, Fehr's (1988) work on a prototype of love in terms of affective, behavioural, physiological and cognitive components is relevant inasmuch as the woman's beliefs suggest just such a prototype for relationships. Deviation from this prototype may be evaluated differently at different points in the relationship's development; perhaps more harshly in the beginning of a relationship than once it is established. The woman's own self-esteem also plays a role here, since she is perhaps more likely to acquiesce to a less than ideal situation if she feels unworthy of seeking better, or if she perceives a cultural or family edict not to be too fussy. Thus, all elements combine in a complex dance.

Once one has formed an evaluation of one's relationship a decision can be made as to whether the relationship is worthwhile and redeemable - or not. Naturally, since we are human, this is not a straight forward, clinical and detached decision. A whole range of emotions are also involved, including anxiety, sadness, disappointment, hope, and so on. In addition, a person's views on him/herself will come into the picture, making a decision regarding the continuation of a relationship or its termination a complex intertwining of beliefs about men, relationships, and oneself with ideals about how things ought to be, assessments of how things are, decisions about the possibility of change, and the associated emotional consequences of such evaluations.

The discussion above has made it plain that the aims of this study have, for the most part, been accomplished. A start has been made in identifying the specific expectations that underlie relationship dynamics and the nature of the association between relationship expectations and perceived satisfaction has been established
within the context of this exploratory study. This brings us to the point where recommendations for future studies can be made.

9.4. Future research.
To begin with, I must emphasise that the exploratory nature of this investigation, and its small scale precludes generalisation. If that is to be possible, a great deal more investigation of specific expectations is necessary, as is the investigation of the workings of expectations in the process of evaluation of relationships. Once a sufficient body of research has been built, a more quantitative approach would be more suitable for the purpose of generalisation.

This study has also raised a number of interesting questions with regard to the role of one's personal values and self-esteem in the process of evaluation of a relationship, and in the decision to continue with a particular partner or not. The focus of this study does not allow for conclusions in this regard, and further investigation is recommended.

Given that beliefs about men and relationships play an important part in evaluations of one's own relationship one area of study that can be considered relevant and valuable is beliefs about women. In other words, what do women believe to be true about the nature and functioning of their gender in the context of relationships? Similarly, what do men believe to be true of themselves? Such beliefs most likely also have an important role to play in the structuring - and evaluation - of one's own role and behaviours in the context of romantic relationships.

It has become apparent through the course of this study that the process of decision-making, and acting upon such decisions is a complex web that feeds back on itself and requires one to move in and out of different levels of focus if one wants to reach a holistic understanding of the ways that people construct their realities, and particularly how that construction process impacts on their relationships. It is a little like taking a magnifying glass to an enormous tapestry composed of many colours in different shades, while still trying to keep an eye on the complete picture that the intertwined threads make up. Clearly, this study is just a small part of that process. Hopefully, it is also a valuable one.
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