

Mount Saint Vincent University

***Eating the Forbidden Fruit: A Critical Race Theory Exploration of Black –White Interracial
Couples in Nova Scotia***

By:

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Abstract

This thesis examines the motivations behind Black-White interracial intimate partnerships in Nova Scotia. Negative societal perceptions and social sanctions against such unions are explored with five interracial couples in Nova Scotia. From a conceptual or theoretical framework of critical race theory, radical feminism, and alienation theory, and employing a qualitative methodology, I interviewed five interracial couples from different economic social backgrounds. I conclude that the motivations for Black-White interracial marriages range from shared social similarities, desires to move up the social economic ladder and an exoticization of the body of the other. Sameness and difference both played roles in the motivations for these relationships. Social sanctions faced by these couples ranged from the stares of strangers, family rejection of the spouse, being ostracized by friends, and hearing negative or inappropriate comments about their marriage from both Black and White families and community members. The couples coped with these sanctions and negative comments by using a variety of strategies.

*To My Afrocentric Cohort classmates (2013)
who have inspired me and challenged me to do better.*

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	8
1:1 - Research Questions and Themes.....	9
1:2 - Implications for Lifelong Learning.....	16
Chapter 2: Nova Scotia and its Black Populations	18
Chapter 3: Literature Review	26
Chapter 4: Theoretical Framework	30
4:1 – Critical Race Theory (CRT)	30
4:2 - CRT and Culture.....	32
4:3 - CRT and Radical Feminism.....	34
4:4 - CRT and Alienation.....	36
Chapter 5: Methodology	40
5:1 - Afrocentricity.....	41
5:2 - Critical Race and Narrative Analysis.....	43
5:3 - Researcher Reflexivity.....	44
5:4 - Participants.....	49
Chapter 6: Results and Discussion	50
6:1 - Motivations behind Black –White marriages.....	50
6:1.1 - Monica W and Carlos B.....	51
6:1.2 - Abigail B and Peter W.....	52
6:1.3 - Michael W and Kimberley B.....	54
6:1.4 - Judy B and David W.....	56
6:1.5 - Wanda W and Eric B.....	57
6:2 - Exoticization of the Body.....	58
6:2.1 - Judy B and David W.....	59
6:2.2 - Peter W and Abigail B.....	59
6:2.3 - Michael W and Kimberley B.....	60
6:2.4 - Monica W and Carlos B.....	61
6:3 - Societal Perceptions of Black-White Interracial Marriages as perceived by the couples.....	62
6:3.1 - Monica W and Carlos B.....	62
6:3.2 - Abigail B and Peter W.....	64
6:3.3 - Kimberley B and Michael W.....	66
6:3.4 - David W and Judy B.....	67
6:3.5 - Wanda W and Eric B.....	68
6:4 - Social Sanctions.....	70
6:4.1 - Monica W and Carlos.....	71

6:4.2 - Abigail B and Peter.....	72
6:4.3 - Kimberly B and Michael.....	74
6:4.4 - Judy B and David W.....	76
6:5 - Social Mobility.....	79
6:5.1 – Kimberly B and Michael W.....	79
6:5.2 - Abigail B and Peter W.....	79
6:6 - Identity of Off Spring as Perceived by the Couples	80
6:6.1 - Carlos B and Monica W.....	81
6:6.2 - Abigail B and Peter W.....	82
6:6.3 - Kimberley B and Michael W.....	84
6:6.4 - Judy B and David W.....	84
6:6.5 - Wanda W and Eric B.....	85
Chapter 7: Conclusion.....	88
References.....	94

Of Man's First Disobedience, and the Fruit
Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal taste
Brought Death into the World, and all our woe,
With loss of *Eden* ...

John Milton, Paradise Lost, 1674

Chapter 1: Introduction

This study has been motivated by a conversation with a friend who was determined to have a child with a White man with the hopes that her baby will look White. “Lady T” I will call her looks Black and identifies herself as Black is the offspring of an interracial marriage, and has one child who can easily pass as White. Questions arose in my mind about the motivations behind Black people preferring White partners and vice versa. Is it out of love, or a desire to move up the social ladder, or an indication that the Black partner feels racially inferior, as I suspect of my friend? Classical assimilation theory posits that the “rising numbers of interracial and interethnic unions [in the US] represent the final stages of group assimilation and the erosion of barriers to social mobility” (Kreager, 2006, p. 887). Such a theory suggests that the increasing rate of interracial marriages in recent times can be shown to be one of the measures of a society’s tolerance for multiculturalism and racial propinquity. The major focus of this study is to explore the motivations behind the decision to enter an interracial marriage from a Black - White perspective.

Unfortunately, there is a paucity of literature concerning interracial marriages in Canada. Statistics Canada only started looking at interracial marriages in 2001 (La Rose, 2008). From the latest figures in April 2008, so called “mixed unions” in Canada are “forming at unprecedented rates” (Milan, Maheux & Chui, 2010, p. 70).

According to Milan, Maheux and Chui, (2010), Statistics Canada did not limit itself to Black-White interracial marriages as an indication of Canada’s diversity, and the way in which different ethnicities are integrated, but looked at mixed marriages between different ethnicities (p. 71). Further, Qian and Litcher (2011) state that there has been an increase in the number of interracial marriages in the United States. This is substantiated by the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan think tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping

America and the world. The PEW writes that in 2010, 8.4% of all current US marriages are interracial. This is an increase from 3.2% in 2001 (Cited in Qian & Litcher, 2011, p.1065).

1:1 - Research Sub-questions and Themes

There are many themes that can be explored in Black-White interracial relationships. I explore a number of these in this thesis and present a historical context for this discussion within Nova Scotia, situating this research within the current social climate and recognizing the important history of this location. I explore how these couples feel they are perceived in society, the distinct features of their marriages, the identities of their children, the social sanctions they encounter, and the exoticization of the Other's body.

Paul Taylor, director of Pew's *Social & Demographic Trends* project states,

In the past century, intermarriage has evolved from being illegal, to be a being a taboo and then to be merely unusual. And with each passing year, it becomes less unusual. That says a lot about the state of race relations and the extent to how far perceptions have changed over time. Behaviors have changed and attitudes have changed. (cited in The Associated Press, Thursday, February 16, 2012, para. 8)

Wendy Roth, a sociologist from the University of British Columbia reasoned, “intermarriages proved that they serve as a litmus test of social relations between the different groups” (Roth, 2008, as cited by La Rose, 2008, *The Toronto Star*). Roth argued further,

If this is a sign of anything bigger, it is a sign that those barriers, those social barriers between racial groups are being chipped away a little bit. The rate of

mixed unions is not huge but it is steady and the fact that it continues to be steady in different censuses suggests that those barriers are diminishing.

(<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada>)

Given these hopeful indicators of improved social relations and the diminishing racial and ethnic barriers in society, my study also addresses the question: ‘How do Black-White interracial couples interpret society’s perception of their marriage?’

Tucker and Mitchell-Kernan (1990) state that Black-White interracial marriages are definitely subjected to different "lenses" by society compared with other interracial marriages (p. 209). The concentration of American research about interracial marriages has been focused mainly on Black-White ones (p. 209). Tucker and Mitchell-Kernan assert that this kind of interracial marriage has “long been subject to conjecture and debate...empirical examination of the phenomenon has been sporadic, limited in large part to descriptive assessments and attributions of motive” (p. 209). Black-White intermarriages have distinctive patterns and this should not be surprising given the “peculiar historical relationship between Blacks and the dominant culture, the continuing tension in Black-White relations, the inferior socio-economic status of the Black population, generally, and the continuing distinctive social context of interracial relationships involving Blacks and the dominant culture” (p. 210). What is most intriguing about interracial marriages, as Pascoe (1991) writes is, “although such marriages are infrequent, throughout most of US history, an enormous amount of time and energy was nonetheless spent in trying to prevent them from taking place” (p. 6).

According to Litcher (2012, as cited by Yen, 2012, para. 3), the Pew study attributes the increase in interracial marriages to the influx of Asians and Hispanics into the US, but it has also revealed that the biggest increase since 2008 has occurred among Blacks. This is interesting

because in the United States, Black-White intermarriages represent a very small percentage of interracial marriages (Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1990, p. 209). Utilizing the 1985 US Bureau of the Census data, Tucker and Mitchell found that Black women were partners in 1.2% of all interracial marriages, 3.6% for Black males, compared to 40.6% and 55.7% for Japanese and Native American respectively (p.209). More current data suggest interesting new trends. Yen (2012) reporting on recent PEW research findings notes that,

Of the 275,500 new interracial marriages in 2010, 43 percent were White-Hispanic couples, 14.4 percent were White-Asian, 11.9 percent were White-Black, and the remainder were [of] other combinations. Still, the share of Asians who intermarried has actually declined recently - from 30.5 percent in 2008 to 27.7 percent in 2010. In contrast, Blacks who married outside their race increased in share from 15.5 percent to 17.1 percent, due in part to a rising Black middle class that has more interaction with other races (Yen, 2012, para 8).

Writing over 45 years ago, Billingsley (1968) observed that interracial couples faced more social sanctions in the form of “strangers’ stares and anger, and even rejection by their own racial groups because of the betrayal and non-conforming behavior of crossing the line” (Billingsley, 1968 as cited by Zhang and Van Hook, 2009, p. 96). For Black-White couples this social sanction could be extremely harsh (p. 96). According to Bratter and King (2008), mixed marriages between Blacks and Whites are considered the least stable overall, and “interracial couples have higher rates of divorce, particularly for those marrying during the late-1980s” (Bratter and King, 2008, p. 160). Zhang and Van Hook (2009) conclude that Black-White interracial marriages are less stable than intra-racial marriages or endogamous unions among Whites and Blacks (Zhang and Van Hook, 2009, p.96), but their study shows that “interracial marriage *per se* is associated with an elevated

risk of marital dissolution” and that there is “little difference...in the risk of divorce or separation when compared to other marriages” which they attribute to the “lessening of social distance generally in society” (p. 104). They conclude that, “mixed marriages involving Blacks were the least stable followed by Hispanics, whereas mixed marriages involving Asians were even more stable than endogamous White marriages” (p.104). The Black man - White woman coupling was found to be the least stable of all marriage combinations, a fact they blame on “persistent racism and distrust directed towards Black men in the US” (p. 104). Following from this, another theme of my research is to investigate how society's interpretations and perceptions of Black-White unions affect the couples' social mobility. Also, I investigate what “distinct” features, if any, within Black-White marriages create this over exuberant focus on Black-White intermarriages.

In an article titled *Interracial marriage in US hits new high, 1 in 12*, Yen Hope (2012) cites Daniel Lichter of Cornell University who stated that an offshoot of growing interracial marriages as a result of improved social relations is that the children of such marriages have blurred America's colour line. Children of Black-White interracial marriages often interact with others across the racial divide and frequently serve as brokers between friends and family members of different racial backgrounds (Lichter, 2012, as cited by Yen Hope, 2012, Huffington Post, 17th February, 2012, para. 3). Further, both sides of the racial divide have been more willing to accept the grand children of mixed marriages. According to the Pew Research Centre, 63% of Americans in 2010 say that it is okay to marry outside one's race compared to 37% in 1986 (2012).

The couples in this study are also interviewed about questions of identity-development of the offspring of their marriages. According to Wardle (1989) society, as a result of the *one-drop* rule, assigns inferiority status to anyone who has any African ancestry, however remote. The *one-drop* rule is also known as the "one Black ancestor rule." Some courts have called it the "traceable

amount rule," and anthropologists call it the "hypo-descent rule," (meaning that racially mixed persons are assigned the status of the subordinate group) (Wardle, 1989, p.2).

But how do the couples and their families see themselves, and how does this identity development affect, enhance or deter a positive identity development? Wardle (1989) asks these questions in his study, *The identity development of biracial children and society's impact thereon*. He asks, "what is the identity process of any child? what is society?—we say society sees them as Black —what do we mean?—and how does society impact the developmental process? how do they fit into each other or interface?" (Wardle, 1989, p. 2). He writes that, society may modify a child's identity, will reinforce it or change it, but if the parents raise children to be comfortable with whom they are, then the children can make their own choices and not succumb to or blindly accept the social constructions of identity pushed on them by society (p. 8). His analysis is not surprising, as he is a White father of a child with a Black mother. The idea of the child seeing her/himself as "biracial" (his words) becomes a solution to the quest for identity, a rejection of societies' use of the *one-drop* rule to label the "biracial" child as Black.

Makalani (2001), however, argues that a "biracial identity" "...has no historical basis and would have a negative political impact on African Americans" (Makalani, 2001, p. 83). She states,

Since races are historically developed political categories, not biological groupings, how might someone be "biracial" in the United States...? Most importantly, in light of estimates that upward of 75% of African Americans have White and/or American Indian ancestry what would a biracial identity offer that a Black identity does not? (p. 87)

She concludes that though children of Black-White interracial marriages may face particular identity and development issues, the conclusions of "biracial" identity theorists are based on "false

assumptions, biological determinism and an unwillingness to engage the Black historical experience” (p. 87). The issue of a “biracial” identity can therefore be a problematic one and a significant theme for analysis in this research is how interracial couples in Nova Scotia view the identities and development of their children in a world of such social constructs as Whiteness and Blackness.

Racism against Black-White interracial marriages in the United States is not only experienced by the Black partner; Zhang and Van Hook (2009) found that Whites in Black-White interracial marriages in the United States experienced racial incidents with their Black partners including “inferior service, racial profiling, and racism against their children” (p. 104). These social pressures tend to isolate the White-Black couple and negatively affect the survival of their marriage (p. 105). Deliovsky (1999) writes that “when an interracial couple consisting of a White man and a Black woman walk down any North American street, they are not simply a man and a woman walking...their bodies signify much more...their bodies are objects within systems of social coercion and sexual, racial and economic exchange” (Deliovsky, 1999, p. 7). Hoch (1979) writes, “at the heart of Western mythology, poetry and literature is the triumph of White manhood over the villainous Black over the possession of the White Goddess” (Hoch, 1979, p. 43). The White female and the Black male then are very important symbols of White hegemony, which is symbolically expressed in the Goddess-like White woman in need of protection (Deliovsky, 1999, p. 9). In this case from the “super masculine Black beast” (Hoch, 1979, p. 51). Hoch (1979) explains that this social drama allows for the White woman to be restrained and controlled, therefore justifying the enslavement and brutal treatment of Black men, and legitimating White male domination. When White women get into relationships with Black men then, it can be seen as a betrayal of the White cause (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 136). These women are reduced to sexual beings who are less bound

by social control, and are therefore in need of treatment. In a study conducted in the late 1970s in the United States, Frankenberg (1993) reports it was not unheard of for young White women who were in relationships with Black men to be sent to mental institutions, psychiatrists, or face ostracism from their parents and family (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 112). A relevant theme of analysis in this research is determining what social sanctions White partners of interracial relationships in Nova Scotia face, and how these reflect race relations in the province.

Lewis, Yancey and Bletzer (1997) conclude that novelty, interracial sex and ease of talk are not factors that determine interracial relationships and marriages (Lewis et al., 1997, p. 67). They therefore conclude that Black/ White relationships and marriages occur because the individuals in the couple shared "social similarities" (p. 75). Sameness, and not difference, they posit, is the basis of interracial relationships and marriages (p.75). I find these conclusions problematic because they diminish the role of difference in spousal or mate attraction or choice. It may have been difficult for human subjects to openly admit the role played by difference. Lewis et al. make no reference to triangulation to ensure the accuracy of their findings. My research findings and informal conversations I have had with friends suggest that *difference* does play an important role in the initial attraction, the decision to date or even marry. An African friend of mine, even when he had the same economic or social standing as his White wife, confessed to me that he preferred a White wife because of the social status attributed to having a White wife in *his* country. Another friend of Trinidadian heritage said that she married a White man because she figured that White people had "*their shit together*". She explains further that White men have goals in life with long and short-term expectations. She believes White men can balance having a relationship and the commitment that it requires, and maintain it with other healthy interests. Her interests toward White men included them as better potential providers as they seemed more likely to be employed or were

more employable than Black men.

In Deliovsky's (1993) research of White women in interracial relationships with Black men, difference played a significant part in some of the women's choice in choosing male partners. One of her participants named Donna chose to be with a Black man because a "forbidden relationship" gave her a reason to escape from an oppressive patriarchal family. In other words choosing to be with a "very forbidden and despised male, I could make that break" (Deliovsky, 1993, p. 88).

Another of Deliovsky's participants, Tanya, states,

I have never been attracted to W.A.S.P.Y. White men, blond hair, blue eyed—never was an interest to me. I've dated Black guys for a long time. Even back to grade 7. Like I've always had an attraction and not necessarily for Black men, any dark skin [man] in general. I love my Puerto Ricans...I just like the dark skin and I'll be honest. (p. 88)

In this study, I explore the role of difference in the choice of interracial partners.

1:2 - Implications for Lifelong Learning

If increasing numbers of interracial marriages between Black and White people are evidence of a more tolerant society as the literature and research suggests, and therefore evidence of decreasing racism within the Nova Scotian society, then it becomes imperative to increasingly work towards more acceptance of these marriages. From a CRT point of view Black -White interracial marriages may blunt the lines that sharply divide White and Black. From a reductionist point of view the solution to ending racism was to have diverse or mixed neighborhoods as a means of blurring the racial lines. As reductionist as this is, because it neglects questions of power, the idea still holds certain promise. The same could be said of interracial marriages. Realistically, it is not the intention to insist on interracial marriages but, concerted efforts can be made to encourage

society's acceptance of them and to change the general Black woman's intransigence towards Black men marrying the White women and vice versa. Promoting acceptance of interracial marriages is then a worthy pursuit of Lifelong learning as part of an antiracist education.

Also, if indeed society has a more favorable view of interracial marriages as a result of improving race-relations, then interracial marriages must be encouraged and the informal social sanctions against them discouraged. If interracial marriages are a barometer for social relations then, in the province that contains the oldest Black settlements in Canada, more research is needed on the incidence of Black-White interracial marriages to fill in the gap in the literature on interracial marriages between Black and White people in Nova Scotia. At the very least it could be another weapon in the arsenal against racism in Nova Scotia.

Questions of power, economics, politics and history are the bedrock of the social construct of racism. The antipathy towards interracial marriages, much like *de facto* segregation in housing is but a super structure of this bedrock of power. Just as multiculturalism is not an answer to racism, interracial marriages are not the answer to racism in Nova Scotia. But because the super structure can, and does dictate the situation of the bedrock, promoting social acceptance of intermarriages will be a big step in the struggle against racism. Before delving into the theoretical frameworks from which I explore the motivations behind Black-White interracial unions, it is appropriate to explore the historical context of racism in Nova Scotia, highlighting in the process, Canadian society's attitude to such marriages.

Chapter 2: Nova Scotia and its Black Population

The settlement of Blacks in Nova Scotia has significant parallels in the racial oppression to that of Blacks in the United States during the same time frame. It is not hard to imagine that they experienced similar deprivations of slavery, poverty and segregation like their counterparts in the U.S. In Nova Scotia, Black people throughout history have had to “carry a special burden, the burden of the White man’s prejudice, discrimination and oppression” (Clairmont & Magill, 1970, p. 5).

In the 18th century slavery was practiced in Halifax and other parts of Nova Scotia. It is estimated that there were about 500 slaves in Nova Scotia at the time of the American Revolution in 1715 (Clairmont & Magill, 1970, p. 6). The rocky terrain in Nova Scotia prevented plantation slavery, however, a slave society, which Clairmont and Magill (1970) define as one in which “values are such that slavery is tolerated” and White supremacy is deeply rooted, still flourished (pp. 6-7). The existence of a slave society in Nova Scotia and the social constructs of racism that were imbedded in the slave society suggest that Nova Scotian Blacks faced segregation and its harmful effects similar to Blacks in the United States.

After slavery the first major migration of Black people into Nova Scotia were the Loyalists. Between 1783-1792 about 3000 Blacks settled in the province after they had fought and lost on the side of the British during the American Revolution (<http://www.novascotia.ca/nsarm/virtual/africanns/> para. 1). During the war, the British had offered freedom to slaves who “escaped and made their way to the British lines” (<http://www.novascotia.ca/nsarm/virtual/africanns/>). Many enslaved African Americans and already freed African Americans made their way to the British lines

(<http://www.novascotia.ca/nsarm/virtual/africanns/> paragraph 1). In addition to these Loyalists, about 2500 African American slaves of White Loyalists accompanied their so-called masters to Nova Scotia.

The British had promised equal treatment for Whites and free Blacks but in Nova Scotia, the Black loyalists were not given the 100-acre land grants as promised (Clairmont & Magill, 1970, pp. 9-10). Many Black Loyalists received no land at all and those who did received “unusually barren lots on the periphery of White Loyalist townships...or in the remoter sections of the province” (Clairmont & Magill, 1970, p. 10). With very little provisions for their upkeep and wretched living conditions, some Blacks were forced to sell themselves and their families into slavery or into long-term servitude (p. 10). Unable to bear these wretched conditions, about 1200 Black Loyalists accepted the Sierra Leone Company’s offer of settlement in Sierra Leone on the West African coast (Clairmont & Magill, 1970, p. 12).

The next wave of Black migration into Nova Scotia involved the Maroons from Jamaica who arrived in 1796. The Maroons were a group of Jamaican Africans who fiercely fought against enslavement and had built themselves free communities in the hills of Jamaica. For more than 140 years they had resisted British enslavement with arms and had become a thorn in the side of the British. After defeat by the British, the Trelawneys, a group of Maroons, were deported with their families to Nova Scotia (Black Cultural Centre website, 2014). In all there were about six hundred Maroons who settled in Nova Scotia in the Preston area of Halifax and helped in the construction of the Citadel, Government House and performed manual labour (<http://www.novascotia.ca/nsarm/virtual/africanns/> n.d. para. 1). In August of 1800 five hundred and fifty Maroons out of the original 600 embarked to Sierra Leone (<http://www.bccns.com/history/maroons/> n.d. para. 4).

During the War of 1812, again the British promised freedom, wages and land to any enslaved Blacks who abandoned their owners and joined the British lines (Clairmont & Magill, 1970, p.12.). In 1815, after the war, about 2000 Blacks arrived in Nova Scotia. They were promised land grants but instead were given licenses of occupation, which were to be followed by the grants in three years. For twenty-five years after, no full grants were given to the Blacks (p. 15). Blacks were then left without any security of tenure and were treated as second-class citizens (p.15).

In isolated communities, Black people in Nova Scotia faced *de facto* segregation, discrimination and prejudice “operating in a complex casual fashion” which forced them to live marginal and subsistent lives (Clairmont & Magill, 1970, pp.18-21). Concerning the education of the youth within the school system, Blacks fared worse than Whites. In 1822 Robert Willis, a member of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) who helped set up African Schools for Black children noted that, “Colored children were excluded from other schools because Whites would not allow their children to mix with them” (p.168). These conditions persisted into the 20th century, and Winks (1997) writes that only the most blind of school inspectors could have pretended that separate education was also equal education (p.176). Summing up the educational deprivation that Blacks faced in Nova Scotia, Reverend W. P. Oliver of the Nova Scotian Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NSAACP) wrote in 1949, that throughout the 200 years that Blacks had settled in Nova Scotia by 1949, only three native born African Nova Scotians graduated from college, and all of them had come from racially mixed parents. The extent of the deprivation is such that Clairmont and Magill (1970), writing about educational conditions of African in Nova Scotia in 1970 describes a vicious cycle of poverty and low education visited on Blacks as a result of historical oppression. Clairmont and Magill argue that, unless educational policy changes dramatically within a context of broad social change, Nova Scotian Blacks would

not likely to experience any changes from the cycle of poverty they lived in. A year earlier in 1969, Winks had had a similar take on Blacks. He writes,

The present Negro generation in Nova Scotia could not be liberated in any case. The cycle of poverty, ignorance and employment had lasted far too long for anyone but the most idealistic to expect the Nova Scotia Negro to assimilate to Nova Scotian society quickly or easily, or for the Nova Scotian White, however much he might be prepared to concede the Negroes inherent equality, to think of them as equals in fact as well as in potential. Negroes were not yet equal in fact and unlikely to be until the slow curative powers of equal education had made their impact. (p. 191)

In general then, Blacks in Nova Scotia ever since slavery and the early migrations of the Loyalists have faced “hostile, White population dominant in numbers and in power (Clairmont & Magill, 1970, p. 27).

By the turn of the 20th century, a palpable picture of segregation had emerged in Nova Scotia. Clairmont and Magill (1970) use the metaphor of an iceberg to describe White racism in Nova Scotia. They write that by the early part of the 19th century statutes that enforced racism had all been abolished and racism was only experienced and “reflected primarily in everyday attitudes and behavior” (p. 82).

Blacks had come to be accepted as marginalized members of the society who were “alright in their own communities and place” (Clairmont & Magill, 1970, p. 82). This they say is only the tip of the iceberg. Underneath the surface is the racist culture that underpins the Nova Scotian society. It may be tempting to conclude that Nova Scotia’s racism must have been more benign than that of the American South because of the absence of official statutes of racism, but as explained physical dispersal and segregation of Blacks in a country that had already perfected the art of

genocide and segregation in the reserve system against natives more than compensated for the absence of racist official statutes.

Adrienne Shadd writes (2003), that

The restrictions [against Blacks] were not legislated, but practiced in communities across the country. Unfortunately, because discriminatory practices varied greatly over time and space, there were no clear-cut targets and they were more difficult to tackle (para.16).

American historian, Robin Winks (1971,1997) referred to the period 1870-1931 as the “nadir” of existence for Black Canadians – next to slavery itself” (p. 9). In the context of such racist social structures, Blacks knew their place within the racial social order. The inferiority of Blackness to Whiteness was so complete, that it was assumed that Blacks “knew their place”, and no anti-miscegenation laws were needed in explicit forms. Other racist practices of Blacks knowing their place in the cinema theatre, sitting at the back of the bus, or Blacks relegated to using different doors to access public or private buildings were all part of the social fabric.

With the absence of explicit anti-miscegenation laws, the White establishment and consequently the White populous used legal and paralegal [including paramilitary means] to enforce their antipathy towards interracial marriages. For example, E. Lionel Cross the only Black lawyer practicing in Toronto between (1920 and 1924) reports that throughout Ontario about seventy-five Klu Klux Klan members marching into Oakville on February 1930 to protest the marriage between a Black Canadian and a White Canadian. They burnt wooden crosses on the main streets of Oakville and in front of the Black man’s home and kidnapped the White bride to be (Backhouse, 2002, p. 3). The White lawyer who defended the Klu Klux Klan (KKK) in court when Lionel Cross successfully pressured the Attorney General to prosecute the KKK argued that the KKK was doing

their “human and decent thing and had conducted themselves as gentleman” (p. 2). The defense lawyer continued by saying that, “hundreds of parents throughout the Dominion of Canada would be eternally thankful” that the KKK had taken the action they did (p. 3). One Klansman was found guilty and merely given a fine of \$50, while the crown prosecutor refused to charge the other Klansman (Backhouse, 1999, p. 208-209).

Citing Valverde (1983), Deliovsky (1999) writes that Canadians, to a very large extent, have ascribed to American views on Black male sexuality, which is that it threatens the social order of Whiteness (p. 22). Deliovsky (1999) gives several historical examples of anti-miscegenation attitudes in Canada. For example, in the early 1900s there was a perception that no proper White woman should have sex with a Black man (p.33). In 1908, a Black man from Chatham, Ontario was jailed for five years and was given thirty lashes for living with a White girl (p. 23). Deliovsky (1999) recalls another incident where a White mob surrounded a Black man’s house screaming, “hang the Nigger”. The Black man’s crime was “forcing the White girl to carry his child” (p.23). Canada’s taboo on interracial sex and marriage was shared by then Prime Minister Sir John A. MacDonald who wrote in a letter in 1868:

We still retained the punishment of death for rape... We have thought it well... to continue it on account of the frequency of rape committed by negroes, of whom we have too many in Upper Canada. They are very prone to felonious assaults on White women: if sentences and imprisonment were not very severe there would be a great dread of the people taking the law into their own hands. (Thompson, 1979, p. 46)

In 1912 the Attorney General of Saskatchewan helped pass a racist statute called the “White Woman’s Labour Bill”. The Bill was intended to prevent Asian men from hiring White women.

This Statute called the “Morals Legislation” was obviously intended to prevent White women from having relations with Asian men.

There are parallels between the racism in the United States and in Canada, and it is not surprising that the same anti-miscegenation laws that supports the Whiteness project in the United States operates in similar ways in Canada. Debra Thompson (2009), notes that the Indian Act in Canada was similar to the anti-miscegenation laws in the US in that it provided both the means to create and maintain racial boundaries, and also to “govern and regulate the intimate spheres” (Thompson, p. 357). Deliovsky (1999) describes her personal experience with society’s response to interracial marriages in Canada:

When I became openly involved in an interracial relationship with my Black man my life began to change significantly. I felt that very peculiar and crazy things started to happen. I was forced out of my home with nothing but the clothes on my back. White men would hurl verbal abuse at me. Black women would give me the “cut-eye” and on several occasions they would physically attack me. My family members expressed outrage and disappointment in many forms ...physical and psychological. Life became so burdensome and stressful...Many times horrible things did happen. When I became pregnant with my first child my father ordered me to abort or else. I feared the or else. (Deliovsky,1999, p. 1)

As recently as 2013, a cross was burnt on the lawn of an interracial couple in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia by relatives of the White woman in an interracial relationship. According to the couple, they heard the perpetrators yell “Die nigga die” as they ran from the burning cross (Delaney, 2012, para. 1). The accused were eventually convicted of “inciting racial hatred and criminal harassment”, showing that racism is not a thing of the past (Delaney, 2012, para. 1).

Concerning the attitudes of African Nova Scotians towards interracial marriages I have not come across any literature on the subject but I will venture to state that being a racialized society, with some history of slavery the resentment to these unions follows the same paths of social sanctions and negative societal perceptions as described in the literature review above.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

A major challenge for this study is the shortage of Canadian studies on Black –White interracial marriages, which has led me to depend on US sources. However, this challenge is mitigated because racial society and its contradictions are somewhat similar in form across North America. Nova Scotia with its small Black population fits the profile of a racial society and it was easy to extrapolate from the US writings to appreciate the history of African Nova Scotians. Clairmont and Magill's (1970) *Nova Scotia's Blacks: An Historical and Structural Overview* has been valuable in understanding the history of Africa Nova Scotians and the racism they have encountered throughout this history. Their research leaves no doubts about a slave society that had morphed, as in the US, into a Jim Crow era.

Lewis, Yancey and Bletzer (1997) in *Racial and Non Racial Factors that Influence Spouse Choice in Black – White marriages* argue that when it comes to marriage, race is “analogous” to caste (Lewis et al., 1997, p. 63). In this sense, the African American is born into a lower caste that they label as “rather permanent”. The lower caste African American cannot obtain the favors of the higher caste White woman [without] a significantly higher socio-economic status in comparison to hers (Lewis et al., 1997, p. 63). Their research also states that among Black-White interracial couples, non-racial factors “are very important in the spouse selection process” (p. 75). When racial factors are considered, Lewis et al list “novelty”, “excitement”, interracial sex, and ease of talk, as criteria for entering interracial marriage in a racist society (p.67). But they conclude that none of these were significant in determining the reasons for interracial marriages. Finally, they state that the whole idea of “jungle fever” - a colloquial term used when someone is attracted to someone outside their race, specifically Black men who enter into relationships with White women, is a

myth. Sexual and racial attraction, according to Lewis et al. (1997), are not significant factors in interracial marriages (p.77) and Black- White people choose their spouses because the couples believe they share “social similarities”. According to them sameness, and not difference become the basis of interracial relationships and marriages.

It is also a significant fact that although American society has become more accepting of interracial marriages, those between “African Americans and Whites are still the least likely to be accepted” (Forry and Leslie, 2007, p. 1539). Various reasons have been given for the low incidence of Black-White interracial marriages by Kreager (2008) in *Guarded Borders: Adolescent Interracial Romance and Peer Trouble at School* who attributes it to “informal sanctions” on youth in high school. Kreager employs social identity theory to show why this separation happens in the high school. He writes,

individuals seek to increase their self-concepts by favorably evaluating their own group memberships relative to other groups. This process of differentiation results in feelings of superiority for in-group members and less favorably for out-group members. When combined with historical inequities... in-group biases foster discrimination by high status individuals towards low status individuals.... Symbolic boundaries based on cultural and normative dimensions- such as language, music, dress, values, religion, etc. provide avenues for low status individuals to resist dominant group stereotypes and positively define their own collective identities. (p. 889)

As a result of the Black -White divide in society then, negative evaluations of interracial romance become more likely in high schools given the racial demarcation that is rife in high schools where the different racial groups tend socially to be distant from one another and competition is high among different racial groups (p. 890). Researchers have found that with regards to dating,

Blacks were the least to date interracially in high schools and universities (p.890). In Kreager's study she had a specific research question: Does involvement in an adolescent interracial relationship increase peer problems at school? She found out that it did "significantly" increase the adolescents' "perceptions of peer trouble" with Blacks' perceptions of peer trouble being the highest in her study (p. 905).

Yet rejection or antipathy towards interracial marriages has not only come from the White communities, Erica Childs (2005) argues in *Looking behind the stereotypes of the "Angry Black Woman": An Exploration of Black Woman's Responses to Interracial Relationships* that "Black women represent the strongest opposition towards interracial dating and marriage" (p. 545). Citing McNamara, Tempenis, and Walton (1999) she introduces the image of the jealous "angry Black woman" who thinks the White woman is stealing eligible Black men, leaving Black women short of eligible Black men to marry. Childs also cites popular movies such as *The Brothers* (Gary Harwick, 2001), *Jungle Fever* (Spike Lee, 1991), *Save the last Dance* (Thomas Carter, 2001) and *Waiting to Exhale* (Forrest Whitaker, 1995) to portray "Black woman's anger and opposition towards interracial relationships between Black men and White women". In *Jungle Fever*, Childs writes that, Drew, the lady whose husband is having an interracial affair with a White woman discusses with her friends "low class White trash White women who throw themselves at African American men...if it wasn't for the twenty-nine thousand White bitches ...who give up the pussy and are stealing all the Black men, Black women would have Black men to date" (p.548). Yet Childs is quick to state that the opposition Black women have towards interracial dating "is not simply rooted in jealousy and anger toward White women but is based on White racism, Black internalization of racism and what interracial relationships represent to Black women and signify about Black woman's worth" (p.544). Childs concludes that racism, sexism, and White standards of beauty have

combined to devalue Black women, and created this shortage of available Black men.

As to why Black men marry White women Richard Lewis Jr. and Joanne Ford Robertson in *Understanding the Occurrence of Interracial marriage in the United States Through Differential Assimilation* (2010) argue that there is evidence that Blacks have a more favorable attitude towards interracial marriages than Whites (p. 409). They see it as a matter of “lower caste” marrying into a higher caste. Lewis and Ford-Robertson argue, “a member of a lower caste will marry a member of a higher caste if they have other assets to trade for the privilege of marrying up...it can be extended that members of the lower racial caste should be more accepting of interracial dating and marriage patterns and there is empirical support for this assertion” (p. 409).

Finally, having been in an interracial relationship for twenty three years myself, Deliovsky's (1999) *Jungle Fever: The Social Construction of White Women in Interracial relationships with Black Men* has provided me with insights into the racialized ethos that White women find themselves in when they enter into interracial marriages. Her description of the social sanctions faced by White women, including ostracism by the family, show how deeply rooted racism is in Canadian society, even without overt racial laws.

Chapter 4: Theoretical framework

Pascoe (1991) states, “the phenomenon of interracial marriages involves notions of race, gender, and culture in individual lives, as well as at the level of social and political policy” (p. 5). She outlines three challenges faced by social scientists, historians and feminists in their analysis of interracial marriages:

1. The challenge of exploring the interconnections between gender and race relations
2. The challenge of learning to see race as well as gender as social constructions
3. The challenge of choosing a definition of culture suitable for writing intercultural history (pp. 5-6).

When interracial marriages are put under a critical lens one needs a theoretical framework that will shed light on an understanding of the workings of race, gender, class culture that inform the individual agency of all the participants involved.

I have chosen therefore, to examine the motivations, challenges and strengths of African Nova Scotian interracial marriages through the lens of critical race theory and intersection of radical feminism, radical pedagogy and Marxist alienation theory, all within the context of culture.

4:1 - Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Delgado and Stefancic (2012), in *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*, list four underlying themes that support CRT: firstly they state that “racism is ordinary, not aberrational ... the usual way society does business, the common, everyday experience of most people of color”... (p. 3). Secondly they presume, “most would agree that our system of White-over-color ascendancy serves important purposes, both psychic and material” (p. 3). A third element of CRT is that race is a

“social construction” devoid of any “biological or genetic reality” (p. 3). Finally CRT seeks to give “voice” to people of color (p. 4).

From these themes Delgado and Stefancic (2012) argue that racism is “difficult to address or cure” (p. 8). The liberal notions of color-blindness present a perception of the same treatment to all citizens. This perception and the rules that society uses to proclaim them remedy only the most overt forms of racism, leaving the subtle forms evident in institutional racism intact (p. 3). The second theme introduces the concept of “interest convergence” or “material determinism”, terms coined by Derek Bell, a founding father of CRT. Interest convergence argues that, because racism “advances the interests of both White elites (materially) and working-class people (psychically), large segments of society have little incentive to eradicate it” (p. 3). The implication of this is that White society would only agree to reforms that improve the lives of Black people only if White society stands to gain from such reforms. As Delgado and Stefancic (2012) write, “Derrick Bell’s shocking proposal that *Brown vs Board of Education*—considered a great triumph of civil rights litigation—may have resulted more from the self-interest of elite Whites than a desire to help Blacks” (p. 3). It will be interesting to explore if the growing acceptance of interracial marriages is a reflection of interest convergence given that half of the partners of interracial marriages are White and experience a certain amount of discredit from society.

Finally, the voice-of-color thesis postulates that because of their different histories and experiences with oppression, Black, Indian, Asian, and Latino, writers and thinkers may be able to communicate to their White counterparts matters that the Whites are unlikely to know. Minority status, in other words, brings with it a presumed competence to speak about race and racism. The "legal storytelling" movement urges Black and Brown writers to recount their experiences with racism and the legal system and to apply their own unique perspectives to assess the law’s master

narratives (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 4).

4:2 - CRT and Culture

As mentioned earlier, liberalism takes a colour-blind approach to society in which race and racism are subsumed under a battery of laws that only prevent at best the more overt forms of racism. In other words if a Black person marries a White person, one can assume that race and racism would not be a major factor in their decision. But, as Patricia Hill Collins (1999) writes, even concepts of femininity and beauty are affected by race (pp. 88-89). It is for this reason that women perm or straighten their hair ...or Black men part, or shake their hair, to fit into a White concept of beauty. bell hooks (1995) agrees, writing that within the era of desegregation and civil rights, few Black activists were vigilant enough to see that concrete rewards for assimilation would undermine subversive oppositional ways of seeing Blackness...being free was seen as having the right to satisfy individual desire without accountability to a collective body. Consequently, Black people could now feel that the way they wore their hair was not political but simply a matter of choice. Seeking to improve class mobility, to make it in the White world, Blacks began to backtrack and assume once again the attitudes and values of internalized racist. This was best typified by those Black females who wore straight “White looking wigs to work covering natural hairdos” (hooks, 1995, pp. 123-124).

With race and racism overt, covert and internalized, affecting personal spaces as concepts of femininity, beauty, and masculinity it is easily extrapolated that race and racism could affect the choice for a partner in marriage. Bennet, Bloom and Craig (1998) place interracial marriages between Whites and Blacks in the context of culture, that sheds light on cultural patterns of marriage and family life among Blacks and Whites. Their research shows in general that,

(a) lower proportions of Blacks marry than Whites and (b) “the proportion of women who marry has declined substantially across cohorts for Blacks but modestly across cohorts for Whites (c) while increased education is associated negatively, if slightly, with the probability of ever marrying among Whites, it is associated positively among Blacks”. (Bennet, Bloom & Craig, 1998, p. 692)

This discrepancy between White and Black marriage patterns, especially of the lower proportions of Blacks marrying has been explained by Moynihan, the former US Senator and Harvard scholar, as the “Black family structure ... disintegrating and the Black community ... enmeshed in a ‘tangle of pathology’” (Moynihan, 1965, p.31). Bennet et al (1989) are quick to disagree. They argue that the Black family should be viewed as a “unique cultural form” modeled after the extended family structure of Africa and not viewed as deficient only because that family structure does not fit the norms of the White middle class (Bennet et al., 1989, p. 693).

Luther and Rightler-McDaniels (2013) attempt to put Black-White interracial marriages under a CRT lens in their article *More than the good Lord ever intended: Representations of interracial marriage in US –oriented magazines*. Explaining why Black-White marriages were the least of all interracial marriages and why they tend to be the most problematic, she writes that, with race being a social construction designed to compartmentalize individuals and create social hierarchies, intimate relations between races becomes a threat to the status quo. In the US there has been an aversion toward interracial relationships, especially between Black and White individuals. The historical backdrop and the breaking of taboos that Black-White intimate relations represent, have led to the erection of societal barriers designed to prevent the widespread acceptance of these relationships (p. 3). All six Canadian women interviewed in Deliovsky’s research show that there may be a “familial and social perception that White women in interracial relationships with Black

men do not guard the sanctity of their Whiteness” (p. 67). For this transgression of the virtue of Whiteness “they are perceived as having ceased participating in the continuing reproduction of Whiteness” (p. 67). For this reason they are punished, ridiculed, and defined as race traitors. As race traitors they suffer the phenomenon of *stigma transference*, which informs and impinges on the quality of their lives (p. 67).

From a CRT perspective then, a strong Black and White binary exists in today’s society and the low numbers of Black-White relationships can be seen as “indicators of subtle racism and the underlying efforts at maintaining race related subordination”(p. 3).

4:3 - CRT and Radical Feminism

As Delgado and Stefancic (2012) state, CRT builds on the insights of two previous movements, critical legal studies and radical feminism. As far as interracial marriages between Blacks and Whites are concerned, it would be appropriate then to examine the intersection of CRT, radical feminism and gender.

Oh (2006) argues from a radical feminist point of view that the opposition to interracial marriages of Black and Whites stem from White society’s desire to keep White supremacy within an entrenched Black-White binary, and to prevent any miscegenation that will weaken the binary. He proposes a connection between racial segregation and anti-miscegenation that makes clear the gendered nature of separating the races (p. 1348). He writes,

Physically separating males and females on the basis of their race prevented the development of social, romantic, or sexual relations between White men and Black women and between White women and Black men. The purpose of anti-miscegenation was to prevent men and women of different races from marrying each other and producing racially

mixed children. Thus, when viewing segregation through the lens of race and gender, we can more easily see that the regulation of gender relations was a critical and fundamental aspect of the regulation of race relations (p.1348).

Oh (2005) argues that the primary focus of segregation under the Jim Crow era was to prevent sexual relations between White women and Black men. While at the same time “secretly condoning their liaison” (p.1348)... with regards to White women, racial segregation operated as a paternalistic restriction on their liberties. “It sought to ‘protect’ White women from ‘succumbing’ to their sexual desires for Black men” (p.1348), Black women, on the other hand, lived in a double oppressive state because they were subject to the “sexually exploitative and coercive relations with White men” (p. 1348). But the connection does not end there. In the Jim Crow era not only were Black men separated from White women and White men from Black females, White men were also separated from Black men and Black women from White women. The purpose of this was to prevent the development of any class-consciousness among the men as the working class and disfranchised of capitalist industry, but also to prevent the development of any feminist consciousness in a White male dominated society. In short, race consciousness “trumped” class and gender consciousness. And according to Oh (2005), this whole structure of White supremacy within the Black-White binary is maintained and exercised primarily by the prevention of sexual relations between White and Black (pp.1349-1350).

It is reasonable then to infer that Black-White intermarriages threaten the system of White supremacy, White patriarchy and White property relations, in short, societal attitudes against them.

4:4 - CRT and Alienation Theory

With the potential attraction between Whites and Blacks that might lead to interracial marriages, CRT hypothesizes that “difference” is essential to the couple’s motivations. Theorizing the White person’s choice of a Black mate or partner, bell hooks (1989) writing from a Black feminist point of view in *Talking Black* that one reason a White person chooses a Black mate could be the White person’s search for the primitive “other” in his or her Black partner as a result of his/her own alienation under capitalism and segregation. In this study, I have used the Marxist concept of alienation and its intersection with CRT to explore possible motivations for Black-White intermarriages.

Marx argues, “The sum total of [the material] relations of production, constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness” (Marx and Engels, 1848, p. 4). He pursues this dialectic into a theory of alienation, where under the nature of capitalist production, workers become alienated from their labor, which once had given them worth. Alienation from labour has a cascading effect into alienation from friends and social relations, because they become competitors for jobs and wages. The workers’ lives lose meaning and enjoyment because they now live to work, rather than working to live. ... The more the worker produces, the less he has to consume; the more value he creates, the more valueless, the more unworthy he becomes... The less you are, the less you express your own life, the greater is your alienated life. Society, then, was thrust into a state of alienation, with all of its members themselves estranged from one another. (pp. 95-96)

Critical race theorists and feminists such as bell hooks, Cedric Robinson (Black Marxism) and Patricia Collins have extrapolated these ideas on alienation and applied them to segregation in the US and other areas where the Black-White binary has existed.

Eldridge Cleaver (1968), the former Black Panther, made a significant contribution to the concept of alienation as the basis of interracial sexual relations and marriages. Cleaver attempts to capture the essence of interracial relationships and marriages in the Jim Crow, civil rights and Black Power years. In *Soul on ice*, he offers a psychological profile of the typical upper class White man and woman versus oppressed Black man and woman under conditions of severe economic exploitation. Applying his ideas to the United States which has a long history of the Slave Trade and slavery, Cleaver identifies four kinds of psychological profiles: the “omnipotent administrator: the “super masculine menial”, the “ultra- feminine” and the “sub-feminine”. The White slave master in this case is the omnipotent administrator who has shed all his masculine physical attributes to become the brain that runs the plantation. The male Black slave, on the other hand has been deprived of all thinking power and left with a pure brutish masculinity. The slave master’s White woman, on the other hand, because she has relegated all her female chores to the ‘sub feminine’ Black female slave, retains only her sexuality as a female, which she consciously enhances to deepen the contrast between her and her ‘impotent’ male partner. Cleaver argues that the ultra-femininity of the White woman and the super masculinity of the Black man possess a magnetic attraction, naturally leading to interracial relationships. The *difference* thus becomes the basis of the interracial relationship. From an alienation point of view and the pervasiveness of racism into the spheres of beauty, identity and feminism I find it quite reasonable that difference could be the basis of interracial relationships or an important consideration at the very least.

Difference is again emphasized in Bracher's (2009) *Radical Pedagogy: Identity, Generativity and Social Transformation*. From a psychoanalytic perspective, he defines racism as founded "on what one imagines about the other's *jouissance*; it is hatred of the particular way of the Other's own way of experiencing *jouissance*". *Jouissance* is sexually orgasmic pleasure. Bracher (2009) asks, "What are the fantasies about the Other's special, excessive enjoyment- about the Blacks superior sexual potency and appetite, about the Jew's or Japanese special relationship towards money and work – if precisely so many ways to organize our own enjoyment?" (Bracher, 2009, p. 119). From this perspective of racism, though it errs in neglecting considerations of the historical dimensions of racism, one can extrapolate into interracial relationships and marriages, individualism in the choice for interracial marriages is by the way of admiring difference in the other.

Critical race scholars are dedicated to exposing and dismantling factors that perpetuate racism and the status quo so that there is a real level playing field for all and by theorizing the racialized attitudes towards interracial marriage, one of the bastions of White supremacy stands to be challenged. It would be simple to say, or to assume, that interracial marriages will spell the end of racism, just as Dr. Williams' suggestion that an integrated housing or integrated neighborhoods would do the same. Integrated housing like integrated relationships are part of the super structure that rests on an economic foundation that privileges Whiteness over Blackness. Until the power structure underpinning racism is addressed effectively, I believe correcting the super structure only allows the power base of racism to manifest in different ways. A clear example of this approach is the civil rights movement, which was supposed to address racism in America but in the end only privileged a few Blacks in the middle class, only to remove them from the ghetto to the suburbs, or to privilege White women who were thought to be the greatest beneficiaries of affirmative action.

CRT enables us to understand the racial basis of the society's antipathy to interracial marriages and by encouraging societal acceptance of interracial marriages the objective would be to broaden the front against racism in all its manifestations. Enough change at the super structural level could reach a tipping point that might yield to cracks within the power foundation of racism.

Chapter 5: Methodology

For this research I have employed a qualitative approach in order to have a better understanding of the context from which I draw my human participants and the data they provide. As Brett Sutton (1993) states, in *The rationale for qualitative research: a review of principles and theoretical Foundations*, “Researchers taking a qualitative approach are particularly careful not to undermine the validity of observations by isolating them from the environment that gives them meaning” (Sutton, 1993, p. 413). This is not to say that quantitative approach does not deal with problems of context. In fact quantitative researchers employ techniques like sampling theory, to make sure that their data are representative of whatever it is they are researching. In qualitative research however, “the problem of context runs deeper” (Sutton 1993, p. 413). A qualitative approach implies “interpretive procedures, relativistic assumptions and verbally rather than numerically based representations of data” (Sutton, 1993, p. 411). Qualitative methods also address themselves to how the participants experience the issue being researched in a way that it provides the human side of the issue being researched, including “the often contradictory behaviors, beliefs, opinions, emotions and relationships of individuals” (Mack et al., 2005, p.1). “Qualitative methods are also effective in identifying intangible factors such as social norms, social economic status, gender roles, ethnicity and religion, whose role in the research issue may not be readily apparent” (Mark et al, 2005, p. 2). The question of interracial relationships as explained earlier is one that crosses gender, culture, socio-economic status, race and sometime religious lines. I believe that a qualitative methodology would provide a fuller and more holistic analysis.

Within this broad based methodological framework I have used the in-depth interview method, which I believe is “optimal for data collection on one’s personal history, perspectives and

experiences particularly when sensitive topics [like race] are being explored” (Mark et al., 2005, p. 2). Kathryn Roulston (2010) in her article, *Concerning Quality*, says that, “for all the commonly used forms of qualitative data the most commonly used data source is that of the qualitative interview” (p.199). She outlines six best practices for bringing quality into the narrative. They are:

- The extent of spontaneous, rich, specific, and relevant answers from the interviewee.
- The shorter the interviewer’s questions and the longer the subjects’ answers, the better.
- The degree to which the interviewer follows up and clarifies the meanings of the relevant aspects of the answers.
- The ideal interview is to a large extent interpreted throughout the interview.
- The interviewer attempts to verify his or her interpretations of the subjects’ answers in the course of the interview.
- The interview is ‘self-communicating’ – it is a story contained in itself that hardly requires much extra descriptions and explanations. (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p.145)

I used these six criteria in the engagement of my participants.

5:1 - Afrocentricity

Because race and culture of African people are pertinent to this study, I also employed an Afrocentric methodological approach. This methodology “and the process of knowledge construction ceases to take precedence over the well-being of the people being researched” (Reviere, 2001, p. 709). As a researcher, I feel compelled to “challenge the use of the traditional

Eurocentric research criteria of objectivity, reliability and validity in the inquiry process” (Reviere, 2001, p. 710). Molefi Asante (2003), the founder of Afrocentrism, in his seminal work, *Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change*, defines Afrocentricity as “a mode of thought and action in which the centrality of African interests, value and perspectives predominate” (Asante, 2003, p. 2). Afrocentricity exists as a theoretical and methodological framework. With respect to theory it is the placing of African people in the centre of any analysis of African phenomena” (p. 2). In terms of methodology, “in its most fundamental expression Afrocentrism is the scholar assuming the right and the responsibility to describe reality from his or her own perspective” (Reviere, 2001, p. 711).

Asante, (1990) outlines three basic beliefs that Afrocentric researchers must abide by: they must hold themselves responsible for uncovering hidden subtle racist theories that may be embedded in current methodologies, they must work to legitimize the centrality of African ideals and values as a valid frame of reference for enquiry and examining data, and they must maintain enquiry rooted in a strict interpretation of place (Asante, 1990, p. 23).

Reviere, (2001) writes, “the definition of place is, in essence an argument for the need for objectivity [as in quantitative positivist enquiry] and for the inclusion of what can amount to an autobiographical approach and the rejection of the personal- theoretical dichotomy” (Reviere, 2001, p. 712). Based on these beliefs Reviere outlines five Afrocentric canons that must govern the researchers’ approach and “harmonizes diverse African and other values and experiences into a coherent definition of place” (p. 712). These canons are *Uhaki*, *Ukweli*, *Ujamma*, *Kujitua* and *Utulivu*. *Ukweli* grounds the research in the experience in the research in the community being investigated (p. 713). *Kujitua* rejects the Eurocentric and quantitative emphasis on objective, dispassionate and value- free research, because they result in “methodological considerations taking

precedence over those of how knowledge is constructed” (p. 715). *Utulivu* stands for the justice that is required for legitimate research (p. 716). “*Utulivu* requires that the researcher avoid creating or sustaining divisions between or within communities but rather strive to create harmonious relationships between or within these groups (p. 717). *Ujamma* and *Uhaki* address researcher / participant distance. They reject separation, which is the hallmark of quantitative analysis (p. 719). *Ujamma* and *Uhaki* uphold the maintenance of community and ask the researcher not to be the well “from which spring theory and practice whole and well formed, but rather that theory and practice should be formed by the actual and aspired interests of the community” (p. 719).

Afrocentric methodology holds that researchers have a personal stake or interest in their research, and the usual disclaimers to the contrary are rather misleading (p. 714). “In the interests of truth and openness the research must make that implicit interest, explicit” (p. 714). It is for this reason that I reflected on my own biases while conducting this research.

5:2 - Critical Race Theory and Narrative Analysis

Gloria Ladson-Billings (1996) writes that in the context of racism, the “dominant group maintains and rationalizes its power with its stories, stock explanations” that shape reality in ways that ensure the maintenance of their privileges (Delgado, 1989, as cited in Ladson-Billings, 1998, p.16). CRT asserts that marginalized groups “internalize the negative and alienating images” that members of the dominant class have erected to maintain power and privilege (Ladson-Billings, 1996, p. 16). In other words it becomes important for groups who feel such marginalization to retain a reality of their own, just for their “psychic preservation”. Just as Anzaldua (1996) points out, “If we have been gagged and disempowered by stories, we can also

be loosened and empowered by stories”. The counter story therefore becomes a way for marginalized people to name their own reality. Delgado and Stefancic (1989) state,

Counter-storytelling provides a means for members of subordinated groups to address those circumstances where the prevailing conception of justice provides no language or means by which the marginalized person can express how he or she has been injured or wronged in terms that the system will understand.

(Delgado & Stefancic, 1989, cited by Love, 2004, p. 233)

I have therefore chosen a narrative method to express the feelings of these interracial couples to bring to life their emotions, through their stories instead of merely categorizing them under the labels of social sanctions, societal perceptions or motivations.

5:3 - Researcher Reflexivity

I have had no illusions of my location within this research. In one sense I am a Black man who interviewed Black subjects so I shared an insider status with some of the research participants – shared racial identity. At the same time having been in an interracial marriage with a White women for twenty-three years, my membership in my research group became the basis of the initial trust that narrows the distance between me, as researcher, and the participants (Roulston, 2010, p. 661). But I was aware that there were other differences in class, gender, age, and even in the Blackness that we share. In short, my relationship as an insider was “based on a process of negotiation rather than granted immediately on the basis of ascribed status” (Twine and Warren, 2000, p. 11).

Asante (2003) writes that, there should be no scientific distance between researcher and participant. But I believe, like Shockley (2007), that “the researcher requires immersion into the participant’s culture in order to decipher that which is culturally authentic, embellished and/or enhanced.

However a certain scientific distance is required...” (Shockley, 2007, p.173). In the end, it was appropriate to remove myself from participants and analyze their responses from the critical lenses I have previously set.

My tasks were therefore two-fold; negotiating my insider status and closing any scientific distance between researcher and my human participants. My success lay in my ability to confront my own biases and to self-reflect on my coming into Blackness, and why I married a White woman. I am a male of African descent. Although I was born in urban Saint John, New Brunswick, I grew up in rural New Brunswick. I have been colonized and socialized to claim a Black identity. I am a sixth, or possibly, seventh generation descendant of the African Diaspora to Atlantic Canada (historical facts are unclear). My daughters and my grandchildren would be the eight and ninth generation.

Although both my parents are Black, and identify as Black, their race belies the extent of a very mixed identity that has been socially constructed as Black. I am essentially a mixed race male with ancestry – of White, First Nations (Maliseet) and African – who was raised as a person of African descent. Growing up, I knew that I was different from all of the “other” children of the neighborhood but tried to “fit in”. This “fit in” became at times humorous, particularly, when I would either try to part my hair or ‘pretend’ that my hair was flowing in the wind, just like the White kids hair. I wanted to fit in. In a small treatise titled *African Nova Scotian-Mi’Kmaq Relations*, Paula Madden (2009) attempts a definition of identity. She writes,

Citizenship, identity, place and belonging are contested ideas within a nation. The meaning of who belongs and how they belong is never fixed but continuously negotiated among citizens, and also between the state and its citizens. Racial identification, whether fashioned

in response to a limited independence from external definition, though sometimes useful in historic moments as a transformative or organizing tool, fails to dislodge the racial order that marginalizes, disembodies and dispossesses many of those seen as “other”. (Madden, 2009, p.38)

With such mixed parentage, how then have we self-identified as Blacks instead of bi-racial or the other modes of representation? Minkah Makalani, (2001) argues that some scholars have ignored Black studies and choose to postulate that, a “biracial” identity would better recognize the complete racial background of persons of mixed parentage and offer a more mentally healthy racial identity than a Black racial identity (Makalani, 2001 p. 83). Further, such scholars “exalt a “biracial” identity as a positive step in moving society beyond issues of race and towards the realization of a color blind society”(Zack & Daniel, as cited by Makalani, 2001, p. 84). Makalani goes on to reject this approach calling it defeatist because it implies that racism cannot be defeated so “a “biracial” identity is thus raised high on a pedestal as a “last resort” against racial discrimination and oppression in America (Makalani, 2001, p.84).

Growing up Black in Fredericton was not easy. The White establishment used racial spatial management methods to keep up the myth of an impoverished Blackness. With the industrialization of Fredericton during the 1970s, rural New Brunswick was hemmed in with a four-lane highway with big box stores on the one side and the native Saint Mary’s reserve on the other side. Blacks were thus moved to Highland Avenue, which was colloquially known as "Nigger Hill" where there was no running water, or indoor toilets. Black women worked primarily as domestics, men as garbage collectors or farmers and few joined the military. In its heyday in the 1930's thirty-five Leek families lived on The Hill, and today, as a result of racial spatial management, only three Black families live there. It might be tempting to say that Blacks moved out of The Hill because

they were in search of jobs in the burgeoning lumber business in the province, but as Jennifer Nelson (2009) explains, “pretexts like industrial progress, urban renewal, integration and such were not apart from racism but rather were ‘constituted by it’ and that ‘racial discourses and spatial management have always been pervasive and deliberate” (Nelson, 2009, p.21). Further she states that “the Atlantic Provinces were reluctant [hosts], a repository for ‘deviants’ or a temporary refuge for unwelcome visitors before their expulsion” (Nelson, 2009, p.11).

My father was an angry man and abused his kids and my mother. He was in the Canadian Air Force and after his discharge, worked as a truck driver delivering fruits and vegetables. We were fed on the leftovers. We ate potatoes in so many different ways. He worked 12 hours a day, and when he came home, he would ask my mother if I had been bad. If my mother answered in the affirmative then he would order me upstairs, take my clothes off and whipped me mercilessly. He was always angry. It looked like he wanted to visit the repressed hatred experienced from slavery and the Jim Crow years on my mother and I. I was the eldest child. My grandparents said I was not my father's baby and my mother had forced a pregnancy on my father. The venom of resentment and insecurities would come out when he was drunk. My father was an alcoholic and so was his father.

Schooling became a form of escape for me from the violence of the house. Because of my father's Air Force job, we moved quite often, and I schooled in Germany, Quebec and New Brunswick. I fell behind two grades because of this. I was the only Black person in every school I went to. I was the isolated Black man in a White man's world. Even though I was academically bright, my teachers always tried to stream me into the trades and non-academic subjects so I could get a job, until one White teacher recognized my talents. He encouraged me to pursue sports and valued my participation in class. He became a surrogate parent to me. He noticed that I had an

amazing memory and that things came to me quite easily. He never ceased to encourage me to higher intellectual levels.

By far the greatest shift in my life occurred when I met fellow Black people in New Brunswick. They were Africans who were studying in the university. One of them basically took me in and started educating me on being Black. I ate their African food and listened to their African music. In fact they opened a whole window into my Africaness and Blackness in general. One was Guyanese and the other, Malawian. They assisted me on the path to identity building. It was at this time that I discovered music. The Leeks in Boston, I hear, have always been musicians and drumming came easily to me. Great Uncle George Leek was a furniture and violin –maker. He also built the pews for the church in Kingsclear. My cousin Danny was a drummer and played a lot of what was then to be considered “Black” music, e.g. James Brown.

I have been married twice. In both cases they were with White women. My first marriage happened in high school. Although the marriage only lasted for three years it did establish a basis for my subsequent relationships. She was a university professor’s daughter and had plans to go to University, and had a worldview very different from that of the Black women with whom I grew up. Further, she had an educational advantage that allowed me to want more than I had ever experienced before. Somehow, I saw a world that allowed me to put my history of Blackness in a box and see a future with White partners.

As explained earlier in my theoretical framework, the idea of Whiteness as superior is enforced by the illegitimization of White-Black intermarriages. Complete acceptance by society will shatter the myth of White supremacy. It is my belief then that research into interracial marriages focuses on the phenomenon as a pivotal occurrence in bridging racial distances and showcase to the population that it is not a bad thing.

5:4 - Participants

Because my study is one of the few researches on Black - White interracial marriages in Canada and as a result of CRT being my critical framework I assumed a strategic essentialist perspective in my choice of human subjects. In other words, I used subjects that belong to the two categories of race, White and Black, regardless of their geographical origins. Other criteria I used were that the couples should have lived in Nova Scotia for at least two years, they self-identify as Black, are in heterosexual unions and are parents. Informal networking brought me into contact with five interracial couples whom I have interviewed in this study. All of the participants were interviewed separately. The participants include Black women who emigrated from Africa, White Nova Scotian men, African Nova Scotian men, African Nova Scotian women, African American men and African American women. I also chose participants from different socio economic situations based on income and educational level. Their ages ranged from 30s to 80s. The couples had been together from between 5 and 57 years. I did not ask set questions during the interview but by following a narrative interviewing technique (Roulston, 2010) I explored relevant thematic areas giving the participants more room to express themselves.

Obtaining participants proved to be challenging. Of the ten participants who had agreed to be part of the study, twice as many others initially had agreed but later declined for various reasons. The “snowball” effect in gaining participants proved to be reliable in eventually getting the 10 participants involved in the study.

Chapter 6: Findings And Discussion

In this chapter I have tailored the participants' responses to the research questions and sub-questions presented earlier. All participants were interviewed individually without any paired interviews. In a way this was a form of triangulation as there was general concordance in the answers given by the individuals within the couples. I discuss the motivations behind the couples' interracial marriages and then examine societal perceptions, social sanctions, social mobility, and questions of identity of children from the unions. Pseudonyms were used throughout the thesis in order to protect the confidentiality of the participants, however I have used the last initial W or B to indicate if the participant is either White (W) or Black (B). The pseudonyms given represent the five couples; they are Monica (W) & Carlos (B), Abigail (B) & Peter (W), Kimberley (B) & Michael (W), Judy (B) & David (W) and Wanda (W) & Eric (B). I have tried to categorize the responses of the participants into answers for the different research questions. As CRT suggests, I have also taken the liberty of bringing the narratives through the voices of the participants in order to better capture some of the emotion that this topic elicits.

6:1: Motivations Behind Black-White Interracial marriages.

For the five couples interviewed, propinquity, especially with respect to proximity, similarity in, and at the time of meeting, seem to be the ultimate motivating factor for their union. Except for Peter W, a highly educated professional who met his spouse Abigail B while on work related duties in Africa, and who had no hesitation in dating "foreign" women, the other four couples all met in Nova Scotia, and they stated categorically that race had nothing to do with their choice in their union. Yet there were times when underneath the protestations of some of the participants that race

had nothing to do with their motivations for marriage, there were subtle elements that suggested otherwise. Some of it bordered on an internalized racism acquired by some of the participants. On the other hand Judy B, Kimberly B, and Abigail B in their choice of a White man all exhibited certain signs of this internalized racism; Judy B stating that she distrusts Black guys. That Black guys have “issues and problems” , “that they want their cake and eat it too” , Kimberley B on the other hand did not wish to be with a man who was “lazy”, a “bum” a “big drinker” (that being her impression of Black men). She wanted a man who is respectful.

6:1.1 Monica W and Carlos B.

Monica W states explicitly that her union with Carlos B, “was just that he was such a nice person. It wouldn’t have mattered what color; it was just that as soon as I met him, it was just a complete connection. Yeah, it wasn’t racially motivated”. Explaining what motivated her marriage to Carlos B she goes on further,

Well, if I could do it all over again, it would have been [Carlos B] whether he was purple or orange... I feel like we were raised the exact same way, but the only difference in us is that, okay, he was raised by a Black woman and I was raised by White parents, because as we talk from day to day, we laugh so much because it’s almost like we were raised by the same family.

Her husband Carlos B, in a separate interview echoes his wife’s thoughts on propinquity. In describing what motivated him to keep seeing and then marrying Monica W, he states,

I just felt that it was more along the lines of ... we connected. We had a genuine likeness. We discovered later on that we like the same things, but I think at the time, she was just a genuinely kind person, and I didn’t find that in other people. I

dated a lot and had a lot of relationships, or not even relationships, when I had my steady relationship, when that ended, I dated a lot and she just was the only genuine person I met.

6:1.2 Abigail B and Peter W

Abigail B also argues that Peter W being a White man had nothing to do with her entering into marriage with him. In Africa, she had a business that was frequented by White tourists. Her motivation for entering into the relationship and marriage was the caring attitude of Peter W to her, to her family, to the African kids, and how much he promoted her business among his friends. His attitude seemed to defeat the stereotype she had of White folk who, when they married outside their race shunned the Black spouses' extended family, and other values related to being African. Abigail B had never intended to leave her African country having invested her life, till then, in a profitable business, yet Peter W overwhelmed her completely with generosity, attention and love at a time when she was not looking for a man and was preoccupied with her child, her business and her extended family. About Peter W's wooing attention she said,

He [would always talk to people about my business and bring me customers.] And also like I told him, his education level and mine aren't the same, but not a single time I talked to him he makes me feel like I am dumb, you see? He doesn't care who I was at that time, but rather encouraging on what I was doing. So that was some of the things I saw in him, and I said, maybe it's about time.

Even though Abigail B, at some point in her interview, refers to Peter W as coming to Africa to find an African wife, she was quick to point out that love was at the basis of their interracial union. She insisted that, "Like you can see the love is there. I can see the love is there, and it's not

me alone, people can see it..." Peter W, on the other hand claims as his motivation for his union with Abigail B to be the general hardworking disposition of Abigail coupled with her beautiful body. He had dated women of different races including African women in Abigail's home country, yet there was something about Abigail (B) that would place her above everyone else in his choice of a partner.

She's very good with her hands, ... she's very capable. She was driven, goal-oriented. I guess there's a little bit of like the Canadian thing there, where if you're looking for a match you want someone who's going to be doing something in life, and in Canada you can't just sit around, otherwise you'll end up broke, on welfare or whatever. So there has to be something going on there. And that was just like, the energy around her was just different than a lot of [women]...

Peter W by virtue of his higher education had a great understanding of racial and gendered bodies and made an effort to separate his real feelings and motivations from mere theorized responses. He had a certain concept of the ideal wife, which he had found in Abigail B. About her body, Peter W says,

I told you her body was fantastic, and it's different. Bodies are different, not all of them, but a lot of them are different, and I mean, yeah, she just had a fantastic body. And she's fit, a beautiful girl, could dance, so her movement, the grace of her movement for me was important.

Being cosmopolitan, part of Peter W's motivation stems from the possibility of an extended married life-style contrary to the alienation of what he called a Canadian individualistic like style. He states,

She would treat you very well. Her family treated me well, and I feel like you know, the average Canadian family, they don't treat you well until they know you're going to be okay, and they're really rough with you. Her family was open. I don't know why, maybe because I was an outsider, probably had money... so maybe that's why they treated me well. But I also got along with her brothers, which went a long way.

Peter and Abigail's motivations for their union seemed to be underpinned by both bell hooks concept of alienation through exoticization of the primitive Other, on Peter's part, and a Patricia Collins conception of internalized racism on Abigail's part. Peter is quite explicit in his adoration of Abigail's body while Abigail touted a prophecy of her family having light skinned people being fulfilled in her marriage to Peter W. Abigail comes from a country where light skin is privileged, and for her to find such satisfaction in a prophecy may be an indication of that internalized racism that sees lighter skin as better than Black skin. Behind Abigail's choice of a White man lurked the fulfillment of prophecies, which her mother had shared pertaining to the family growing lighter in color in the future. This sentiment of Abigail's may be due to the colonial domination of her African country, where colourism – the privileging of light skin- had been imposed.

6:1.3 Michael W and Kimberley B

Michael W and Kimberly B met by chance at a site frequented by non-commissioned officers of the Canadian Navy. What is interesting is the site was built at the time when the Black community of Africville was being razed by the City of Halifax in the 1960s. Situated by the harbor, the site stood between two poor Black neighborhoods. Michael W's motivations for marrying has a "divine purpose" borne out of his deep religious beliefs. Both Michael W and

Kimberley B were born and raised at a time when racial tensions in Halifax were high, an era that witnessed the Black Panthers' visit to Halifax. Michael W, says he was a shy, religious, young man who had been "horribly bullied" throughout his childhood by both boys and girls. He had joined the navy and at the age of 22 when he met Kimberly B, and had never dated anyone before. He recalls sitting alone at a very crowded table when two civilian Black women, Kimberley B and her friend walked in and asked if they could sit at his table. For him, it was an act of God. Like he said, "And when Jesus wants a person to have someone very special in their lives, it's going to happen". He describes his motivation for the marriage:

I saw her compassion, her gentleness, her unique style. Her inner and outer beauty touched heaven... Oh, she's beautiful. She's absolutely beautiful, gorgeous ... I saw a glow, a gentle effervescent glow within her. Her spirit was so amazing, so ... Yeah, and her smile was infectious. I just wanted to look at her. She was tall, slim, her glow, her bubbly spirit, her gentleness and kindness. I loved her eyes – just gorgeous big brown eyes. It would take the rest of my life to tell you.

Kimberley B, who had what she calls a "good upbringing" by her mother, had a wish list for the man she desired. She says him being White had nothing to do with it. What she sought was a man who was not a "bum", who was not a "big drinker", who did not boss her around and who was not lazy; a hard working respectful man. She found these qualities in Michael W and fell in love with him. They have been married for over 40 years.

Michael W's recollection of his first encounter with Kimberley W hints at the exoticization of the so called "primitive Other" that bell hooks (1989), referred to. A shy, previously bullied young

White man meets a Black woman in a bar setting and falls head over heels in love with her. His description of her physicality indicates some aspects exoticization.

6:1.4 Judy B and David W

Judy B and David W are a working-class couple. Both of them with family histories of interracial marriages and so called racially “mixed” children. Judy B – being racially diverse herself – states with some definitiveness that she wanted to marry a White man because she grew up in a “very, very small town and if you dated anybody that was Black, you might have been related somewhere down the road, you know what I mean, because it was such a small community of Black people”. David W grew up in low income housing among Black people and as a boy always dated Black girls and as a man had preference for Black women. His love for Judy B grew out of propinquity, but has subtle hints of exoticization. He states,

Well I mean, I grew up in low income housing, so like my brother always says, we didn’t know we were White until we were 13, because 90 percent of my friends were Black, or Indian or whatever, right? So we just – it was natural to us. Some people don’t experience the inner mingling of races, but for us, it was kind of like, what are you talking about? It was just second nature for us.

David W becomes more explicit about his preference for the exotic other,

It’s not that I don’t have an attraction to White women or actually any other race for that matter, but it’s just, no, that’s the way I grew up. I grew up around Blacks... I like their skin tone. It doesn’t matter what, whether it’s light or dark or whatever, it’s just – full lips, their figure for the most part is more curvy. It’s just, I don’t know, I just like that ... I’m not into real thin, skinny kind of – you

know, I like a woman to have some, you know – and I do like ...to have some *curvage* and good physical attributes, we'll say. I guess that's about it. I can't really say anymore.

What is interesting about David W's perception of preferred women is that it is not a total rejection of White women as suitable partners but more the rejection of the Western aesthetic of thin White women as the standard of beauty. Growing up in a neighborhood with a lot of Black people he had rejected that aesthetic and in its place sought the curvaceous "exotic Other".

6:1.5 Wanda W and Eric B

Wanda W and Eric B have been married for over 57 years and claim each other as their first love ever since Grade 10 at the age of 14 and 15 years old respectively. They grew up in an area of Nova Scotia, which at the time had a sizeable Black Population. According to Eric B the city at the time had an industrial park populated by workers from 32 nations. Eric B grew up in a racially mixed environment. Eric B's parents were an interracial couple. As to his motivations for marrying Wanda W, Eric B states,

She was charming, very. [She] accepted me as a person and I don't know, it didn't dawn on me that she was a White girl, and you know – if [Wanda W] had been Black, it would have been the same thing. Colour didn't mean anything to me. She was just a nice person, and I wanted to be with her 24 hours a day.

That's the way I felt towards her.

Wanda W echoes the same sentiments when asked if race was an issue in her relationship and marriage to Eric B. She answers,

No, I can't see – you mean, I dated him because of him being Black? No. I just – I don't know, I don't know why I dated him. I loved him, I guess, or I thought I did. I liked him, and I love him now of course, but no, I can't say that...

6:2 – *Jungle Fever* and the Exoticization of the Body of the Other

Even though the expression, *jungle fever* originally referred to the attraction between partners of different races or cultures, Hollywood Black film maker, Spike Lee's movie *Jungle Fever* (1991) came to signify a subtly illicit sexual attraction between Blacks and Whites, especially Black men and White women. It is not a new phenomenon and still parades under expressions like “once you go Black, you never go back” or the “darker the berry, the sweeter the juice”, expressions known to a majority of the participants in this study. What is referred to as jungle fever, this interracial attraction is seen as a form of alienation through a CRT lens. bell hooks, sees Black-White intermarriages, especially, as attempts by White women and White males to reclaim their lost primitive side, and rediscover the exotic Other. Bracher (2009), has examined this phenomenon through one's search for *jouissance*, and, Cleaver's (1968) has used the super masculine and feminine designations to examine this kind of union, to discover the motivation behind such unions. Although Lewis et al. (1999), discount “difference” in Black-White interracial marriages, my research participant sample, though not representative of the whole population of those involved in Black White interracial marriages, did show some instances of difference as a motivation for interracial marriages such Peter W and Abigail B, or David W who preferred Black women having lived in Black neighborhoods, and Judy B who because of experiences of abuse and exploitation from her previous relationships with Black men, actively sought a White man.

6:2.1 Judy B and David W

Judy B and David W also possess elements of this alienation - him growing up in a predominantly Black neighborhood in Halifax with 90 percent of his friends Black, and she wanting a White man out of concern that a Black man may turn out to be a relative. But, there is a much more poignant reason for her preference of White men. She distrusts Black men. She states, “My two younger sisters just date Black guys, but me and my older sister just dated White guys. But I dated also Black guys, but they just had a lot of issues and a lot of problems”. She adds: “I thought [Black men] were a lot of control freaks, they didn’t want to do anything, like you know what I mean? They basically wanted to have their cake and eat it too. They were abusive, and they brought whatever way they were raised from their household or whatever, but it just wasn’t for me. It just wasn’t for me”.

Her mate David W, as stated earlier, was also afflicted with this alienation. His statement of older White men lusting after Judy B is a telling reflection of the pervasiveness of the “exoticization of the Other”. It shows that he was more aware of it in others than within himself. He states,

Judy likes to be very well put together when she’s not at work, right? So if we’re out, I’ll notice large numbers of older White men checking her out, all the time. And I just, I kind of smirk to myself and stuff like that, and I just carry on... And I see it all the frigging time. In their families or social circle, it’s not acceptable. But it doesn’t mean that they’re not attracted. Do you see what I am saying? It’s very hypocritical to me.

6:2.2 Peter W and Abigail B

Certainly, one can place part of Peter W's motivation as *jungle fever* as manifested in jouissance and hook's alienation from the primitive. His idolization of Abigail B's "fabulous body", dancing skills and movement attest to "exoticization of the Other". Even when he argues against exoticization being a motivating factor he still eroticizes Black women's bodies:

I'm trying to be honest here, and sometimes [professionals] do a thing where they're like, well I've reached the limit of how far I want to be honest, and now I'm going to be [professional] and talk about desire and things like that, which I read about in books. But I'm trying to be honest to say that you know, it's not like all of a sudden I discovered, to be crude, a Black ass, and I was really into it. I feel like you know, Black women's bodies ...are fantastic, but you know, it's not like I went through that. I just don't think I did. But on the other hand, now I think if I had desire, it would probably be guided towards [Black women]... If you gave me a whole bunch of photos of like naked women, and said which one is most attractive, I bet you anything I'd end up choosing the Black girl.

6:2.3 Michael W and Kimberley B

Even when Michael W and Kimberly B, fervently deny that race had anything to do with their partnership, one can still see elements of *alienation* for Kimberley already had a concept of the kind of man she wanted – not a bum, "a working man who was not a drunk". Kimberly B had dated some White men prior to meeting Michael W. She explains:

I used to find that with some of those guys in the Forces sometimes, you'd have the odd Black guy on the Forces that always wanted a White girl, and they'd never speak. Stuck up as hell. I remember there were a couple of them, and they

always went with White girls, which was fine. But even if you went to the club or went out, they were so goddamned stuck up, they wouldn't even say hi to you.

Like, some would say, where are you from? They wouldn't say boo to you.

6:2.4 Monica W and Carlos B

The fifth couple, Monica W and Carlos B, was the only couple whose motivations for marriage did not fit into the context of alienation. In other words Monica W and Carlos B did not fit into bell hooks' (1989) theory of alienation, which sees Black male-White female intermarriages as an attempt by White women to reclaim their lost primitive side or Cleaver's (1968) conception of the super masculine Black man and ultra feminine white woman's designations.

They met on an internet-dating site and hit it off right away. Carlos B had dated both White and Black women in the past, but this was Monica W's first relationship with a Black man. Carlos B explains,

I've dated both [races]. Yeah, I've always thought that it's more about the person than their colour because I know I have friends that only date Black women, and I know Black women that only date White men, sort of thing, and I never understood that. Because for me, you can meet anybody in any different ethnicity and they could be the one. You don't know.

Further Monica W comments that she "didn't have any preconceived notions about White and Black relationships" as she "wasn't setting out to find a Black man. But that's who I found, and that's who I'm very happy with".

What becomes clearer to my mind, is the inherent futility in trying to polarize the motivations for Black White interracial marriages into sameness or difference when they dovetail

into each other, especially depending on the context in which the partners meet and the instrumentalization of what factors of propinquity they inhabit be it socio-economic class, growing up in the same neighborhoods or having similar interests and passions. When a Black person meets a White person of the opposite sex, by virtue of the social construction of race, they are bound to know, a certain difference exists between them. Their difference is taken for granted. If they will relate romantically and get married, then sameness will play a part in that decision. This was the case with Peter W, even though he may have first noticed Abigail's body, it was not for that reason alone that he married her. He claims her strong work ethic, loving family, and willingness to have his children were the criteria that he valued most in a future mate all contributing to his decision to marry her.

6:3 - Societal Perception of Black White Interracial marriages

Research by Deliovsky (1999) and Kitossa and Deliovsky (2010), two of the earliest published studies on Black-White interracial marriages in Canada point to a terrain of hostility from the family and society towards such unions. Yet somehow, the societal perception as shared by research participants, showed a more benign view of Black-White marriages in Nova Scotia. Once again, geographical and social contexts – propinquity - just like in the motivations for entering into the union, played a prominent role.

6:3.1 Monica W and Carlos B

Monica W and Carlos B's union was well received by their parents and immediate families. Monica was born and raised in a small all-White town in the Maritimes. She said

people in the area were not used to seeing Black people, but her family accepted her marriage to Carlos B albeit, with little jokes.

Yeah, probably a few little jokes or like, oh, you're going to have little Black babies, stuff like that, but never to the degree of, you know, 'What? You're dating a Black person?' No, it was never like that, but probably you know, a little bit of humor. But no, never any negativity, and just happy that he's a nice person and makes me happy.

Monica W had a unique perspective of Black people while growing up in the rural Maritime county that may have shaped her family's perceptions of her union with Carlos B:

People have asked me over the years, have I had any interest in dating Black people or how come you didn't date Black people?, or what are your feelings about Black people? And I think that people almost expected that because I grew up in this rural county that there would be racist thoughts because I didn't know a lot of Black people. But the thing is, with where I grew up, mostly everybody was White, but if somebody got sick you went to the doctor, and if they couldn't figure out what was wrong with you, they sent you to the doctor who knew everything, who was either Black or Chinese. And so, to me, in [that part of the country where I lived] if you're a Black person, you're more revered because you're the specialist, or you're the professor in the university. So we didn't have any preconceived notions that if you're Black, you're a troublemaker, or you know – like we watch *The First 48 Hours* on TV or crime shows, and the thugs are always Black guys. But that wasn't our thought process growing up because

you know, you were the more educated person or the person who knew really what you were doing, or somebody we looked up to if you were another race.

Monica W's co-workers think Carlos B is the "sexiest man in the world". She says the co-workers love Carlos B because he is handsome, kind and sweet and they all believe she has got the "catch of the century, which I do". Carlos B's parents were equally accepting of his marriage. He states:

I don't think [our Black –White interracial marriage] really matters to them. They love [Monica]. They find her extremely funny. They find her extremely kind. They find all of the good qualities that I find in her, they see in her. So I don't think they've ever had a problem with it.

However in Carlos B's previous marriage to another White woman, her parents were adamantly against the union. Even though he tried to ignore their negative attitudes towards that union he still felt their resentment.

6:3.2 Abigail B and Peter W

Abigail B and Peter W's family also had a similar level of acceptance from their families. For Abigail B, who already had a sibling in a Black-White marriage, the parents were supportive. She reasoned that,

You know, my family is a family that wants to see everybody happy. It's a happy family, so like I said, the ball is in my court. If I am happy being with [Peter W] or being in a relationship with [Peter W], they are happy too. They are happy too, because we say something that, at the end of the day, I will manage my affairs in my marriage. They are not coming to manage it for me.

What became problematic for Abigail B was the perception of their marriage from part of the society in her African country. While family and a close circle of friends viewed their union in a positive light, generally young local women who hang with White men were considered to be prostitutes and she had to bear such sanctioning from a sector of the population. Abigail B explained the general acceptance of her marriage by giving an example of her and Peter W's wedding and reception attendance, stating:

No, like I would say, they were happy seeing me getting my life. They know who I am, because anybody I invited to my wedding was there. My wedding reception was full of people that I hadn't even invited. You see?

Peter W confirms Abigail B's observations. He mentions that he had to perform certain traditional ceremonies for the conjugal union and then was accepted into Abigail's extended family. But he was not too sure about his own parents. On the one hand, they accepted the marriage, but they did not get along very well with Abigail B as a result of a lack of shared social and intellectual pursuits, which he blames on class differences between his parents and Abigail B. He confessed though that all his previous girlfriends had problems relating to his mother. Any anxiety his parents had over the union, he puts to normal parental worry of anticipated difficulties of a Black-White marriage; after all, the parents themselves had difficulty getting their marriage accepted. However Peter W's siblings love their union, with his brother - also in an interracial relationship - regularly playing guitar and drums with Abigail's brothers. Peter W was also quick to point out that some White girls he knew, and others he had dated previously teased him about White girls not being good enough for him and him wanting fuller lips to kiss. One good friend, he remembers, tried to dissuade him from marrying a Black woman, arguing

that as a highly educated person with great employment prospects, he could find an educated rich White woman and live a “comfortable” life.

The negative perception of their marriage from some of the “young men” in Abigail’s country is significant because it foregrounds Oh’s (2005) view from a radical feminist point of view that whole structure of White supremacy within the Black-White binary is maintained and exercised primarily by the prevention of sexual relations between White and Black (pp.1349-1350). So pervasive is this supremacist thinking that even some colonized Africans, while idolizing White people, still hated any sexual liaison with between White men and local Black women.

6:3.3 Kimberley B and Michael W

Kimberly B and Michael W also experienced total acceptance of their union from their families. Michael W attributes this perception to society in the 1980s when mixed marriages and mixed races were an “everyday experience” because, as he says society was “laid back”. In his work place he had never heard a disparaging remark about his marriage and the two extended families, his and Kimberley’s, get along well. He states:

Yes, actually we had at our last family gathering, back in 2007. My kids got to see most of their [White] cousins, and they just loved them. Both sides [were] just like crazy about each other. My brother, his daughters and daughters’ children, just love them.

Kimberly, who had been raised in the north end of Halifax, had family and friends that were in Black-White marriages, and so hers was easily and readily accepted by family and friends.

Again, on the military bases where they lived, the marriage was accepted and supported by those

she came across. She says, “People were nice to us. I mean, nobody ever said anything out of the ordinary, or anything different”.

6:3.4 David W and Judy B

David W and Judy B, a working class couple who both had wanted partners from the opposite race right from the beginning seem to see society’s perception of their union in a way more consistent with a racialized society. Societal perceptions of David and Judy’s union fit into a critical race feminist’s argument that the opposition to interracial marriages of Blacks and Whites stem from White society’s desire to keep White supremacy entrenched in a Black-White binary, and to prevent any miscegenation that weaken the binary. Its manifestations can be both explicit and subtle, while at the same essentializing race. At Judy B’s work place, for example, her co-workers and superiors, who are highly educated, acted “surprised” when she informed them she is married to a White man,

Yeah. And I’d say, why do you look surprised? Oh, no, I just thought – You thought what? Kind of like, people think, Oh, you like rap music? And it’s like, why do [you think] I like rap music, because I’m Black? And they said, Oh, no, no, and they’re all flustered kind of thing. And I said, You’re stereotyping.

Actually, I like Country [music], I like R and B, I said, I like a lot of things, but I don’t like rap [just] because I’m Black. And [I would say,] ‘Because you’re

White, do you like country music?’

Judy B however, believes that it is the older folk that have a negative perception of interracial marriages. She cites her husbands’ grandmother, who was 80% Mi’kmaq was racist towards Blacks and somewhat considered herself White. She says it is not the young folk or older Black

folk that give her the stares but mainly older White people who have been socialized to believe there should be no mixing of the races in marriage. Yet, she also expressed doubts about present day generations because her daughter is often paired up with the only other Black person on dates by both students and teachers. When she asked her daughter why him? The daughter replied, “Because he too is Black”. As a result of some of the unfavorable perceptions, she warns her two Black sons from a previous relationship to be very careful and watchful when dating White women. Judy B’s husband David W’s parents also accepted their marriage perhaps because they had family who were in such unions. His mother was more worried because Judy B had two children from a previous relationship and wondered if Judy B had trapped her son into marriage to be a provider for her sons. David W was more worried about racial discrimination that his stepsons and daughter might face in employment. On their very first trip to Toronto the kids were elated and wanted to move to Toronto because they saw many mixed couples and kids and thought they will be more accepted in Toronto. David W confessed though that one of his sisters did not “hit it off with Ruby B, but the reason was not a racialized one, in his opinion. His sister, according to him, just felt Judy B was taking her “little” brother away from her.

6:3.5 Wanda W and Eric B

Wanda W also had moments at the beginning of her union with Eric B where she perceived an unfavorable attitude from some members of her father’s family and members of the community. In describing her father’s initial opposition to her dating a young Black man, Wanda W states,

One day he was out in the hall talking to mom, and I could hear him say, take [Wanda] and buy her a new dress. And I was wild. I came storming out the door

and said, a dress isn't going to help me. I want to go out with Eric B, and don't be trying to buy me or something like this I was saying to them, you know, yeah, just things like that. I was so upset with them. But then he let me start seeing him, but then dad went to the school and talked to the principal and said for them to not let us talk in the hallways.

Her father became accepting of the relationship and showed Eric B a great deal of respect but her mother expressed some doubt as to Eric B's Blackness. At a birthday party in Wanda W's home where Eric B was the only Black person, her mother responded to Wanda W when she asked what her mother thought of Eric B. Her reply shows this prejudice,

And I was out in the kitchen with mom, and I said, mom, do you like him? And she said, he's awful dark, Wanda. That's what she said. He's awful dark. See, it was all she worried about, what the neighbors were going to think. That's all it was!

Considering that Eric B had a Black father and a White mother, "awfully dark" seems rather prejudicial. Eric B's father too was initially against the relationship not because of her race but because he had been putting money away for a university education for Eric and he felt Wanda's early pregnancy and relationship to his son, which Eric blames for failing his provincial Grade 11 exams, was preventing him from pursuing a university career. Eric B's father a Caribbean immigrant, like most immigrant families, saw education as the key to success for his children.

Wanda W also experienced more negative reactions to her relationship to her marriage from certain White folk in her home city. She states that while they were dating, there were "little innuendo [s]" from White folk but once they decided to get married, anonymous letters

started arriving, warning her to leave the neighborhood. Her best friend warned her not to go ahead with the marriage “because of what people are going to say, worrying more about what everybody else was thinking. That’s the concern”. In the end when they finally had their wedding, they expected only family members, but as Eric B expressed,

The church was packed, standing room only. Jammed solid. Why? I have no idea, but I think what it was, was because we attended the same High School together, all my former classmates were there, a lot of them, kids I went to school with came because they knew me and they knew Wanda W, friends of friends of Wanda, friends of mine, they all came to church. We got married on a Friday afternoon at four o’clock. The church was packed. But a lot of them were just curious onlookers.

After that, according to both Eric B and Wanda W they never experienced any outward signs or acts of prejudice from society as a result of their union.

6:4 - Social Sanctions

Complementing societal perception of Black White interracial marriages are the accompanying social sanctions which, are observed in the form of “strangers’ stares and anger, and even rejection by their own racial groups because of the betrayal and non-conforming behavior of crossing the line” (Billingsley, 1968 as cited by Zhang and Van Hook, 2009 p. 96). Zhang and Van Hook (2009) also observed that for Black-White couples these social sanctions could be extremely harsh (p. 96). The five couples interviewed for this study experienced social sanctions in different forms - from benign disapproval, through passive aggressive behaviour to outright hostility.

6:4.1 Monica W and Carlos B

Throughout their marriage life, Monica W remembers only two instances of social sanctions apart from the jokes from her friends about “going Black and never going back”. The first was in the Caribbean when they were on a visit and the second instance by a relative of her husband, Carlos B. She states,

The only one [experience of social sanction] that I’ve been aware of [was when] we went to [the Caribbean] two years ago, and I found that Carlos B was received very well in the resort by the staff, and I wasn’t. And I’ve never experienced that. But we would go into like the dining hall, and the staff would smile and say, “ha ha”, like that, and then I would get you know ... a sneer. And that was the only time in my whole life that I’ve ever felt that somebody didn’t look upon me well because – the impression that I got was that they were mad at me because I was taking a nice Black man away. And actually there was one other situation that I did feel, and that was at one of Carlos B’s family’s events, and there was a lady there that ... yeah, a Black lady who was part of Carlos B’s extended family, and Carlos B was talking to her, and she was giving me dirty looks. And she would have had no reason to, other than maybe she didn’t like me because I was White, because we didn’t even speak. And I think I smiled at her a couple of times.

Her husband Carlos B confirmed the incident in [Caribbean] explaining a bit of pop culture among a section of [Caribbean] women and men. Carlos had dreadlocks then and the [Caribbean] club manager at the resort assumed Monica B was one of many White ladies who

come to the [Caribbean] to hunt for dreadlocked men. Carlos B noticed other social sanctions like “staring and stuff” but his attitude towards that was,

Yeah, that’s always going to happen. That’s not going to change, I don’t think.

There’s always people that are going to think me dating her and vice versa is going to be wrong, but it doesn’t bother me.

In Carlos’s previous interracial relationship, he admits he faced more sanctions including by relatives of his White spouse passing by him and his son on the streets without any hint of acknowledgement. These examples suggest support of the White supremacist approach to keeping the Black-White binary.

6:4.2 Abigail B and Peter W

Abigail B and Peter W also had faced their share of social sanctions both in Africa and in Nova Scotia. Abigail B, as referenced earlier, mentioned a perception in her African country among some people that a Black girl going out with a White man was bound to be a prostitute. She described comments she would hear from her country’s citizens when she was out in public with Peter W.

So sometimes we would be walking and waiting, and I could see my own fellow Blacks making comments, like we Blacks are here, and look at you, nice beautiful girl and you are having a White man behind you. What is he going to do for you? He’s going to use you and leave you, you know, that kind of stuff, like filthy, filthy comments. Or leave her, she’s a prostitute, you know, that kind of ...

Again with Abigail B, social sanctions had an economic effect on her because anytime she went shopping with Peter W, prices doubled or tripled because the vendors assumed that because

she was with a White man she had lots of money. When she dared to challenge the doubled prices of things that she normally bought the answer from the vendors were unequivocal, “Yeah, but you are with a White man”. Peter W on the other, having a solid grasp of racism and White privilege, anticipated social sanctions but being “a White liberal man” thought he would triumph over those sanctions. Peter W also faced social sanctions in Africa, but he considers it miniscule. A Rastaman he met discouraged him from settling in Africa because Whites were not welcome. Peter W attributed this to the man’s own thoughts because he otherwise felt welcomed in Africa, as he (Peter W) had learnt and participated in some of the social rituals shared among the country folk. Back in Nova Scotia, Peter faced no sanctions from the African communities or people, and he gets along with many of them, but is wary about the attitude of Nova Scotian Blacks to his marriage. He admits there is racism in Nova Scotia and counts himself lucky for not being brought up in a small town, which he thinks may have filled him with prejudice. Where he finds the continental Africans are accepting of his union, he thinks African Nova Scotians frown upon it. Though he and Abigail B have made some friends among African Nova Scotia professionals, they have never been invited to any African Nova Scotian social gathering. He adds that it is not that he wants to be invited but,

it would seem that, you would think eventually things like that would happen, but they’re not. So that’s all I have to say about that. I have no problem with the African Nova Scotian community, but man, the barrier is up.

Peter W also noticed that his interracial marriage, and being in Nova Scotia has led to a reduction of his friends. He states,

I have other friends who were closer to me when I was dating White girls because they just kind of felt more comfortable. Like nobody visits me out here. I think

they feel like probably I'm in a bit of African culture and a different place, and it's hard to get here, so I don't get a lot of visitors. And I think that does have to do with the fact that I don't have a White wife who is Canadian.

6:4.3 Kimberley B and Michael W

Kimberley B, who has been married to Michael W for more than fifty years experienced social sanctions in the early years of her marriage in the form of stares from the townies. She said that children and adults would stare at her like they had never seen a Black person before. She stated,

People just stared at you; like the kids stared at you. I'd say, do these people not have televisions at home? You must watch shows with Black people in it. You know, it's real. But you know, that's just the way they were back then.

Within the military base, where she lived with her husband Kimberly B said she did not experience social sanction. She was quick to point out that may have been the result of her adopting a philosophy of living where she kept away from anybody she considered a "weirdo" She says,

Yeah, I don't know, but I just never had confrontations, and if I didn't like somebody, I didn't feel them, I didn't bother with them. You don't bother with a whole lot of people on military bases. You keep your friends to a minimum because there's a lot of weirdos, you know? They're different, you know, and you just don't bother with them. You don't bother with everybody; you know that person ain't right, or you've got a vibe about somebody – that's what the kids always said; "mother, you've always got a vibe about somebody, and you're

right”. That’s right. You don’t have to be friends with everybody. You don’t have to be around everybody. If it ain’t right, don’t feel right, that’s the thing, the same as at work, those strange ones, strangers, strange ones, I ain’t got no time for them.

She confessed about social sanctions from some Black people, what she called their “hang-ups” about her marriage, which she never bothered about.

Kimberly B’s husband Michael W says he never experienced any sanctions from society Black or White. Again, like his wife Kimberly B, in the military bases where they resided, he hung around “safe circles” and all his friends accepted and supported their marriage. Incidentally, Michael W had visited US military bases in the US South and had witnessed segregation in those bases between White and Black servicemen, which he asserts were totally opposite to those at the Canadian bases he had been resident in. He argued that even though there may have been racial discrimination in the Canadian military in the sixties and seventies, in the eighties when he was a service man, he “never saw any disharmony amongst the Whites and the Blacks”.

Because of his highly Christian values, which would have him readily turn the other cheek, it seems, he could not understand the social sanctions unleashed against what he calls a relationship “made in heaven”. His solution was to resign himself to defeatist idealism. About social sanctions, he insists,

Yeah, I don’t even notice it. I really don’t. Now I know Kimberly B has said to me, she’s had comments where Black guys will say, “What? A brother’s not good enough for you”? And that might have been before we were married, or maybe she hears it now, and I just don’t – I mean, it’s not like we talk about it every day.

6:4.4 Judy B and David W

Judy B, wife of David W wasted no time in delving into instances of social sanctions meted out to her. She says,

Oh, yeah, you go into the mall, people are like looking. It's more at the grocery store, I find more at the grocery store because when we go in, like I live in.... Oh my God, the people just are staring, if you stop at the light, they're all looking and they're hitting each other, you know?

It was obvious in the interviews that these sanctions were a real sour spot for Judy B. At the local grocery store, she continued,

Yeah, and it's like they do a double take, and my husband's like, what is wrong with people? Like, what is wrong? Besides our skin, he said, what's the difference between you and me besides I'm male and you're female? What's the difference besides skin color? But like I said again, there's a lot of people that think that you should stay with your own race.

As a result of these sanctions, Judy B stopped going to the local grocery store altogether, but kept frequenting the public park. "But even in the park, you still get stares. People look at you right weird, it's like, you know...." The frustration was evident in her voice. Judy B did not take these stares in a passive way she was quick to point out. Depending on her mood, she would answer their stares,

People look at you right weird, it's like, you know – and sometimes it just depends on my mood, it's like, why are you looking at me, why are you staring at me? You've never seen a Black person before? Seriously– or an [inter]racial

couple? Like you know, and then they kind of turn their heads and don't look at you anymore.

In the end Judy B says she "just laughs about it". It has not had any negative influence on her marriage. She is adamant in her preference of White men as marriage partners and instills that into her kids.

Despite David W's insistence that his marriage to a Black woman was accepted by all, when pushed about social sanctions he admitted their marriage had faced many such sanctions; he just chose to ignore them. There is a sense of grief in his utterances,

I wouldn't say that I've heard any comments because I don't put up with that crap. I just wouldn't. I've seen maybe the stares, the glares, the feeling uncomfortable, like you just get that feeling. You're feeling uncomfortable because you may be in a restaurant that is full of White people, and you're the only mixed-race couple, or she's the only Black person, and it makes her feel uncomfortable. So I've felt that for her, as much as I can. There was a time we went – actually, a really good friend of mine, a Black guy. And I say friend because we used to do some partying together and whatnot, and still to this day when I see him – I don't hang out with him anymore, but he's still a friend of mine, right? I still call him a friend. Once we went to a restaurant for supper, we sat down, and I ordered a beer, and Judy B got a drink or whatever. And she felt that uncomfortable with people staring at her that we actually left. She was like, You know what, I'm not going to stay here with this.

He continues,

Yeah, I don't like when people will – or you know, you run into situations where, and I think I kind of touched on this, where people seem accepting at first blush because they're, oh, hi, how are you, you know, this, that and the other thing, more so with Judy B because I'm the White person, so I'm okay here. But her, you know, but you can see in people's faces, you know, their face color may change. They may blush, they may look – you know what I'm talking about, right? And so, there's physical changes, and you know right away that that's making them either uncomfortable or they didn't know what to expect – I don't know.

The way he deals with these sanctions is basically to ignore them and live his life.

Wanda W and Eric B after the initial reaction from Wanda W's parents seemed to have settled on good terms and as Wanda W says, her parents became more supportive of her union. They faced classic discriminatory practices from society in housing where landlords who had agreed to terms with her would back down with excuses as soon as Eric B showed up; or in employment, at the beginning. It was at this time that her mother received the letter warning Wanda W and Eric B to leave the neighborhood. Wanda W kept that letter all through her life only throwing it away very recently. They have had their share of glares and stares. Since their marriage in 1957, and like Ruby B and David W, they have stoically bore these sanctions, endured and prospered. Overtime, according to Wanda W, "people accept us the way we are. I mean, we're still meeting new people, all our lives we're going to be meeting new people, but nobody has ever made any [rude] comments to me". As for Eric B, comfortable in his Blackness, he has dealt with internalized racism of Black folk. For example, some African Nova Scotians

have assumed him to be a police officer, just because of the way he was dressed, and by his accent, which is considered not to be true African Nova Scotian.

6:5 - Social Mobility

None of the individuals in this study explicitly entered their marriage to move up the socio-economic ladder. That some upward mobility happened as a result of their marriage became the plum in the cake for some of the couples and individuals.

6:5.1 – Kimberley B and David W

Monica W and Carlos B both state that their marriage did not influence their employment. They were both working decent jobs when they met and continue in those jobs. Kimberly B and David W present a different picture of social mobility. Kimberly B, as stated earlier, had dated a few Black men and had concluded they were irresponsible, controlling, and abusive. As she said, [Black men] basically wanted to have their cake and eat it too. They were abusive, and they brought whatever way they were raised from their household or whatever, but it just wasn't for me. It just wasn't for me.

She sought a White professional whom she thought would provide her a stable gratifying relationship. With Wanda W and Eric B, and similarly with Judy B and Michael W there was nothing to indicate that their marriage affected their social mobility.

6:5.2 Abigail B and Peter W

Abigail B and Peter W present another picture of socio-economic benefits or mobility. According to Abigail B, her mother had said there was a prophecy that their family would

acquire fairness or lightness in color. Her marriage to Peter W, and having children were both seen by her mother as fulfillments of this prophecy. Social mobility can be discerned from this when one factors in the fact that in Abigail's African country, slavery and the colonial heritage had instituted colourism where lighter skin was highly valued. Marrying a White man was therefore seen sometimes as a sign of upward social mobility. In Peter W's profession, on the other hand, some of his superiors had advised that professional success would be achieved by someone who learns to love an African language, lived in a traditional African setting and who immersed him/herself in the culture of any African. Did he marry Abigail to advance his career prospects? He answers, "I worry that it's all been orchestrated by myself, but it's not true, it's just not true. It's not possible that that's the case, but it may have helped my career prospects. I won't lie about that".

6:6 - Identity of Offspring

In analyzing the racial identity of the offspring, I would like to state that none of the offspring of these couples were interviewed for this research. My analysis is solely based on what the participants, their parents have said. Black-White interracial marriages, there emerged, sometimes, even with this small number of research participants a divergence between what parents assigned to their children and what the children thought about themselves, especially after interacting with the broader society starting from school. Understanding this dichotomy elicits a reiteration of Makalani (2001), "Since races are historically developed political categories, not biological groupings, how might someone be "biracial" in the United States', or Canada, for that matter"? She, argues that a "biracial" identity "...has no historical basis and would have a negative political impact on African Americans" (Makalani, 2001, p. 83). A

biracial identity assumes purist biological forms that can be combined. Children of interracial marriages may face particular identity and development issues, yet the conclusions of biracial identity theorists are based on “false assumptions, biological determinism and an unwillingness to engage the Black historical experience” (p. 87).

The issue of the offspring of such unions is critical to the bridging of the gap between the races through the affection often times shouldered on children of Black-White interracial marriages from both White and Black grandparents. Offspring of Black-White intermarriages are able to interact with others on the racial divide and frequently serve us brokers between friends and family members of different racial backgrounds (Associated Press 17th February, 2012). In other words, both sides of the racial divide have been more willing to accept the grandchildren of mixed marriages. One can locate this willingness to Derek Bell’s concept of interest convergence, where he states that it is only when the interests of Whites converge that Whites will give in to the demands of Blacks, a tactical way to preserve the supremacy of whiteness. In this case grand children fussed over almost naturally by all humans becomes a way of eliciting further acceptance of the interracial marriage.

6:6.1 Carlos B and Monica W

Carlos B and Monica W had children from previous marriages. Where Monica’s kids were White, Carlos’s children have a White mother. The two families and their kids and extended family get along very well. Where Carlos B considered his son “biracial”, his son, he says, considers himself Black. Carlos B says, “I would say my son considers himself Black, and I think that’s a society thing. I don’t think that’s a child thing”. In that relationship, both families, except for the Monica W’s father, treated the child with deep affection.

6:6.2 Abigail B and Peter W

Abigail B and Peter W were united in their distrust of the expression “biracial” for their children, because Peter W thought the kids were much more than “biracial” because of the different heritages they were a part of. He preferred the expression “mixed heritage” or “blended heritage”. But Peter W was well aware of the multiple identities his children would inhabit, as Black, as African and African Nova Scotian and he was ready to prepare him to inhabit those shifting intersections of being. He reasons,

Right, okay, let me answer the Black part in Canada. In Canada, I hope that if there’s going to be a bridge across, that my kids will be part of building that bridge... They bail on the whole project of Black Nova Scotia, and they’ve said, forget about it, I’m not part of that. I hope that my kids will identify with the situation, of not just about being Black, but of being part of a disenfranchised category of people in this province.

Abigail B was also aware about the identity issues of her children. She says,

I see my kids, well I hear people saying mixed or multi-colored or culture kids, and White or whatever, but I don’t agree with them. We are all one people, no matter how it is. So they should put that mentality behind, so we move forward.

Abigail tries not to teach her kids about their racialized identities. For her it is enough for them to know that their mother comes from her African country and the father is Canadian. And she insists it is paying off as evidenced by her son who chose to do a school project on her African country. But both of them were well aware that society will brand the kids as Black and they were going to have to help them negotiate that pathway. As to the children being ambassadors of

peace between the races, a description of that by Peter W concerning Abigail's daughter from a previous marriage and her son with Peter W, serves to illustrate the effect of the "biracial" child.

My mom is absolutely crazy about my son. Absolutely crazy about him! My stepdaughter doesn't really get along with my mother. She really got along with my dad, no problem. My dad treated her like gold, he love[s] her, liked spoiling her. She came across when she was like eight or nine, so it was really easy, my dad just treated her like a little daughter. My dad never had a daughter. So yeah, but I wouldn't say that those are conflicts with the African part or the Black part of it, because moms don't get along with daughters-in-laws, that kind of thing is a normal conflict. Abigail B doesn't really like being under the thumb of my mother, though she did live in the house, and she put up with my mom. My mom's bossy, you know, I love her so much. She runs her household very effectively, but she's in charge of the household. And so anybody goes in there – and I get special privileges because I'm the son, right, so a totally different category, but anybody else who comes in there has to do what she's saying. My mom has a lot of respect for Abigail B, just her, yeah, she's very independent, and my mother was always envious of women who were independent, did their own thing. She's always afraid to do that. My mom is a teacher. She said, I only went into teaching because that's what we did when we had good grades; they sent us to teaching school. You're either a nurse or a teacher. And so, she's like kind of jealous of Abigail in that way. She's said that to me, her independence, I can't fathom it.

6:6.3 Kimberley B and Michael W

Kimberley B and Michael W were adamant that their children identify as “biracial” even if society tried to label them as Black. Kimberley B confessed that the children, now in their thirties, are somewhat considered to be Mexicans or Iranian, and they always get pulled over for extra scrutiny at airports and border crossings mainly for suspicion of drug trafficking or smuggling. They both insist there should be no diminishing of any of their children’s heritages, as Black and White. Their children, they both feel, have also bridged the gap between the families. According to Michael W, his mothers’ biggest concern was how the kids were going to be received by society. Concerning the interaction between the two families, he says, “Oh, let’s see. They fell in love with Kimberley B, absolutely, without a doubt. They fell in love with the babies, people, oh, especially the older ladies, from both nationalities”.

6:6.4 Judy B and David W

Judy B and David W reject the notion of their children being “biracial”. In their own way they recognize the social construction of race and insist that, since society is going to treat them as Black, they accept that and would rather make effort helping their children negotiate the often times difficult paths of Blackness in Nova Scotia, Canada, and the US. Judy B provides an example where she insisted and succeeded in getting a teacher to apologize to her daughter in front of the class for what she considered a racially motivated reprimand of her daughter. Judy B says,

To be accepted by society, you can’t say you’re biracial you just say, you’re Black. And that’s what I was saying, when I was saying about my daughter was saying, her boyfriend said, oh, my girlfriend is light-skinned. And she says, I’m

Black. He said, no, your father's White and your mother's Black. But society, she said to him considers me as still Black.

Their children have experienced racism in school but David W is confident he was able to deal with it through the involvement of the RCMP. He says the kids don't experience the structural racism within the school anymore. Judy and David both believe the families have gotten closer as a result of the kids. David W says, "Oh, my mom loves the kids - I mean, they can call her. She makes sure that special occasions, they have their gifts, they have their – you know, yeah, no, my mom loves the kids". In the end they both are proud of the children's Black heritage, because

It's their culture, it's their race. So, yeah, it's important for them because it's part of their race, it's part of their culture, it's who they are. And I think it's important because, why would you not? Would you not, because society might be more accepting if you say, oh, no, I'm not, but you visibly can see it, and why hide from it? Why not be proud of it and just be who you are?

6:6.5 Wanda W and Eric B

Wanda W and Eric B also believed in teaching their children both their Caribbean and Canadian heritages. They shied away from the term "biracial", and Eric B did consider his children to be Black even if they were light skinned enough to "pass". He was proud of the fact that his children identified as Black and were quick to challenge any prejudice in school based on racial lines. Like he said, he had taught his children to look proudly on their Black heritage. Wanda W on the other hand did not see colour in her children or anyone else – just a bunch of people. Of their Caribbean heritage, she says,

I think they should be proud of their heritage and that, and that's why we took them to the Caribbean this year. We wanted them to see where their grandfather was born. Yeah, they all came to see their roots, and they're proud to be – even my granddaughter, well they're all proud. And my grandson that fellow there, he's the youngest grandson, and he is so adamant when people are talking down about a different race or a different – like, he just can't stand that.

Again like many of the other couples, the kids brought joy to the lives of both Wanda W and Eric B's parents. Speaking about her White parents Wanda W opines,

My dad definitely had the opportunity of seeing all of my children. The little ones, they were little when he died, but the boys definitely remember dad. But my two girls, they don't know, but they remember *Grampy* from pictures or they remember things he did. But no, my parents and Eric B's parents, oh my God, Eric B's mom and dad, they just loved those children too. Eric B's mom was like a mother to me. I loved her like I loved my mother. She was a wonderful, wonderful woman. His father was quieter and he sort of sat back and just watched everything, but Nanny was always involved.

Chapter: 7 - Conclusion

One cannot generalize from a sample size of 10 couples, yet this study can conclude that negative perceptions do exist from society towards all the participants in this study who are in Black-White interracial marriages in Nova Scotia. Except for one couple, Eric B and Wanda W, who stated that they did not experience any such perceptions, especially after their wedding, all the other couples did notice negative perceptions from the White community, the Black community, in Nova Scotia, Africa and the Caribbean. Yet even with Wanda W and Eric B, there still were some negative perceptions from society at the beginning of their relationship, which somehow went away after their wedding. Although Carlos B said he felt no negative perceptions of his marriage from society, Carlos B acknowledges, “There’s always people that are going to think me dating her and vice versa is going to be wrong, but it doesn’t bother me”. Such a stance seems to suggest not the absence of negative perceptions but his decision to tune his mind off their existence.

From a CRT perspective such negative perceptions are indicators of racism and the continued efforts to maintain race related subordination. Black-White interracial marriages threaten the status quo – the whole structure of White supremacy within which the Black-White binary is maintained and exercised primarily by the prevention of sexual relations between White and Black people (Oh, 2005, pp.1349-1350). The five couples in this study, though not representative of all Black-White interracial marriages shed significant light on society’s attempt to maintain racism in Nova Scotia. The couples’ motivations for their unions included social similarities, “exoticization of the Other,” (at least as a motive for the initial attraction) considerations of economic stability and moving up the social ladder. Exoticization was only obvious in one couple Abigail B and Peter W, with Peter W doing the exoticizing. This was not the sole reason for his marriage to Abigail B, but

did was part of the initial attraction. Even though Kimberley B and Michael W dismissed the idea of exoticization as a motivation for their marriage, Michael W's background as a bullied adolescent who had never had a girlfriend, and his assignment of their meeting and subsequent union to divine intervention did point to hints of exoticization. Judy B and David W exhibited elements of this exoticization too, David W says he was only too aware of older White men "lusting after" Kimberley B. Similarly Michael W stated, "I see it all the frigging time. In their families or social circle, it's not acceptable. But it doesn't mean that they're not attracted. Do you see what I am saying? It's very hypocritical to me". Key to these unions was their propinquity. What is evident about these couples is that whatever their motivations for their partnering, they all made their unions work no matter the negative perceptions of their partnerships and the sanctions they faced from family and society.

Contrary to Lewis et al.'s (1997) assertion that sameness and not difference form the basis of interracial marriages and relationships (p. 75) and their rejection of interracial sex and novelty as factors in the determination of the relationships, my research participants showed that the potential of having interracial sex could be the trigger for interracial marriages and partnerships. This is clearly seen in the case of Peter W and Abigail B where it was Peter's exoticization of Abigail B that provided his initial attraction. Judy B and David W also possessed such elements of difference. Having grown up around black neighborhoods, David W categorically states his preference for the bodies of black women exoticizing,

Their skin tone. It doesn't matter what, whether it's light or dark or whatever, it's just – full lips, their figure for the most part is more curvy. It's just, I don't know, I just like that ... I'm not into real thin, skinny kind of – you know, I like a woman to have some, you know – and I do like ...to have some *curvage* and

good physical attributes.

His wife Judy B also rejects relationships with Black men because she did not trust them. She states that her initial reason for preferring White men was because in Nova Scotia any two Black people could be related. This may mask her preference for White men. To her, Black men were abusive, had too many “issues” and were control freaks”. Difference and sameness therefore work together in a dialectical relationship in the partnerships and marriages of Black-White interracial marriages.

Family and societal perception of the marriages of these five couples as perceived by the couples ranged from favorable to unfavorable. Eric B and Wanda W for example, have indicated that they are accepted as an interracial couple and experience no problems from others where they live. David W whose mother initially suspected Judy B of having an “ulterior motive” because of two children from a previous marriage, now “loves Judy B to death”. On the other hand, Kimberley B had noticed negative perceptions by way of stares from the older White folk in grocery stores. Despite the growing acceptance of Black-White marriages racism towards interracial marriages still appears ordinary and not just an aberration in society.

Social mobility of one partner through marriage to a person of a different race also emerged as a motivation for marriage in one of the Black-White marriages in my study. It was only Peter W, who perceived social mobility as a result of his marriage to a Black woman because it enabled him to climb up the ladder in his profession. In the case of Kimberly B and Michael W the mere fact that she sought to find a mat only in a location frequented by decently paid, White military men, maybe an indication of her longing to escape the poverty of Black folk into a higher social class.

One offshoot of growing interracial marriages that may play a part in increased acceptance of such marriages or blurring the color line, as seen from the participants, could be

the unanimous acceptance of the children of mixed marriages by the grandparents. For all of the couples in this study their children served as a welcoming bridge for the mixing of the Black and White members of the extended families. The children often interact with others on the racial divide and frequently serve as brokers between friends and family members of different racial backgrounds (Yen, 2012). All the participants in this study were unequivocally clear that their children brought increased acceptance of their intermarriage by family and friends. In other words, both sides of the racial divide have been more willing to accept the grand children of mixed marriages. What seems different among them is the question of the identity of their children. Though all the couples tended to see their children as having a Black identity, sometimes the children, after experiencing societal attitudes chose a Black identity over one that more expressed their heritage or an identity that didn't fall into a White or Black binary. This has significant implications for teachers of children from Black-White interracial marriages because it is they who must help the children to protect them against the negative construction of Blackness and to embrace their identity, including their Black identity for activism for equality.

The narratives of the participants has provided a means for these couples to name their own realities in their own voices The counter story therefore becomes a way for marginalized people to name their own reality. It has allowed them “address those circumstances where the prevailing conception of justice provides no language or means by which the marginalized person can express how he or she has been injured or wronged in terms that the system will understand” (Delgado & Stefancic, 1989, cited by Love, 2004, p. 233). For some of the participants like Peter W, the interview and his story became a therapeutic way of dealing with his interracial marriage because “thank goodness, you allowed me the opportunity to share this with, for the first time, with anyone.” He was the only one to have shared this sentiment

explicitly but that was the general attitude of all the participants. It was though a repressed bubble had been burst and as Anzaldua (1990) wrote, if they had been repressed by the dominant stories, now they were liberating themselves through their own stories.

What I found most remarkable about the couples in this study is the way their marriages thrived and blossomed despite the sanctions and negative social perceptions directed at some of them. They had developed different coping mechanisms in dealing with varying degrees of negative perception and social sanctions. Kimberley B, for example, stated she did not bother with anyone who had “hang ups about seeing Black-White interracial couples”, whilst Judy B avoided the grocery stores where she experienced the stares for strangers. Sometimes she adopted a definite confrontational stand against some of these negative societal perceptions by verbally challenging those with such perceptions. These coping strategies, I believe, are worth studying further because from them one could extrapolate best-practices to help other Black-White couples successfully withstand societal sanctions and negative perceptions. Further studies should also be undertaken to determine the processes through which the children of Black-White interracial marriages come to form their identities, which for some of them in this study, were antithetical to what their parents thought of them.

What this study has shown is that Black-White interracial marriages are here to stay and a lot more education must be extended to correct society’s general hostile attitude towards them. As seen from participants like Wanda W and Eric B, David W and Judy B, and Kimberley B and Michael W who have all been married for more than 40 years each, Nova Scotia is becoming more accepting of Black-White interracial marriages, and the social sanctions these couples face are not as harsh as they would have been for example in the 1960s. Even in the entertainment media where Black-White relationships were once frowned upon, there has been a significant increase in the

number of Black-White couples represented in movies and on television and in advertising indicating an increase in acceptance of such unions. This is not to say that racism, as a prop of a purely economic system, can be cured without the broader structures that support it. Ultimately, Blacks would need to wield more economic power or to change the power dynamic in order to demystify race as a function of prejudice. The idea that Whiteness is superior has been enforced by the illegitimization of Black-White unions. Therefore a societal change is needed to accept Black-White unions to erode the myth of White-Black inequality.

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