Narratives of South African heterosexual relationships: Understanding masculine and feminine togetherness

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Heterosexuality often appears as a monolithic way of being that has been disciplinarily defined as right and natural for all sexual subjects (Foucault, 1979). However, it may also be viewed as a social construction, subject to alteration and variation according to social and historical context. In the following research, the stories of ten couples and from the South African soap opera Isidingo reveal the ways that heteronorms shape togetherness between men and women. In the research a queer stance is used to interrogate the ways that togetherness appears as natural and normal, such that the contingency of such togetherness is revealed. The queer stance was used to unsettle the unquestioned assumption of heteronormativity by interrogating the construction from a political position not included by the norm (Stein & Plummer, 1994).

Within the general queer stance the concept of performance has been used to account for the ways in which subjects are able to unsettle normative constraints: Butler's (1993) conception of repetition, Holzman’s (1991) account of the revolutionary developmental potential of performance, Billig's (1991) understanding of the rhetorical constructions of everyday philosophers. Further Bakhtin's (1994) dialogic ontology suggests that utterances, performances and/or narratives

Using these theoretical underpinnings, the narratives show how stories of togetherness collude with heteronorms while at the same time existing alongside alternative forms of togetherness. Possibly because norms are broad, overarching constructions, they do not define the entirety of the couples’ tales. Rather moments of resistance and alteration are interwoven with normative themes. This unpredictable ambivalence appears in the couples narratives as the assertion that all relationships are the same, and that all relationships are unique.

Couples position themselves within a social network, and this network instructs the couple on heteronormative ways of being together. They also witness normative performances in a way that is similar to the observation of disciplines, suggested by Foucault (1979). Although couples often go with their social network’s observations, the manner in which couples position themselves within this network assists them in arguing for alternatives to
heteronorms. Spatial expressions also at times serve to fix togetherness. Homes are structured in line with social constructions of heteronorms. However, couples can and do mould their understandings of their homes, such space is reveal as an intersection between social and individual concerns. Narratives of work again reveal that heteronorms structure but can also be ignored within heterosexual relationships. Couples tell of receiving particular benefits from normative performances, and it is likely that these dividends make it difficult to opt for an altered version of togetherness. At the same time, the gender dualism of a heteronormative division of labour inserts oppression into togetherness, and this may lead couples to seek an unusual way of being together. In these ways, heterosexuality can be read as a multiple and contingent performance, rather than an immovable, unchangeable imperative.
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1 Introduction

Heteronormativity and performance

Heterosexuality can be understood as a norm that structures and organises not only relationships between specific men and women, but also a myriad of social contexts (Jackson, 2006): including television shows (Epstein & Steinberg, 1997), education (Hall, 2006; Robinson, K.H., 2005), medicine (Lewis, 2005; Martin, 1997), nationality (Puar, 2006), and literature (Thomas, 2000). The requirement to be in a relationship with a person of the opposite sex may thus be understood as a pervasive, underlying construction that defines social relationships in both public and private realms (Richardson, 1996). Dworkin (1981) refers to this system that works to render one kind of sexuality as a normative requirement as the “heterosexual imperative”. This imperative is framed by two binaries: the male/female binary provides a rationale that explains attraction (Hester, 2004; Hird, 2000), while the heterosexual/homosexual binary serves to delineate the boundaries of socially acceptable togetherness (Jackson, 1995, 2003, 2006).

The current research intends to explore this pervasive norm through an analysis of narratives told by heterosexual couples in contemporary South African society. I explore narratives of heterosexual togetherness told by ten couples and on the soap opera Isindingo. This is a critical endeavour, and I assume a queer theoretical stance from which to read the tales. This stance provides a vantage point from which to interrogate constructions of heteronormativity, in order to explore the ways that such tales exclude and also include understandings of alternative subjectivities. These stories shall be viewed as expressions of the lived experience of being heterosexual that reveal the difficulties, advantages, constraints and freedoms associated with a normative sexuality. While it is assumed that couples produce and reproduce normative ways of being together, it is also assumed that it is possible for couples to resist socially constructed limitations of their performances. The current research seeks to explore the ways that couples negotiate norms of sexuality, such that they enact collusion and/or alternative ways of being together.
Heterosexuality is constructed as a monolithic norm (Richardson, 1996) that excludes not only other sexual subjectivities but also non-contractual, non-cohabiting, non-procreative, non-monogamous, non-gendered ways of being together (Borneman, 1999; Jackson, 2006). It is a multifaceted, overarching category such that couples in the present research only tell of partial collusion. At the same time resistance is also a momentary, fleeting and incomplete accomplishment, and the couples constitute themselves as a couple in part through monitoring and surveying their adherence to the norm. While heteronorms organise, shape and structure not only the couple but also social relationships, as a lived performance heterosexualities come to include alternatives that blur the boundaries between what is normal and what is not. Heterosexuality is thus a multiple, inconclusive practice that relies on and belies the norm.

As such, it is possible to view the heteronormative role as produced and reproduced within the knowledge and technology of various disciplinary frameworks. In the following sections I shall describe the heterosexual/homosexual and masculine/feminine binaries and the ways that they are implicated in the marginalisation of particular performances of gender and sexuality, in order to argue for a stance that is sensitive to these forms of oppression. Queer theory is an approach that views heterosexuality as a norm that has marginalised certain sexual subjectivities, and therefore seeks to unsettle and challenge the assumption of this norm by appropriating the perspective of the marginalised subject (Sedgwick, 1990; Solis, 2007; Thomas, 2000). Within this broad framework, I shall make use of conceptions of performance, dialogue, narrativism and embodiment to shape the current research.

**Heterosexuality/homosexuality**

In this section I shall describe how heterosexuality has come to be constructed as the opposite and privileged term within a binary. Homosexuality can be understood as the term that is different to, and in part defines, heterosexuality and heteronorms. It is noteworthy that “heterosexuality” and “homosexuality” are relatively recent terms that have not always been used to describe sex acts (Laqueur, 1997), and it is useful to contextualise these terms. In drawing attention to this binary it is my intention to show how heterosexuality is a contingent social construction rather than a fixed, monolithic concept. The construction of heterosexuality as a norm has implied marginalisation and oppression of the opposite pole in the binary, such that homosexual subjects are
disadvantaged where heterosexual subjects experience advantages that are largely taken-for-granted (Jackson, 2003).

Before the notion of sexuality as a marker of identity evolved, sex acts were understood as isolated events focused on pleasure. There were general aesthetics that applied to these acts, but these acts did not impart any lasting distinctive or unique characteristics on that person (Gauntlett, 2002). As far back as the eighteenth century, legislation was in place prohibiting homosexual acts, but these acts were not perceived to refer to the identity of an individual. Similarly, the Greeks condoned and even recommended the love of an older man for a younger boy as a kind of initiation into the ways of the world. However, in Greek society a sexual interaction was permissible so long as it did not transgress particular social boundaries that defined a person’s place in that society: men could have sex with men, so long as the partner that was penetrated was of a lower rank than the one doing the penetrating - that is a slave, a prostitute or a boy. Here it is the social relationships that define the acceptability of an act, and not an internal possession or quality of the subject. Sexual interactions were not perceived to define personhood in the same way as sexuality has in recent times (Weisner-Hanks, 2001). This shift towards understanding sexuality as a fixed identity can be linked to shifts in understandings of the individual that I shall describe in more depth in the second chapter (Foucault, 1984).

In contrast to sex acts defined by relationships and pleasure, the construction of heterosexuality as normal, natural and right for all human beings is in part constructed in terms of difference from non-normal kinds of sexuality. I shall make use of the term heteronormativity throughout this research to refer to the taken-for-granted assumption that defines togetherness as necessarily and unquestionably between partners of the opposite sex. At the limits of this norm, lie a collective of sexual behaviours that cannot be sanctioned socially including polygamy, polyandry, orgies, fetishism, sadomasochism, transexuality, intersexuality, bisexuality and homosexuality. While homosexuality has been increasingly accepted into the public domain, attraction to same-sex others remains in a sense the boundary that delineates normal sexuality from non-normal sexuality (Jackson, 2003). The term itself reflects this function: while the prefix “homo” literally means “one” and not “same”, it does suggest a relationship to the prefix “hetero” that refers to different sex attraction (Laqueur, 1997). In this way, the positions are constructed as related, and importantly as opposites such that both terms rely on one another to define their meaning.
The linguistic designator for homosexuality can be interpreted as locating this performance on a boundary that marks the limits of sanctioned, heterosexual sexuality (Laqueur, 1997; Jackson, 2003).

In this way, both heterosexuality and homosexuality are constituted as clearly definable categories. Importantly, heterosexuality is privileged as the only acceptable version of sexuality, and is constituted as heteronormativity. Attached to heteronorms and the performance of heteronorms are particular benefits and advantages, including the right to take togetherness for granted. Heterosexual couples are not expected to justify their sexuality and can reliably expect to have the opportunity to form relationships with the opposite sex (Jackson, 1995). In contrast, non-heteronormative sexualities are largely excluded from both public and private spaces, and may be required to account for their sexuality (Richardson, 1996). In this way, non-normative subjects are excluded from full membership to a society (Hubbard, 2001; Reddy, 2006). From this marginal position, non-normative subjects are disadvantaged in public, private and institutional terms.

While it may seem that same-sex stories have become more socially tolerated in recent years, the inclusion of same-sex sexuality narratives in the public domain remains problematic. Whisman (1996) suggests that there are certain narratives that can publicly communicate non-normative sexual subjectivity, but at the same time many remain “in the closet”. In the United States military a “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy still applies, and homosexuality is classified as a mental disorder (Rosenberg, 2006). While some Americans remain in the closet, celebrities and politicians are increasingly being “outed” without their consent. This could be a means of normalising media discussions and representations of homosexuality, thereby gaining acceptance for homosexual subjects (The Advocate, 2007), but could also be an assault on homosexual celebrities’ privacy and confidentiality. This can be read as demonstrating social difficulty in hearing non-normative sexual stories, or difficulty in making public stories of sexual dissidence. Epstein and Steinberg (1997) show how on the Oprah Winfrey Show, heteronorms are unquestioned, so that heterosexuality is communicated as beyond choice. In so far as heterosexuality is taken-for-granted in such a public forum, it may be difficult to tell a non-normative sexual story.
In this way other sexualities are literally silenced or prevented from performing (Tomsen, 2006). While it can be argued that there is increased public space to make private sexual narratives public on talk shows, to family, to friends, and a concomitant belief in the health of such openness (Plummer, 1995), the same is not necessarily true of non-normative sexualities (Jackson, 1995). At the same time, communicating sexual orientation could be correlated to positive valuations of homosexual individuals. Gowen and Britt (2006) indicate that a stereotypically homosexual performance of speech is correlated to negative attitudes toward and a desire for social distance from homosexual men. If the sexual orientation of a speaker is not known but their speech can be interpreted as conforming to a homosexual-like performance, then failure to provide an ascription of sexual identity is associated with negative attitudes toward the speaker. As such, the silence regarding sexual orientation and difficulty in making sexual narratives public, may contribute to negativity surrounding homosexuality (Solis, 2007, Tomsen, 2006). In this way, homosexual subjects are caught in a double bind in which they cannot speak because of negative constructions of homosexuality (Rosenberg, 2006; Solis, 2007), but silence leads to negative constructions (Gowen & Britt, 2006). In the South African political context, this double-bind took on particular meanings: homosexual men and women were involved in the struggle against Apartheid, but had difficulty in justifying the liberation of sexuality alongside racial liberation (Cock, 2005; Gevisser, 1994).

**Gender dualism**

Homosexuality thus defines the limitations of heteronormativity by representing unacceptable sexual performances. In the above section I have described how this construction is both contingent and implies the marginalisation of non-normal subjects. Importantly, heterosexuality and heteronorms require difference that is structured as a gender binary. In this section I shall argue that this binary can also be viewed as contingent. While sex and gender appear to be natural, unalterable, morphological characteristics, I draw attention to the ways that the body can be and has been interpreted in alternative ways.

Butler (1993) explains the status quo in which all humans are classified according to two sexes and two genders, and heterosexuality is constructed as natural, with reference to the heterosexual matrix. This matrix underlies performances of sex, gender and sexuality. Sex is socially constructed to easily confer a gender onto subjects, such that male
subjects reliably perform “masculinity” and female subjects consistently perform “femininity”. In this way, performances of sexuality are intimately related to gender, and the taken for granted construction of gender as binary and oppositional (Hester, 2004; Hird, 2000). As such, performances of sexuality require these oppositions, attraction is defined by difference, and the construction of normative relationships requires negotiation of and between gender positions (Irigaray, 2004).

Hollway’s (1984) exploration of gendered positions within heterosexual relationships describes the discursive positions that define this difference. Here women are described as subject to the Have-Hold discourse. Within this discourse, women are obliged to accomplish a romantic and emotional bond with a partner of the opposite sex, and then to take responsibility for maintaining that relationship. In opposition to this the Male Sex Drive discourse defines male sexuality as an unstoppable, biological imperative. The tension between these two positions has consequences for gender interaction: a woman must labour to ensure her male partner’s fidelity and continued commitment, and it is therefore her responsibility to provide her partner with sex. She must grant him a means to experience his “masculinity”, or risk losing a context in which to express her own “femininity”. In this way women assume the position of object in relation to the male subject position. As such, the difference that underpins heteronorms implies inequality between “feminine” and “masculine” partners in a relationship.

In this way it is possible to view the gender binary as providing the rationale that justifies hetero-attraction between partners (Jackson, 2006). This binary may be understood as constructed through the heterosexual matrix Butler (1997) describes, to appear as natural, biological and fixed. However, this has not always been so. Gender has not always been fixed by the apparently physical sex binary. In some cultures there has also been acknowledgement of third, fourth and even fifth gender orientations (Bockrath, 2003; d’Anglure, 2005; Penrose, 2001; Towle & Morgan, 2002). The occurrence of intersex individuals, that is people born with physical structures that approximate both male and female genitalia, also undermine the assumption of an easy sex/gender binary (Kritzinger, 1999; Williams, C.D., 2003). Some Native American tribes had “two-spirit” people, so called because they possessed both masculine and feminine spirits. Most often these people were male-sexed, and wore the clothes and performed rituals of both men and
women. These individuals were revered as having knowledge of both male and female aspects of the spirit world (Weisner-Hanks, 2001). Also in a spiritual context, some South African sangomas are sometimes aided by ancestors of the opposite gender, and this ancestor may request a spouse for themselves to be brought into the household. This spouse may be of the same gender as the sangoma but opposite to the ancestral spirit. This ancestor is understood to be the guiding spirit of the sangoma’s power, and these wishes are abided by to show respect and love for this ancestor (Nkabinde & Morgan, 2005).

In another context, Potgieter (2006) describes a group of Port Elizabeth male-sexed individuals who perform “femininity” daily. On an ordinary day, they dress in fashionable women’s clothes and are employed in what is usually thought of as “feminine” work. On occasion, when they go out to clubs or parties, they dress in extravagant, high-heeled, short-skirted, feather boa-ed ensembles. The women have large social networks, including friends, family and often a “butch” boyfriend they may hope to marry. Within this social network they interact and are interacted with as women. Importantly, their resistance to the notion of surgery (to change their bodies to suit their performance of gender) is founded on the grounds that this surgery is too expensive but also on the belief that God will judge them by what they make of what He gives them. Though the disjunction between the bodies of these men and their “feminine” gender performances could pose a threat to notions of gender, by refusing surgery they submit to the will of God and to their bodies, and by passing as well as they do they submit to the norms of their social context. In this way, they do not enact a gender that contradicts their bodies or sexuality. Thus the dominion of God and of the heterosexual matrix remains untouched (Potgieter, 2006).

Hird (2000) views such instances of transsexualism and intersexuality as profoundly unsettling to notions of the relationship between sex and gender. These morphological manifestations cannot be categorised as male or female, and so unsettle notions of biological sex as binary. In this case, biological sex and the body are perhaps best viewed as socially constructed categories that are flexible and contingent constructions, and in this way the flexibility and contingency of gender is made apparent (Hester, 2004; Hird, 2000). Feminist (Butler, 1997; Grosz, 1994; Hester, 2004; Hird, 2000) and queer (Thomas, 2000; Gevisser, 1994; Sedgwick, 1990, 1995) scholars view gender and sexuality as
socially constructed in order to draw attention to the ways in which some subjectivities are marginalised. In this way, the political implications of gender and sexuality constructions become apparent.

**Conditional performances**

In the previous sections I have argued that heteronorms are constructed on the premise of two binaries. While these binaries appear normal and natural I have argued that they can be understood as premised on particular social, cultural, scientific and historical assumptions. Together the heterosexual/homosexual and male/female binaries define not only what is acceptable between partners, but also how these partners should present their togetherness in a variety of social settings. That is in public and private places (Richardson, 1996).

These two binaries organise many social structures such that heterosexuality may be perceived to be a taken-for-granted norm (Jackson, 2006) that excludes non-normative performances of sexuality. Hubbard (2001) suggests that public settings, such as toilets, office buildings, bars, clubs and malls are materially constructed such that non-heteronormative subjects are excluded. Private houses also may be interpreted as inscribing heteronorms on the private domain of the home, thus excluding non-normative sexuality from private spaces as well. During the 1950’s and 1960’s the Apartheid government in South Africa can be understood to have appropriated the potential of homes to inscribe ideology onto space (Hubbard, 2001; Posel, 2006). The government awarded black, married, heterosexual couples with homes in the townships of the Witwatersrand in order to control the influx of men and women into the towns looking for work and for living space. The procedure reflected a desire both to segregate the South African landscape according to race (Hubbard, 2001), and also to fix that segregation to the already set norms of heterosexuality represented in houses (Posel, 2006).

While I have described how the binaries that underlie heteronorms can be viewed as conditional, it is not clear how subjects reproduce heteronorms in their everyday togetherness or might be enabled to perform against normative constructions of subjectivity. Foucault (1979) argues that norms are constructed by disciplinary technologies as universal and overarching. The perspective, or gaze, of these
authoritative institutions becomes internalised such that subjects attempt to normalise their behaviours, thoughts and opinions. In this way, disciplines have power that defines subjectivity. Technologies of self are used by the subject to constitute themselves as acceptable in disciplinary terms. In this way the subject is constituted by the production and reproduction of normative constructions (Foucault, 2003). However, these norms are abstractions that do not exist in their entirety within individual subjects (Foucault, 1984). Rather subjects must continually survey and monitor themselves in order to give a normal performance, and this implies that at times subjects might give performances that are at least partially alternative to the norm.

Butler (1993) views gender as a performance that is repeated again and again and is defined by a socially constructed script, and Sedgwick (1995) argues that this conception can be used to understand the ways that individuals enact and embody other social constructions beyond gender, such as sexuality. For a performer, the script defines what sort of behaviours are possible, normal and appropriate for particular performers. In the case of gender and sexuality, the binaries I have described limit the scripts in certain ways. While the performances are delineated and defined, it is also possible for performers to undermine the scripts. Through the repetition of the scripts, as performers return to their roles in different circumstances and contexts, they are able to insert resistance into performances. Alteration may occur either through indifference derived from the recurrence of scripts or through choices in style. In either case performances that go against the grain are viewed as political opposition to the norm (Sedgwick, 1990, 1995; Gauntlett, 2002).

Bakhtin’s dialogic ontology can be used to extend this understanding of performance, particularly an understanding of how resistance might be possible. This ontological conception understands utterances (including single words, entire narratives or performances) as constructed of two opposing forces that pull meaning not only toward a unified point but also outward into diversity (Bakhtin, 1994; Shotter & Billig, 1998). In this way meaning slides between the limitations of a socially defined script and the diversity of an actor’s preferences, opinions and indifference. Utterances, narratives or performances are constructed in consideration for both how an audience might react to it, that is the concern of addressivity, as well as concerns for how the performer might argue in support
of the performance, that is the concern of answerability (Bakhtin, 1981). As such, an utterance, narrative or performance is constructed in consideration both for the norms of social scripts, and also for the preferences of the performer. In this sense, narratives can be understood as a dialogue between meaning from the positions of monologue and heteroglossia, as never completed complexes of interrelated meaning. A narrative monologue can be thought of as one defined by norms, that produce the subjectivity of the narrator and the social world, while a heteroglossic narrative is more diverse and inclusive of events that alter, undermine or challenge monologues (Bakhtin, 1994; Shotter & Billig, 1998). These two positions should be understood to be in constant dialogue, and both forces are always present in words and utterances (Bakhtin, 1994).

Billig (1991) also argues that subjects are able to construct a position that stands against the norm. Everyday philosophers might consider normative social constructions and rather than simply accept these conceptions, they could opt to rhetorically construct their own opinions regarding issues. In creating such an alternate position, a subject may be required to argue for that position. Such argumentation may necessitate choices regarding ideologically constructed subjects, and interrogation of what is ordinarily taken-for-granted. In this way it may be possible to avoid assumptions regarding social constructions, and create a space of resistance. Holzman (1991) suggests that understanding subjectivity as constituted through performance can account for the manner in which this space of resistance is created. Performance allows social actors to see their subjectivity as changeable in much the same way as a stage actor might take on different roles. The ability to change roles may be lead by other social actors or by socially constructed understandings, and alteration is a socially embedded process that occurs within a Vygotskian Zone of Proximal Development. While both Billig (1991) and Holzman (1991) suggest that subjects are under certain circumstances able to alter normative constructions, they have only limited ability to resist and alter these scripts. At the same time as subjects are limited by normative social constructions, the ability to resist constraint is ever-present and unavoidable.

**Queer storytelling**
In the previous sections I have discussed the binaries that construct heterosexuality and the constraint and resistance that is inherent in such a normative construction. Considering the marginalisation that is revealed through this, a stance that can address such political oppression is required for the current research. The project shall thus take the political position that heterosexuality is a privileged norm that marginalises particular performances.

While this discussion has critiqued the theoretical categories and concepts associated with heteronorms, it remains for the current research to explore the ways that these norms are performed or resisted by couples. Norms are abstractions that influence and shape subjectivity and the current research seeks to explore the ways that couples perform and/or undermine heteronormativity. The exploration is directed at making known the ways in which heterosexual togetherness might be performed not as natural, necessary and unalterable but as a conditional and contextual construction. In order to gain understanding regarding the performance both of constraint and resistance associated with heteronorms, ten South African heterosexual couples were interviewed. These couples represented a range of experience in terms of race, socio-economic class, age and parental status. Couples were asked to tell stories about their relationship, prompted by photographs of events significant to their togetherness. These photo-elicitation interviews combined both lexical and visual data, as did excerpts from the local soap opera Isidingo. Excerpts from this television series were chosen to extend and enrich the narratives told by couples.

Soap opera narratives may be understood as public domain texts that, theoretically, any South African with a television has access to. The self-conscious manner in which these programmes are created may reflect particular social dialogues, particularly those that describe “femininity”. Alongside these narratives I have explored stories constructed in a personal setting. While I am arguing that couple interviews could provide evidence of personally situated narratives and that soap opera narratives could contain narratives suitable for the public domain, this division should be understood as largely artificial. It is difficult to delineate at what point the public becomes private, and there is little that separates the individual from society (Richardson, 1996). In so far as a narrative can be viewed as inextricably socially embedded, it is not always possible to distinguish between
the social constructions of a person’s lived experience and that lived experience (Chase, 2005).

The research is understood in part as a critical exploration of an oppressive institution, of heteronormativity. In recognition of the power that I and my participants receive by virtue of our normative performances, the research shall assume a stance that I have described above and that undermines this power (Jackson, 2006). In a sense, heteronorms impose domination, and heterosex is always potentially an enactment of domination, whether it is physically violent or not (Dunne, 2003; Firestone, 1998; Rowland, 1996). Challenged by this entrenched power, some feminist theorists believe it is best to opt for political lesbianism. Because men and women are not ideologically equal it is not possible for individual men and women to avoid these taken-for-granted structures. By refusing to enter into heterosexual relationships women can evade this dynamic (Dunne, 2003). However, because of the pervasiveness of heteronorms, it is unlikely that women who refuse to enter into romantic relationships with men could entirely escape the constraint of heteronorms. Heterosexuality is sometimes taken-for-granted (Cocks, 2006; Richardson, 1996) and has posed as a non-choice (Kanneh, 1992). This normative prescription of heterosexuality, or heteronormativity, marginalises other sexual subjectivities and relies on difference in gender that leads to asymmetries in power between men and women in relationship (Brown, 1994). For these reasons Wilkinson and Kritzinger (1992) suggest that this inequality obliges heterosexual women to reflexively acknowledge that the choice to remain heterosexual is implicated in a specific uneven, political status quo and to account for their choice to remain heterosexual. The research seeks to draw attention to the ways that heterosexuality is not entirely monolithic by exploring the ways that South African couples both collude with and also resist heteronorms. By assuming this stance, the political awareness of dominance of heteronorms over alternate sexualities shall be included in the research.

The queer stance that is taken up within this research should be understood as a widely inclusive, general term that encompasses any sexuality or subject position opposed in principle to heterosexual norms. It should be understood, in the words of Sedgwick (1990, p. 14), as an “open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning [that occur] when the constituent elements of anyone’s
gender, of anyone’s sexuality aren’t made (or can’t be made) to signify monolithically.” The performance of subjectivities that are not included in normative constructions, allow individuals to call norms into question, to problematise these norms in that alternate performances draw attention to the ways that gender and sexuality are conditional, thereby demonstrating their contingency (Sedgwick, 1995; Thomas, 2000). In this way queer becomes a political stance that acts against the limited boundaries of heteronormativity, and may embrace all manner of sexual proclivities including homosexuality and heterosexuality (Stirratt, 2005). While a queer stance is not limited to homosexual subjectivity, it is at least in part reliant on or indebted to the experience and performance of homosexual subjects, in so far as these individuals assume a non-normative position within a social milieu (Sedgwick, 1990; Thomas, 2000).

In general, a queer standpoint seeks to present challenges to social constructions of the role of the physical body in determining gender and sexuality, and questions the assumptions underlying sexuality and of gender (Stein & Plummer, 1994). The position is also political, and implies a concern for the ways that gender and sexuality entail marginalisation and disempowerment (Gauntlett, 2002; Hall, 2006). As such it may be a valuable approach to exploring heterosexual relationships, because of the perspective it provides in counterpoint to heteronormativity, and because it sees the identities, binaries and boundaries I have described above as questionable and malleable.

The approach is particularly apt in the South African context. Significantly, the struggle against Apartheid can be understood to have become intertwined with the struggle both for sexual and gender equality (Cock, 2005; Gevisser, 1994). Although the political resistance epitomised by the African National Congress (ANC) initially believed gender and sexual equality to be issues that distracted from the importance of racial equality, both were incorporated to a degree into the democratic project following the 1994 elections. Women have been included in government according to the 50/50 campaign (Ngcuka, 2006), and the homosexual subject has been gradually reinstated as an acceptable citizen through changes in legislation (Reddy, 2006). Most recently legislation has been directed at obtaining rights for same-sex couples to be married under South African law. Although the Constitutional Court ruled the exclusion of same-sex couples from marriage law to be unconstitutional, the recent changes to the marriage act fall short of unconditional
recognition and equality with heterosexual couples. The recent legislation records same-
sex marriages on a different register for civil unions, and requires that marriage officers
who are willing to perform same-sex marriages reregister. While the legislation begins the
process of according the same rights to same-sex couples as to heterosexual couples, the
unions that are allowed are marriage only in name, and remain a reflection of the
exclusion of same-sex partners and couples from South African society (E. Naidu,
personal communication, February 18, 2007). As such, the South African context has an
ambivalent relationship with queer activism. By interrogating the norm of heterosexuality
from a queer perspective, the research seeks to obtain nuanced and complex
representations of heterosexual performances. In the above sections I have described the
binaries that underlie normative constructions of sexuality, and I have suggested that this
requires a perspective that includes a point of view that has been excluded.

Within the queer stance, I shall make use of the concept of performance in order to
account for the potential of subjects to both collude with and resist heteronorms. I explore
narratives because these social artefacts may be understood as performances. Narratives
can be viewed as the most typical and persistent mode of representing, structuring,
organising and signifying aspects of individual and social lived experience. Roland Barthes
(1977, p. 79) describes the centrality and pervasiveness of narrative in social life as
follows:

The narratives of the world are numberless. Narrative is first and foremost a prodigious variety of
genres, themselves distributed among different substances – as though any material were fit to
receive man’s (sic) stories. Able to be carried by articulated language, spoken or written, fixed or
moving images, gestures, and the ordered mixture of all these substances; narrative is present in
myth, legend, fable, tale, novella, epic, history, tragedy, comedy, mime, painting…stained glass
windows, cinema, comics, news item, conversation. [...] All classes, all human groups, have their
narratives [...] Caring nothing for the division between good and bad literature, narrative is
international, transhistorical, transcultural: it is simply there, like life itself.

This lengthy proclamation may appear to be an indiscriminate ontological claim about the
ubiquity of narrative, in that it seems to declare narratives to have a primary importance
and extensive scope within the social world. While I would not want to make such an
extensive ontological claim, narrative theorists have suggested that narrative is a
fundamental feature of lived experience, proposing that it is a feature of all human beings
that they structure and order their lived experience through stories (Lieblich, Tuval-
Mashiach & Zilber, 1998). However, this essentialist conception of narrative can obscure the ways that stories are also socially constructed. It is better to view Barthes (1977) statement as a conception of social life that provides insight into the lived experiences associated with everyday life (Czarniawska-Jeorges, 2004). This kind of experience is central to the current research.

Analysis of the narratives attended to both forces that reflected constraint and those that revealed resistance. Stories may be understood to be constituted as polyvocal constructions generated by the numerous voices that speak in and through individuals. Instead of regarding subjectivity as centred on an essential, fixed self, the narrativist position can be used to suggest that individuals derive meaning from the relationships they create between other humans, (and also non-human) aspects of the world. Gardiner (2000) explains, regarding dialogic interactions that “a person’s consciousness awakens in another’s consciousness” (p. 35). The stories that express and structure a person’s life do not compose a monolithic entity, but are multifaceted and variable, sometimes even contradictory and irrational. Just as a person is a product of a continuous dialogue between aspects of their social milieu, so stories evolve over time and draw on a myriad, changing variety of sources. Narratives are as complex as the individuals that speak them (Josselson, 1997).

The narratives reveal a complex interplay between constraint represented by heteronorms and resistance to these norms. Both normativity and resistance are fleeting accomplishments. Couples describe themselves at moments in heteronormative terms that allow them to receive the benefits of a socially acceptable sexual performance. These instances are interspersed with moments of alteration in which norms are unsettled or undermined, such that the performance of heterosexuality is never monolithic, predictable or conclusive. Rather the meanings of the couples’ narratives slide erratically between collusion and resistance to normative constructions. In this way, the narratives undermine the construction of heterosexuality as natural, unchanging and unquestioned.

Order of chapters
In order to address the concerns and issues I have outlined above, in chapter two I shall first provide an in-depth description of the theoretical stance that shall underlie the research. The research aims at understanding both how couples are limited to unchanging forms of behaviours, and also how couples act differently from one another. Foucault’s (1979) understanding of the docile sexual subject shall provide understanding of how heterosexuality has come to be constructed as a norm. In contrast, the queer theoretical stance shall provide an understanding of how subjects might resist norms. Queer theory values a critical and political interrogation of social constructions in order to draw attention to the manner in which these constructions rely on the underlying, heteronormative organisation of society. Here the concept of performance shall be used to make sense of how subjects are able to resist heteronorms, and I shall return to the understandings of Butler (1993) and Bakhtin (1981; 1994) that I have already briefly mentioned.

Having described the theory that shall inform the research, in chapter three I shall describe the context of the research. That is, I shall outline various aspects of relationships, by referring to other research. This understanding of relationships shall also include a description of heterosexual relationship from three focal points: the idealisation of heterosexuality in marriage; understandings of sexual interactions as fundamental to heteronormativity; constructions of romance. These three focal points provide a description of heterosexuality as it is represented in research. Following this description, in chapter four I shall discuss heterosexuality in the South African context. Here understandings of gender and sexuality are bound up with the oppressive legislation of Apartheid and thus gender and sexual equality became incorporated into the democratic agenda. While this has resulted in increased protection for marginalised groups, women and same-sex couples remain disadvantaged in the South African context. Apartheid legislation also shaped notions of appropriate sexuality: legislation awarded black couples in Witwatersrand townships with homes after they married and also encouraged contraceptives to limit the black population. As such notions of sexuality that may be institutionally sanctioned were bound up with notions of race.

After presenting the theoretical, research and South African contexts within which the research shall be situated, in chapter four I shall outline the methodological concerns that have shaped the current project. In order to access constructions of heterosexuality, a narrative approach was used. This approach is suggested by Bakhtin’s (1981; 1994)
ontology that focuses on performance and inter-subjective communication. Narratives sometimes tend toward unity of meaning and the appearance of wholeness, but in the current research this tendency shall be mitigated by attending to monologic and heteroglossic representations in narratives. The stories couples tell shall be viewed as contingent and conditional constructions that negotiate both collusion and resistance to heteronorms. Photo elicitation interviews and soap opera narratives of heterosexual togetherness were collected in order to explore these competing positions and to reveal multiple expressions of heterosexual togetherness.

The final four chapters I shall discuss the findings of the research. In chapter six I shall first show how the input and influence of other characters, outside of the heterosexual couple, serve to normalise the relationship. Some characters play a witnessing role in the couples’ narratives and they might recommend particular ways of being together that can be interpreted as normative. At the same time, couples are able to position themselves in relation to these other characters, and sometimes to derive alternative meanings for their togetherness. In chapter seven I describe how couples depict their relationships as simultaneously the same as and different to all other relationships. This construction in particular, reveals the manner in which couples must negotiate monologic and heteroglossic expressions of heterosexuality in their narrative, and how these two expressions coexist. Couples make use of everyday connecting rituals to perform their togetherness, and this daily connection functions to normalise togetherness. It also implies that physical proximity, in order to connect daily, are fundamental to togetherness. In chapter eight I shall explore this imperative and interpret the couples’ use of space in their narratives. I suggest that space is an interpretable concept and while it has the effect of fixing togetherness in some senses, it can also be interpreted in alternative ways. Finally, in chapter nine I shall discuss how the spatialisation of heterosexuality implies a separation between public and private, masculine and feminine domains. This separation is visible in narratives of employment within their narratives of togetherness. I suggest that these narratives reveal the gendered-ness of togetherness, and also imply a way for couples to avoid collusion with these norms. Some couples are able to actively interpret and shape their togetherness by “struggling” together and “working” on their relationship.
In the first part of this chapter I shall extend Foucault’s (1976, 1984) theory of bio-power to understand the norm of heterosexuality. Heterosexuality has been viewed as an individual and social imperative largely because it can be associated with what are assumed to be fixed biological possessions of the individual (Hirst, 2004). In this way, the historical and social contingencies of sexuality may be ignored. However, insights derived from Foucauldian (1976, 2003) power dynamics insist on the contextual constructed-ness of notions such as sexuality and thus open the way for political comment on and political alteration of these norms. Firstly, I shall explore the origins of the term “heterosexual” in order to trace the way that it defines the norm above all other forms of sexuality, most notably homosexuality. The binary that is thus created can be understood as a means to simultaneously construct a norm of sexual practice and police the boundaries of that norm. Secondly, I shall describe the reliance of heteronorms on gender dualism. The construction of gender as binary provides the impetus and justification for the norm of heterosexuality. In each case I shall highlight how strategies for consolidating the normativity of heterosexuality rely on particular social and historical understandings. In this way I seek to emphasise that the norm might be seen as contingent and constructed.

In the second part of the chapter, I indicate how resistance to heteronorms may be possible. Here I shall outline a queer position that may be appropriate to interrogating and unsettling constructions of heteronorms. The concept of performance shall be discussed in detail in order to describe the specific framework, within the diffuse field of queer theory that I shall utilise to explore heterosexual relationships. This is an embodied and socially embedded perspective that views narratives as a framework for intelligibility of meaning. Underlying such a perspective is the understanding that language is constitutive of, rather than merely reflective of, lived realities. Language itself, expressed through speech activity, can be understood to exert a normalising influence over the speaker, but also provide a means of resistance. I shall refer to a wide range of theorists and theories to extend this framework, including Butler, Sedgwick, Foucault and Bakhtin.
Normality and heteronormality

In the following section I shall first provide an account of Foucault’s (1984) understandings of subjectivity as constituted through the workings of bio-power. This conception is intended to provide a lens through which to read the social construction of the normal sexual subject. In so far as physical aspects of the human being can be socially interpreted in various ways, understandings of sexuality, gender, subjectivity can be viewed as contingent, historical and social constructions. In order to understand the mechanisms and processes that contribute to the creation of such norms, I shall refer to Foucault’s (1979, 1984, 2003) notions of bio-power. Through these concepts I shall provide a description of heteronormativity, as well as how this norm has been constituted as an imperative.

While sexuality has been explicated through reference to innate biological drives, and immutable corporeal characteristics, it is also possible to view the body as socially constructed. Through the technologies of bio-power, sexuality has increasingly become a strict identity that has been linked to fixed, biological characteristics (Hirst, 2004), and by virtue of such assumptions heterosexuality may be viewed as necessary and compulsory (Jackson, 2006). This essentialist perspective constructs “masculinity” as opposite to “femininity”, and has come to imply the naturalness of hetero-attraction. In so far as the subject’s gender provides the necessary impetus that justifies sexual attraction, sexuality can be constructed as naturally involving opposite sexes (Hirst, 2004). In this way constructions of biological sex and gender function as justification of heteronormativity, and constructions of gender inform the performance and behaviour associated with normal sexuality in a multitude of contexts. Further, heterosexuality and homosexuality are constructed as a mutually constitutive binary (Laqueur, 1997; Jackson, 1995), and the concomitant association between naturalness and heterosexuality implies that other versions of sexual identity are illegitimate and deviant. In this way, other sexualities become obscured and silenced (Richardson, 1996).

Bio-power: constructing the docile subject and society
Although it seems that sexuality has become less censored and hidden since the 1960’s sexual revolution, sexuality and sexual activity can be understood as a historically contingent and changing construction. Prior to the eighteenth century sex appeared to be relatively openly acted out, and during the Victorian era it seemed to be repressed. Foucault (1984) has argued that the concept of “sexuality” has quite recently become a category of importance to individual subjects in industrialised, Judeo-Christian, European and American society. Contemporary understandings of sexual subjectivity view these characteristics as a central and important signifier of personal identity (Cocks, 2006; Gauntlett, 2002), and this attests to shifts in understandings of life, individuals, society and power (Foucault, 1976).

Foucault suggests a way to understand the mechanisms that produce such norms regarding sexuality. The story of a simple-minded French farmhand, ironically named Jouy (which sounds like the French word for enjoyment and also for orgasm) serves to illustrate Foucault’s contribution to understanding the disciplining of sexualities. In 1867 this man purchased some gestures of intimacy from a young girl. Although he had engaged in this kind of transaction before, as had others, this time he was observed and reported by a band of children, resulting in his arrest by gendarmes, indictment by a judge and incarceration in a mental hospital. In this hospital he is clinically examined, his brain span and facial bones measured, he is interminably questioned, and ultimately he is analysed and written about from any and every perspective (Foucault, 2003). The story of Jouy is significant because it is an example of the transformation of an everyday occurrence into an exercise of institutional control over an individual and of the production of knowledge that could be used to define him as normal or abnormal within his social context. It demonstrates a case in which sexuality had become a concern of disciplinary mediation, a subject to be policed, fully measured, named and examined (Foucault, 1984).

The story thus demonstrates a change in power that Foucault traces to the seventeenth century. Around this time there occurred a shift from the absolute power of the monarchy to the development of techniques of government directed at optimising economic and political efficiency (Foucault, 1979). Instead of exercising the sovereign power, literally to take the life of a subject, power begins to be used to care for the lives of citizens (Foucault, 1979; Kirsch, 2000; Smart, 2002). Following this shift, two basic forms through
which power may be exercised over life become apparent: first disciplines and techniques are developed to maintain efficient functioning of the individual body, and second, processes are directed at administration of the population, of the entire social body (Foucault, 2003). These two forms of power over life, or bio-power, may be exercised by disciplinary powers. Such disciplinary institutions first emerged to consolidate a new focus of power directed at protecting the life of subjects, rather than the monarch’s power based in the ability to take a life.

The functioning of bio-power has been implicated in the production of the individual subject (Richardson, 1996). The exercise of disciplinary technologies has required that subjects be viewed as separate subjects, in possession of certain characteristics, rights, abilities and qualities (Foucault, 1984). Disciplinary structures have in part been built around defining, measuring and controlling different aspects of the individual, and disciplines may be conceptualised as frameworks of information, directed at describing and defining optimal functioning of the individual (Foucault, 1979). In chapter seven I shall argue that couples are constituted in a similar manner. The couples’ narratives express their relationships as a product of a unique process of negotiation and compromise that result in a form of togetherness that is distinct from any other. At the same time, they also recognise how there are general features of relationships that may be shared by other couples, and in this way seem to refer to the disciplinary norms that define heterosexual togetherness.

The emergence of disciplinary technologies provided the means to supervise the individual (or the collective, social) body by regulating particular gestures, processes or functions within the body (Smart, 2002; Sullivan, 2003). This supervision is effected through three specific instruments: observation, the normalising gaze and the examination (Foucault, 1979). Observation by a central disciplinary power is important to the functioning of that power. Foucault (1979) proposes that this new configuration for the use of power may be likened to a military camp. Space is arranged in order to facilitate the visibility of subjects by disciplinary powers such that this visibility allows disciplinary experts to know subjects and thereby to alter them (Foucault, 1984). As such spatial arrangements can be central to the exercise of power (Smart, 2002). In chapter eight I shall describe how homes produce and reproduce heteronormative togetherness in the
couples’ narratives. Homes may be associated with a fundamental requirement that is a theme within the narratives, such that partners of a couple must remain in physical proximity to one another in order to perform normative togetherness. A shared house provides a stage on which the couple has continued, everyday access to one another, and is able to monitor and survey the relationship. In this way the partners are able to observe one another and their relationship on a continued, everyday basis.

Ideally this visibility is performed by a single “gaze of authority”, but may also be enacted by a “disciplinary gaze” (Foucault, 1979). This requires a series of observers or observations that constitute a continuous, hierarchical surveillance directed at detecting non-conformity (Foucault, 1984). Should a subject fail to enact a standard of behaviour, activity, physicality, sexuality, then a penalty may be enforced in order to correct an abnormal performance (Kirsch, 2000). Rewards may also be provided to those who do conform, and it is significant that a normalising judgment is required in either case. In an examination the normalising gaze and observation are combined, in order to classify, categorise and judge a subject. In this way an individual is constructed as a case to be documented and detailed and diagnosed (Foucault, 1984).

The couples’ narratives suggested that this kind of monitoring, surveillance and observation could be central to heterosexual togetherness. Family, friends, colleagues may direct the couple toward particular, heteronormative ways of being, and in some instances perform a witnessing role in the narratives. Here the social network might observe, evaluate and advise a couple in ways that I shall discuss this function in chapter six. Couples’ narratives also made use of everyday activities, such as drinking coffee, drinking tea, watching television, eating meals together, to construct the partners as physically and emotionally close and this shall be discussed in-depth in chapter seven.

The mechanism whereby disciplinary power constructs subjectivity may be epitomised in the example of the eighteenth century prison designed by Jeremy Bentham (Foucault, 2003), and I suggest that some couples assume the position of metaphorical panopticon in order to survey their relationship. The panopticon places a guard tower in the centre of a circular system of prison cells, so that the guards in the tower are able to see into the cells, but the prisoners in the cells are unable to see into the tower. In this way the prisoners are unable to tell when they are under surveillance (Foucault, 1984). They must
behave as though they are always watched, and constrain their actions to the patterns allowed by those in power (Gauntlet, 2002; Sullivan, 2003). In this way, the subject comes to govern themselves, and the manner in which they order their subjectivity align with the directives of disciplinary powers (Foucault, 1984).

Thus, individuals regulate their ideas, behaviour and bodies, so that they produce and reproduce discipline-defined notions of what is natural, right and normal. The term “technologies of the self” is used by Foucault to refer to the methods a person employs to ensure that they adhere to social norms (Gauntlett, 2002; Kirsch, 2000), and I shall refer to technologies of relationship to signify the methods a couple might use to normalise their relationship. In this way the individual, and the heterosexual relationship, is constructed through the effects of power. Individuals are not agents of power, but an effect of power is that certain actions, behaviours, gestures, desires are sanctioned and constituted as individuals (Sullivan, 2003) or as couples. While power is not held by one person, it is exercised through a series of relationships that includes the entire social body, and in a sense creates both individuals and social relations (Smart, 2002). While the couples in the current research do construct their relationships with what can be read as normative concerns, they also resist these concerns. The normative aspects of the narratives are not expressed as unchanging, and do not appear as fixed ways of being. Rather, the couples accomplish normative ways of being alongside alternative ways of being, without concluding or finalising their performance.

It is also noteworthy that “technologies of the self” become implemented physically, on the bodies of subjects. In this way, the result of technologies of the self is that they render visible indicators of normality. In this way the gaze of authority is able to sanction or approve a particular individual, because they have made their conformity perceptible. Bio-power has the effect of requiring that the physical bodies and behaviours of subjects conform to particular configurations and manifestations. Normality is constituted not only through speaking, but also through employing behaviours that demonstrate physical, corporeal docility (Foucault, 1984). Acceptance of and assimilation into the reign of bio-power is shown through enacting regimens of physical, linguistic and psychological manifestations of control. In the context of sexuality, it is important to note this aspect of power, since “technologies of the self” must include control over corporeal manifestations.
and behaviours, specifically sexual intercourse (Gauntlett, 2002). In the couples’ narratives a fundamental need to be in physical proximity to a partner is incorporated as a narrative theme. This requirement of togetherness can be understood to imply sexual, embodied togetherness, and to structure the spatial setting of togetherness, most notably in the home and particularly in the bedroom. I shall describe this in-depth in chapter eight.

Importantly, Foucault’s (1976, 1984) conception of bio-power situates control of sexuality at an intersection between concerns for society and the individual. In the couples’ narratives, this intersection is apparent in the witnessing role that characters play in the narratives. Foucault’s (1976) work suggests that the realm of sexuality has been an important context in which power is exercised. The emergence of technologies to care for and supervise the population as a whole, and also each individual subject, can be associated with the development of sexual knowledges within disciplinary structures. Sex was important because it is implicated both in the wellbeing of individuals, and of the population: that is, sexuality is a concern of an individual in so far as it provides various experiences of pleasure and/or pain, and is also a concern of society in so far as it leads to over or under population, transmission of diseases or other shared conditions (Richardson, 1996; Smart, 2002).

Power, according to Foucault’s (2003) understanding, is both diffuse and performed by individuals, so that the separation between society and the individual is not clear-cut. However, sexual practices and preferences are often characterised as personal matters, concerns of the individual and located in a private, usually domestic space (Richardson, 1996; Somerville, 2000). However, they may also be viewed as a social issue, and matters such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic (Weeks, 1986), teenage pregnancy (Weisner-Hanks, 2001), premarital sex (J. Harding, 1998), over population (Smart, 2002) have been viewed at particular times in particular places as matters of social interest, and even moral panic (Kirsch, 2000). In this way, social understandings of sex and sexuality inform the personal enactment of sexuality by individuals, requiring that the individual conform through their spoken and embodied acts to norms that express societies’ best interest (Richardson, 1996). In this way the mind and body of the individual become the concern of society as a
whole, and the wellbeing of society as a whole is the matter and responsibility of every individual.

The limits of sexual normality: homo/hetero boundaries
In the previous section I outline a Foucauldian understanding of bio-power in order to understand how sexuality has been constructed as a monolithic norm. The disciplinary construction of heteronorms conceptualises sexuality as an unchanging and universal way of being, not subject to deviation, variation or alteration (Jackson, 2006, Richardson, 1996). In this section I shall explore how heterosexuality may be understood as contingent by examining how heteronormativity has been constructed in contrast to homosexuality.

As sexuality became fixed as a marker of identity, it also came to mark society. Both understandings of the individual and concepts of social space can be understood to have become defined as heteronormative (Richardson, 1996). The origin of the term “homosexual” is illustrative of the process through which heteronormativity became consolidated as the right and natural expression of sexuality. Experts in the emerging discipline of sexology, at the close of the nineteenth century, were instrumental in creating a proliferation of categories that specifically define aspects of sexuality, most notably those viewed as deviant. Havelock-Ellis and Kraft-Ebbing’s work served to define a typology of sexual perversions, and these typologies linguistically and theoretically multiplied the possibilities through which individuals could engage with sexuality. Initially, these typologies included the category of “invert”, used to label a person who is attracted to the opposite sex. This term Havelock-Ellis preferred to homosexual because it suggested a person who has turned in on themselves, a problem he believed to be the source of same-sex attraction. The term homosexual he understood to be linguistically incorrect, since it literally means a person with one sex: the suffix homo- means “one” and not “same”, and so it did not convey the meaning he required (Laqueur, 1997).

However, the term eventually became the preferred designator: a choice that Laqueur (1997) suggests reflects the perceived opposition of homosexuality to heterosexuality. Even though the term homosexual does not translate from the Greek as a term that means a person attracted to the same sex, it does suggest a relationship to the term heterosexual. This expression makes sense within a binary in which heterosexuality is
positioned as different and preferable to homosexuality (Jackson, 2003; Laqueur, 1997). In this way, homosexuality might be seen to function as a category that defines the boundaries of what is normal. It designates a type of sexuality that is deviant, and specifically the kind of deviance that is opposite to heterosexuality (Cocks, 2006; Jackson, 2003, 2006). This term thus helps to locate and define normality, since heterosexuality only makes sense in opposition to homosexuality.

While these terms are reliant on one another in this way, heterosexuality is advantaged. In understanding the mechanism through which the hierarchy of sexual norms function, Richardson (1996) draws attention to the link between sexuality and citizenship. She notes that sexuality is constructed both as a private affair and as a public matter. Sexual choices and behaviour are sometimes viewed as intimate, personal and confidential, while there is also an emphasis on being open about sexuality by telling sexual stories (Plummer, 1995). These contradicting needs function to exclude homosexuality from both public and private spaces, and have the effect of rendering the homosexual subject invisible and marginal as a member of society (Jackson 2003; Richardson, 1996). In this way, homosexual subjects are prevented from performing their subjectivity in bars, restaurants, shopping malls (and other public places), and also in the homes of families and friends (or other private spaces) (Hubbard, 2001). The physical and corporeal experience of sexuality is thus limited by norms regarding the spatial enactment of identity. Heterosexuality can be viewed as the performance sanctioned both socially and privately, and this limits the domains in which the expression of homosexuality is possible (Richardson, 1996). The couples’ narratives in this research showed pleasure in being allowed access to public and private space together, and this access was assumed without the awareness that it was contingent upon a normal sexual performance. In this way the norm of heterosexuality is enforced through the limitations on the use of physical space, as is characteristic of disciplinary technologies described by Foucault (1984).

One man and one woman: heterosexuality and gender
In the previous section I suggest that heterosexuality has become privileged as an expression of sexuality, above all other forms of sexuality. In this section I shall describe the influence of gendered constructions over sexual norms. The disciplinary gaze has described heterosex to be the only natural, healthy, functional sexuality. Through the functioning of bio-power, heterosexuality has been associated with immutable biological
processes of the human body, and with procreation (Hirst, 2004). The binary of gender roles could be viewed as providing the reason for heterosexual attraction (Chodorow, 1994) because importantly, the notion of heterosexuality requires two different and opposite types of human beings, men and women.

Marriage as it is conceived of in a “Western” sense thus idealises a specific kind of relatedness, involving one man and one woman, who love one another and will have children, thereby rendering as uncivilised and abnormal homosexual, and also some kinds of heterosexual couples and individuals (Borneman, 1999). This is particularly relevant in the South African context where polygamy (Anderson, 2000) and the migrant labour system (Levine, 2004) continue to render many relationships beyond the norm. This shall be dealt with in more depth in chapter four and chapter eight. As such, the heteronormative prescriptions inherent in the ideal practice of marriage, overstep the simple heterosexual-homosexual binary by excluding even heterosexual practises that do not fall into a certain mode: like childless married couples, unmarried or divorced men and women (Borneman, 1999). Although there may be diversity in the practice of heterosexuality (including arranged marriages, polygamy, polyandry, childless partnerships, marriage-less partnerships) all draw on gender dualism. While some forms may be dominant at certain times (e.g. arranged marriage) and in certain “cultures” (e.g. polygamy), and these are fluid and changeable, they all draw fundamentally on the notion of gender difference.

It can be argued that constructions of gender serve to fix the ways that heterosexuality is enacted, since heterosexuality requires opposite gender performances. Butler (1993) refers to the heterosexual matrix to explain how biological sex, gender and sexuality are socially constructed to determine one another: biological sex is understood as immutable and fixed, and determines a subject’s gender, that in turn prescribes who a person might desire sexually, specifically a person of the opposite sex. In this way, both heteronormativity and gender rely on sex characteristics, and particularly a sex/gender binary. In this way the heterosexual matrix is underpinned by conceptions of corporeal experience as immutable, based on notions of biology, genetics, anatomy that understand the body in natural scientific terms (K. Davis, 1997; Hird, 2000), and difference between partners is constructed as fundamental to a normal relationship.
The belief in essential gender difference has definite implications for the heteronormative couple (Hirst, 2004). Within this system of opposition, the male assumes the position of disciplinary power (Haraway, 1997). It is indicative of the process whereby “masculinity” has assumed the gaze of authority that the English word for “man” serve to designate not only a singular, “masculine” person, but also the entire human race (Lindemann, 1997). Male bodies can be understood to retain the potential to occupy a position of neutrality, against which all other categories are measured as other. By performing from this position of monolithic invisibility, male subjectivity assumes the stance of objective, knowledgeable observer of the world (Puwar, 2004; Martin 1997). The word “man” does not refer to just any type of man that is presented linguistically as the generic for all human beings. Women, children, people of other races and cultures, are an unacknowledged part of the category (Lindemann, 1997; Puwar, 2004).

The gaze of authority can in part be understood as a “masculine” gaze, and it is this gaze which observes and evaluates heterosexuality as normal and natural (Haraway, 1997). Heteronormative sexuality may thus be viewed as defined in part by two kinds of difference: it relies on two opposite, different sexes that imply different gender roles (Jackson, 2006), and it depends on the aberrant opposition of other sexualities, most notably homosexuality (Laqueur, 1997). The assumption of gender duality can be seen to be based in an essential, anatomical, biological, hormonal, genetic difference between male humans and female humans, and this appeal to apparently immutable characteristics imparts naturalness, and necessity on heterosexuality (Hirst, 2004). In contrast, the performance of homosexuality may be perceived as unnatural and deviant, and may function as a boundary marker indicating the norm of sexual identity for both men and women (Jackson, 2003). The appeal to the naturalness and immutability of the body invests heterosexuality and “masculinity” with disciplinary sanction (Hirst, 2004).

In this way, an understanding that locates sexuality within biological incontestability defines attraction as primarily between one man and one woman, and this monolithic conception colours many aspects of the heteronormative relationship, including marriage. Interestingly, early anthropological discussions of marriage understood it as a biological function of the relationship between male and female human beings. The behaviour of animals, especially birds was used to demonstrate the naturalness of marriage in
particular and gender roles in general. In this sense, marriage as it has been interpreted by anthropologists is a means of ensuring and legitimating sexual access of a man to a woman so that structuring of the union as between one man and one woman functions primarily to ensure the legitimate paternity of children. In this way it is strongly linked to heteronormative standards (Borneman, 1999).

In so far as marriage can be understood as an institution that functions primarily to protect the paternity of a man's offspring, procreative sex becomes central to the heteronormative relationship. Early sexological conceptions of sexual pathology are illustrative of the ways that constructions of gender are bound up with constructions of this normative sexuality. Havelock Ellis' descriptions of white homosexual women and black women demonstrate similar confusions regarding the subjects' gender. Both are described as excessively "feminine" as well as excessively "masculine". The perceived qualities of promiscuity, or attraction to female others, is inscribed on their bodies, and made visible through male-like, physical attributes: the enlarged clitoris of the lesbian female, inviting comparison with the male penis, and the distended labia of the black women, suggesting the male scrotum. These descriptions of black and lesbian bodies construct both these particular sexual subjectivities as deviant, and the deviance located within a tendency toward "masculine" traits, such as the sexual desire for women experienced by the lesbian and the insatiable sexual appetite ascribed to the black woman. In this case, the assumed norm takes the form of the chaste but potentially childbearing bodies of white women (Sommerville, 1997).

It can be argued that this view constructs women as the boundary markers of the home, and of the nation (McClintock, 1991). Douglas (1966, in Goddard, 1987) suggested that the need to control the social body could be exercised through limitation of sexual interaction for female society members, usually by prohibiting premarital sexual intercourse. Such control of the female body might represent the need to keep the social body pure, and uncorrupted by foreign influences. In such a social order, sanctions against premarital sex may apply only to women because it is women who bear children, and in order to maintain societal purity and to avoid contamination from other groups, the fertility of women must be controlled. Thus it can be argued that the role of a husband and father is to ensure that the women in his household, his wife and daughters remain sexually pure (McClintock, 1991).
In this way, gender roles enforce a particular kind of relationship between husband and wife. In so far as marriage is an idealised form of heterosexual togetherness, it may define heterosexual couples who have not wedded as well (Jackson, 2006). While it is unlikely that these kinds of concerns affect every heteronormative relationship, they highlight the effects of conceptions that locate attraction within gender difference particularly those concerned with work and domesticity. Here women are portrayed as the objects of male sexual desire, or of their alliance building efforts. In this sense women may be conceived of as central to matrimony, but powerless without male relationships (Borneman, 1999). Although it may not be a concern to all couples to maintain domestic or national purity, my purpose is rather to argue that these concerns are implicated within the norms of heterosexual relationships and these concerns shall be expanded on particularly in chapter nine.

**Queer performances**

Considering the normative construction of heterosexuality, it is potentially revealing to interrogate these constructions from a position excluded by the norm. Queer theory is an approach that questions sexual norms with a view to resisting and subverting those norms. This perspective shall be used as an overarching viewpoint from which to interrogate the norms of heterosexual relationships, account for resistance to those norms, and to include the concerns of alternative sexualities and ways of being in relationship. The field has arisen across disciplines and fields of inquiry, and has coalesced around the politics of sexuality (Stirratt, 2005; Thomas, 2000). The following may be seen as characteristic of queer work:

“1) conceptualisations of sexuality which sees sexual power as embodied in different levels of social life, expressed discursively and enforced through boundaries and binary divides; 2) the problematisation of sexual and gender categories, and of identities in general […] ; 3) a rejection of civil rights strategies in favour of a politics of carnival, transgression and parody which leads to deconstruction, decentering, revisionist readings and an anti-assimilationist politics; 4) a willingness to interrogate areas which normally would not be seen as the terrain of sexuality, and to conduct “queer” readings of ostensibly heterosexual and nonsexualised texts (Stein & Plummer, 1994, pp. 181 - 182).”
While these are quite general tenets of the standpoint and it is a stance characterised by diversity of approach, the challenge queer theorists seek to extend to assumptions underlying constructions of gender, sexuality and the physical body, is a unifying feature (Stein & Plummer, 1994). In general, a queer standpoint involves confronting the role of the physical body in determining gender and sexuality, and in interrogating the meaning and contingency of society’s understanding of sexuality and of gender. Importantly, it is also a political posture that attends to the manner in which gender and sexuality imply marginalisation and disempowerment to particular sexual subjectivities (Gauntlett, 2002; Hall, 2006). It is thus a particularly useful approach to exploring heterosexual relationships, because of the fresh perspective it provides in counterpoint to heteronormativity, and because it sees the identities, binaries and boundaries I have described above as contingent and malleable.

Within this broad framework, I shall make use of the notion of performance as a focus for several important issues: it provides an understanding of lived experience that includes the physical body as well as the spoken word (Butler, 1993); it suggests that the performer may act in ways that are not contained within a social script (Butler, 1993; F. Harding, 2002); it emphasises the ways in which performers are related to others in social, spatial and temporal ways (Burkitt, 1999; Grosz, 1995; Hetherington, 1998).

**Performing queer: to be and not to be**

It is an assumption of queer theory that multiple and variant expressions of gender and sexuality are possible, and such variation can be viewed as evidence of the flexibility of these subject positions (Stirratt, 2005). It is necessary then to account for this assumption, by exploring under what conditions a performer may resist the constraints of what Foucault (1984) calls bio-power. It is difficult to see how any individual might be able to stand outside of such constraint, beyond the power of social constructions, in order to subvert a norm and assume a queer performance. Such an understanding of subjectivity, as constituted through performances of socially prescribed scripts, shall be central to understanding the possibility of resistance within the current research.
In understanding the concept of performance, within the context of resistance, the difference between “performatives” and “constatives” is important. These terms were used by Austin (1962, in D. Robinson, 2006, p. 63) to describe “speech acts” and to show how “to say something is to do something”. According to his conception, a constative speech act attempts merely to make use of language to reflect an objective fact about the world. In this way, constative language use is aligned with a positivist world view, in which the subject is limited to immutable facts. A performative speech act however, is able to transform reality, to actively construct it (D. Robinson, 2006). In a sense, performative speech acts are magical and can be linked to understandings of ritual in which particular performances are used to alter the world (F. Harding, 2002; D. Robinson, 2006). It is possible to understand constative speech acts as language use that is normative or normalised in that it refers to a monolithic, immutable world, while performatives that are able to create and construct reality contain the potential for resistance, alteration and innovation from normative language use (D. Robinson, 2006).

Butler (1997) argues for an understanding of gender that views performance as incorporating both constative and performative speech acts as defined by Austin (1962, in D. Robinson, 2006) within a single conception of performance. It is this unified understanding of performance shall be applied in the current research. Butler (1997) views gender as a performance in that bodies of a certain type act in certain socially acceptable, socially constructed ways as well as being able to resist. This understanding can provide insight into the ways that individuals enact and embody other social constructions beyond gender, for example sexuality (Sedgwick, 1995). The socially constructed and sanctioned script must be delivered by each individual subject in character, on cue and at appropriate times that arise time after time. Such performances are repeated. It is these repetitions that insert resistance into performances, either through indifference derived from the recurrence of scripts or through choices in style. In either case performances that go against the grain are viewed as political opposition to the norm (Sedgwick, 1990, 1995; Gauntlett, 2002).

While such a conception of performance is indebted to understandings of theatrical performance, it extends beyond a literal, theatrical stage and into the social world.
However, understanding theatrical performance can deepen understandings of social performances. Referring to theatrical performance, F. Harding (2002) notes that it is arguable to what extent “performers are the performance and the extent to which what they do is the performance (p.3)”, and this may also be said of performance in the sense used by Butler (1993). A theatrical performance necessarily involves the amalgamation of characteristics that is the actor, as well as the amalgamation of characteristics that is the role being played, and the separation between the two not entirely clear (F. Harding, 2002).

The distinction between self (the actor) and other (the role) is particularly problematic in the context of ritual performances (D. Robinson, 2006). Horton (2002) describes how Kalabari rituals involve both the recognition of the performer’s everyday position in the village, as well as recognition that a god or ancestor is present in their physical place. The success of a performance relies on a complex interplay of material, personal and supernatural qualities: the mask that the performer wears, the physical stamina to wear the heavy mask and to dance with it, skill as a dancer, and knowledge of spiritual lore. These factors combine to transform the performer into a deity, although villagers continue to recognise the performer’s style of dance, voice, and personality. These recognitions add depth rather than detract from the performance, because in this way the performer is both a Kalabari villager as well as a god.

The notion of performance thus provides an alternative to the concept of a static and fixed identity (Stein & Plummer, 1994). While the functioning of bio-power locates characteristics such as gender, intelligence, health and sexuality as possessions of the individual (Foucault, 1984), the concept of performance locates these as activities or practices that an individual undertakes (Richardson, 1996), partially because they are made to by certain constraints and possibly partially because it is their choice (Butler, 1993). An identity can be seen as the essential and unalterable qualities of an autonomous and bounded individual, while the performances or practices of an individual are fluid and flexible because they are located within a wider social context (Richardson, 1996; D. Robinson, 2006). By viewing the Kalabari’s performance as influenced by the interrelation of social roles, it is possible to understand how he could sometimes be a god.
and sometimes be a villager. Performance is thus inseparable from the social context (Horton, 2002), and this is reflected in the couples’ narratives featured in this research. The social context seems to play a witnessing role that might have the effect of normalising couples’ performances, but it also enables the couple to position themselves within a social network and possibly to create meaning that resists norms. This suggests that the activity of performance allows a person to actively construct their reality with other social actors, rather than simply restating a biological or social truth about themselves and the world (D. Robinson, 2006).

In this way, performance problematises the notion of the bounded individual who is separated from their social context (Namaste, 1994). The distinction between what is inside of a couple and what is outside of the couple is also not clear, as I shall argue in chapter six. A performer undertakes certain practices within a social milieu, and these respond to, and connect with the life of the person and other social actors (Horton, 2002). The performance does not belong only to the performer, and thus the division between what is inside a performer and what is outside of them is unclear (Namaste, 1994). In this way, the concept of performance serves the queer project of undoing boundaries (Stein & Plummer, 1994), in that it shows that the distinction between performer and other social relationships is not that clear. As such, the performance of homosexuality may not be unconnected to the performance of heterosexuality. I have argued in the previous section that heterosexuality and homosexuality are defined in opposition, thereby creating a mutually constitutive binary (Jackson, 2003). The practises of a heterosexual performance may also include some of the practices homosexual performance and vice versa. In this way, the performances are interconnected and interrelated (Namaste, 1994).

This quality of performance, to contain both what is inside and what is outside, may account for the possibility of everyday actors resisting social scripts. Holzman (1991) speaks of the developmental and revolutionary potential of performance. Development is understood as a process during which social actors assist one another to develop new social, interpersonal, emotional abilities. This understanding of performance owes much to the Vygotskian notion of the Zone of Proximal Development, through which an actor who has mastered a skill may lead a less capable actor to develop some proficiency. In this
way individuals are enabled to perform what they are, and also what they are not (yet). While individual performances are en-scripted by taken-for-granted social constructions, particular actors are also able to create a zone that guides others toward an alternate, resistant, revolutionary performance. Such a conception of performance is useful in understanding how resistance can be seen as development that is innovative of normalised scripts. This notion of development is employed by couples in the current research in constructing relationships as requiring work. Many couples believe that togetherness requires a “struggle”, and in chapter nine I relate this construction of togetherness to couple’s understandings of paid and unpaid work.

Bakhtin (1994) suggests a description of the way in which such development may become possible. He noted the inversion of social hierarchies and the lack of distinction between performer and participant as characteristics of the medieval custom of carnival (Bakhtin, 1994; Lensmire, 1994). Carnival was a time of excesses of physical pleasure - singing, eating, drinking, dancing, sex. These excesses were viewed as a means to purge the body of sinful desires in order to better resist temptation in the course of the year (Gardiner, 2000). Much of the imagery of carnival expresses both the taking in of pleasurable stimulus into and the excretion of waste material from the body, so that the beautiful and the ugly were celebrated during carnival time. Both had the property of bringing the reveller closer to spiritual purity (Bakhtin, 1994). This inversion of values was also enacted in the parade of the king and queen. These monarchs, chosen from the commoners, were subject to mock worship and ribald fealty, and the parade was central to the festivities. Carnival celebrations usually took place in a large space set aside for stalls, stages, and tents (Gardiner, 2000). In this space comedies were performed by actors and pranks were pulled by commoners (Bakhtin, 1981).

All classes of people were enlisted in the merriment of the event, and the everyday lives of townspeople were turned topsy-turvy (Bakhtin, 1994). This disorder was a sanctioned form of chaos, set apart from the town both in place, by locating the carnival in a square or field, and in time, by associating the revelry with religious events, for example lent (Gardiner, 2000). In this way, carnival authorised madness and revelry that subverted the usual social order and the performance was circumscribed by time and place from normal daily
living. Thus chaos and order in society coexisted and contributed to one another (Bakhtin, 1981, 1994). Such liminal placement of the carnival opened up the possibility for subversion and parody of the usual social hierarchy (Gardiner, 2000).

Bakhtin’s (1994) understanding of this specific form of performance suggests that performers who resist, act from a similar liminal positioning, and that this type of performance may need a wider social support for resistance. To a certain extent, couples make use of the carnivalesque to set themselves apart from norms. They accomplish this by reinterpreting space and time, by defining themselves as set-apart from other couples, by laughing, joking and taking pleasure in particular forms of togetherness. The notion of carnival can be read as a metaphoric means for understanding the conditions under which resistance can occur. In the context of everyday performances alteration of the usual social order may take place by invoking the revelry and chaos of carnival to undermine socially constructed norms. The carnivalesque may be understood as a performance that celebrates the overturning of constraint, and may thus challenge the limitation of normative constructions in day-to-day contexts (Gardiner, 2000).

Billig (1991) suggests that everyday philosophers may step out of the usual social order by constructing arguments around their opinions and preferences. Rather than merely accept all representations that structure the social world, individuals rhetorically construct their own opinions regarding specific issues. In constructing such an alternate position, a subject must argue for that position. This requires making decisions regarding ideologically constructed subjects, and interrogating what is ordinarily un-thought-through. It is thus possible to step outside of ideologically constructed patterns, and create a space of resistance, but only through actively engaging with, developing beyond or moving past normative scripts. Thus a dialogue is performed between the constraints of a social construction and a particular subject, such that an inter-subjective position is created (Shotter & Billig, 1998). At least one couple in the current research constructs a dialogic way of being together. I shall argue in chapter six that they accomplish this in some instances, in part because they are from two different countries, and have had to build togetherness from these distinct, geographical and personal positions.
In the above section I have outlined four theoretical understandings of the ways in which performances might incorporate resistance. Butler (1993, 1997) suggests that the quality of repetition implied by social scripts implies that either apathy or choices in style could insert alteration into these scripts. Holzman (1991) views performance as containing the potential for development in so far as a Zone of Proximal Development is created through that performance. Bahktin’s (1981, 1994) understanding of carnival suggests that performances that make use of separation in time and space can become resistive. Billig (1991) suggests that everyday philosophical speech acts employ argumentation to distance a speaker from normative monologues.

**Inter-subjective performance**

It can be argued that this kind of resistance is also made possible by characteristics of words themselves. Such an understanding can be conceived of as a dialogic conception of meaning, in which “a word is a bridge” between two people (Shotter & Billig, 1998, p. 13). This is not an abstract event, but a living, social process in which meaning is created actively by people’s utterances. The term “utterance” is one used by Bakhtin (1994) to denote the importance of active, doing elements of meaning derived from words (Shotter & Billig, 1998). According to Bakhtin (1994), the activity inherent in an utterance is derived not only from the language activity of a conversation, but also because every word contains contradictory, conflicting forces of meaning. Any single word or entire utterance is held both by centripetal forces – that drive toward unity, wholeness and coherence – and centrifugal forces – that seek multiplicity, incongruence, and dispute. As such, language and conversation is rife with the tension between monoglossia and heteroglossia, and this tension marks interaction through language activity with alternating tendencies toward multiplicity and unity, with a resulting complexity and density. For example, Hird (2000) describes the narratives that transsexuals tell of the feeling that they should have the body of the opposite sex, as reliant on conceptions of biological sex. Such a narrative must navigate monologues that describe sex and the body as material and unchanging as well as the heteroglossia of their feelings of corporeal disjunction. In this way the narratives both undermine and support the constructions of sex as immutable, and dispute and maintain the centrality of lived experience (Hester, 2004).
Because every word contains the tension between monoglossia and heteroglossia, and because its meaning is never complete, every word spoken as an utterance simultaneously takes on the qualities of the speaker as well as responses that speaker anticipates from the addressee (Bakhtin, 1994). This is the property of addressivity, and this property implies a kind of internal dialogue that a speaker enacts, even as words are being uttered. This internal dialogue, that assesses the words given out in a language interaction, confers a kind of answerability on any utterance (Bakhtin, 1981). The manner in which an utterance is appraised in the mind of the speaker allows that speaker to account for their choice of words (Bakhtin, 1994; Shotter & Billig, 1998). In this way, narrators have the option of speaking in their own voices, although sometimes speakers take on the voice of an overarching ideological structure, such as science or religion or psychology (Shotter & Billig, 1998). While these positions are also marked by the competing forces of monologues and heteroglossia, they are well-constructed, often-argued positions that are likely to have been able to eliminate some aspects of heteroglossia that may have undermined a completed monologue.

While Bakhtin’s conception of oppositional forces borrows extensively from physics and thus risks becoming excessively rigid and classificatory (Gardiner, 2000), these forces might also suggest that dialogic constructions are never completed, final or fixed (Bakhtin, 1981). The inherent forces of all words could imply that all language activity contains the potential to enact a monologic stance (in which the meaning of an utterance is decided and foreclosed) or to be heteroglossic (in which meaning is multiple, negotiable and unfinished), but that meaning slides somewhere between these poles. Bakhtin (1994) describes a speaker’s ideological understanding as in constant flux, that shifts sometimes unpredictably between the extremes of centripetal and centrifugal forces. In this way, an utterance is the performance of a particular moment in the constant dialogue between centralised, official monologues and decentralised, personal opinions influenced by heteroglossia. “The word in language is half someone else’s” (Bakhtin, 1994, p. 77), and can only become the speaker’s possession if that speaker appropriates it to their own meaning. Utterances therefore necessarily rely on social relationships, and socially constructed norms and concepts. In the narratives of transsexuals, it is thus understandable that notions of material sex must be included despite the tension they create with the feelings the transsexual experiences (Hird, 2000). In this way a complex
and varied combination and amalgamation of ideological stances is achieved, and individuals sometimes speak with the voice of official ideologies (Bahktin, 1981).

This inter-subjective creation of meaning through utterances can be connected to a narrative understanding of social relationships. Utterances can be understood to coalesce around constructed narratives that provide a framework of intelligibility that make attribution of meaning to experience possible (Crossley, 2000). Narratives from this perspective are not merely mental representations, but relational and social means of creating personal meaning. Personal meaning is necessarily embedded within broader social stories and these stories not only express but also structure a person’s lived experience. Fay (1996) describes the position:

> We tell stories in acting and we continue to tell stories afterwards about the actions we have preformed. To coin new words to express this complex view, we might say that our lives are enstoried and our stories are enimived (p. 197).

Importantly, every narrative is the product of a particular temporal, spatial and social context. A narrative is performed for a particular audience with this audience in mind, and can be understood as a relational co-construction between at least two people (Josselson, 1997). Because narratives are constructed within these relational contexts of meaning, this research will view narratives as contextual performances or co-constructions, rather than static, coherent, abstractions (Newman, 2000). These issues will be attended to in greater depth in the methodology chapter to follow.

In this way, narratives are subject to numerous, indefinable and ever changing influences, including the kind of repetition that Butler (1993) describes as an aspect of gender performance. This notion of repetition implies that members of a society have more than one opportunity to deliver their performance, and that they might suit their presentation to the context or moment in which they produce it. A subject experiences their identity only through socially written scripts, but through this repetition there are spaces that open up for the actor to improvise and improve on or alter their enactment (D. Robinson, 2006). Slowly and inexorably, the performer is drawn toward slight alterations in intonation, cadence, pitch, gesture. These disjunctions in performance are what Butler (1997) refers to as matters of style, and these stylistic innovations constitute a subtle form of resistance.
The queer body: relational performance

It is important to note that although Bakhtin’s (1994) insights into dialogue refer to language, it also relates to the body that speaks the word. While immaterial words may be described as always potentially revolutionary or subversive, and it is important to hear these words as they are spoken by an embodied performer to another embodied performer. The corporeal and relational context of language activity is central to a performance (Burkitt, 1999). Grosz (1994) argues that the property that bodies possess, of being able to touch one another, to physically reach one another, fundamentally redefines those bodies’ relationships to one another. In this way the corporeal nature of performance is a defining feature of the experience. To be an embodied subject is to inhabit the sensuousness of bodily experience, but also to sense through and with the web of ideology (K. Davis, 1997).

Attention to embodiment includes not only the lived experience of the body, but also the space in which the body exists. Certain performances are limited to or derive meaning from certain spaces (Hetherington, 1998). Hubbard (2001) argues that cities are constructed so as to render homosexual subjects invisible, thereby denying them citizenship and legitimacy. The control of space, land, place can provide means of physically limiting the kinds of performances that can be enacted (Hetherington, 1998). A similar separation in time and space enable the revelry of carnival (Bakhtin, 1984; Holloway & Kneale, 2000). It is not only space, but artefacts within the space that contribute to limiting or extending meaning making. Objects and non-human others may extend or further limit the performance of an actor. In this way, embodied actors interact with landscapes, artefacts, as well as other human and non-human actors, and performance is in part defined by the potential and constraint contained within such relationships. To understand a performance, these relationships may have to be interrogated and accounted for (Burkitt, 1999; Holloway & Kneale, 2000).

Similarly, the body may not represent an end point that need not be interrogated. While it provides certain physical and material limitations, it is also subject to constraint and construction (Burkitt, 1999). From a queer standpoint, physical, biological sex need not be
understood to determine a stable gender that would in turn determine sexual desire. Part of the queer project of elaborating on the contingency of sexuality and gender performances, involves undermining the formative role of the body (Sedgwick, 1995; Thomas, 2000). Usually, even when gender is understood as a fluid and multiple performance, this performance may be constructed as based on a genetic, biological, hormonal foundation that cannot be questioned (Hester, 2004). When looked at closely the very physical, apparently natural features of human beings become less clear: some individuals are born with the genitalia of both sexes (C.D. Williams, 2003); some people believe that their physical body does not match their experience of their gender (Hester, 2004); testosterone is found in the blood of women and oestrogen in the blood of men (J. Harding, 1998). These multiple manifestations of the body become silenced, and those bodies that do fall neatly into an XX or XY category may be disregarded by being defined as aberrations or syndromes (Hester, 2004). In so far as such variations are designated as abnormal and surgery, hormone replacement, psychotherapy are believed to be means to fix these problems, the myriad expressions of corporeal existence are erased (Hird, 2000).

The politics of relational performance
In the previous sections I have presented an understanding of performance as a means to understand the social world. Here performance is viewed as embodied and socially embedded, such that this is a relational conception of society and the individual. Any performance is shaped by the relationship that a performer has with other actors, with the space in which the performance takes place and by the artefacts the actors use in the performance. This is an active negotiation between the constraints of bio-power and the argumentative constructions of the individual, such that each performance is located within a specific socio-economic, spatio-temporal context.

Within the context of the current research, performing from a queer position requires that constructions of sexuality as natural and given should be challenged. The body of a subject may perform a particular script and may perform sexual desire, but these performances shall not be read as unchangeably decided or limited (Stirratt, 2005). Instead queer activity challenges normative constructions, especially heterosexuality. Thomas (2000) suggests that heterosexuality could or should be made queer by
expanding the practises and prescriptions included in the construction of heterosexuality. This would be a political manoeuvre that would require that heterosexual subjects negotiate their own performances to include the radical multiplicity of a queer perspective. Such a move is in some ways problematic, and rather than unsettle and reform heteronormativity, it may instead normalise queer-ness. This danger notwithstanding, Richardson (1996) states that heterosexuality is often presented as a monolithic and static entity, but in practise it is a diverse position. Thomas’ (2000, p. 24) proposal that heterosexuality be “queered” could thus be a matter of drawing attention to the multiplicity of expression that already exists, and this central project shall shape the current research.

By reading homosexuality and heterosexuality as aspects of sexual subjectivity that have been constructed by opposing forces, it is possible to view the terms as interrelated, interdependent and in dialogue. While there are no intrinsic value judgements or power conferred by the opposing positions of monologue and heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1994), Richardson (1996) proposes that there are certain effects of a heteronormative performance. These effects may be linked to the process of normalisation, which has defined heterosexuality as a standard for sexual subjectivity (Foucault, 1984). In this case it is useful to assume a queer stance to this investigation of heterosexuality, since it provides a view of sexual subjectivity from a position not normatively assumed (Gauntlett, 2002), but closely associated with and thoroughly implicated in the definition of heterosexuality. By assuming a queer stance, the research shall employ an inherently political attitude to the study of heterosexual relationships, in that the queer theoretical position could possibly unsettle presentations of heterosexuality (K.H. Robinson, 2005).

In the current research I adopt the particularly precarious position of married, heterosexual woman, undertaking research from a queer stance. This position is potentially not only contradictory, but also undermining of an already-marginalised, queer subject position and is thus especially problematic. I adopt this position because I want to include the concerns of non-normative sexual subjectivities within a critique of heterosexuality. However, I am in danger of including the concerns of a heterosexual under the guise of a non-normative stance (Richardson, 1996; Thomas, 2000). Since I have gone so far as to choose to structure my relationship with my partner according to the idealised form of heterosexual togetherness that is matrimony, it is possible that I may take the assumptions that underlie
and surround the heterosexual subject position for granted, and may be unable to interrogate and critique the norm.

One of the aims of the research is to undermine the appearance of unity and fixedness that is characteristic of heteronormativity and to draw attention to the contingencies, alterations and deviations that are part of the performance of heterosexuality (Richardson, 1996; Jackson, 2006). As such, I am attempting to claim my own potential as a heterosexual woman to perform differently from the norm. With this claim I want to make apparent the ways that my participants may potentially be queered. It seems even more dangerous and irresponsible to undertake this research without the benefit of a queer lens, since such research would serve only to entrench the assumption of heterosexuality even further. Further methodological considerations regarding the ethics of the current research shall be dealt with in chapter five.

The politics and interrogation of corporeal experience shall also be extended to gender. I have argued that heteronorms rely on the distinction between male and female bodies, and the research shall be directed at exploring the relationships between sex categories. Although many societies could be described as male dominated (Pollert, 1996), and my presentation of normal gender performances supports this to some extent, it is not all men that dominate all the time. Rather, the relational performance between actors may involve domination of a gendered nature. Connell (2001) argues that it is one very specific kind of “masculinity”, the performance of hegemonic masculinity that enacts authority and control, bound by cultural and social understandings of what it is to be a man. Such a notion constructively demonstrates the specificity of masculine performances of domination. It is healthy, white, heterosexual, middle class, adult men who are entrepreneurial who are most connected to a masculinity of power, and this limited category does restrict the ways that men can relate to themselves, to other men and to women (Kimmel, 1993). This concept of hegemonic masculinity is also useful in that it draws attention to the multiplicity of the masculine subject, and increased scholarship into masculinity has sought to explore this diversity in masculine performances (Connell, 2001).
While investigation of the relational performance and diversity of “masculine” experience can contribute to understandings of gender, it is no less true that “femininity” is multiple in performance. Black feminists have emphasised the danger of viewing the experience of domination as unified through the quality of femininity alone (hooks, 1997; Lorde, 1997), and argue that femininity is a category that is influenced by categories of race, age, class, sexuality (Hird, 2000). Although there are many kinds of masculinities, these performances all have a certain degree of access to the power contained in a hegemonic performance. It is important to retain an understanding of gender that accounts for this access to power, and some feminists argue that it is patriarchy that structures society such that “masculinity” is rewarded with supremacy (Bryson, 1999). While patriarchy may provide a useful description of social structures, it becomes reductionist and circular if used to provide an explanation of these structures (Pollert, 1996).

Rather than view power as located within a specific gender or gender performance, it is possible to view the pervasive division of all humans into differently valued gender categories as the underlying structure that enables patriarchal or masculinist power. This ever-present dualism I have argued underpins the social constructions of heterosexual relationships, and seems deeply embedded in social understandings of the world (Jackson, 2006, Hester, 2004). The necessity of successful ascription to one of two gender categories has profound implications for every individual, and should neither category apply effectively, it is likely that interventions will be made to provide an obvious gender ascription. This has lead Hester (2004, p. 222) to argue that there is “an ethical imperative to have a sex”. While it is possible to challenge male domination by unsettling the hierarchy that removes power from feminine subjects, this argument leaves intact the basis of such an unequal distribution of power, the gender binary, the imperative to have a sex (Lorber, 2000). It is thus the social construction of sex and of gender itself that needs to be confronted as a limiting, regulating and normalising force.

Lorber (2000) proposes that a degendering movement is required, and Hester (2004) advocates a postgender position. While degendering would seek to remove gender categories from social interactions and postgendering would seek to move past such categories, both require progress beyond the divisive and value-laden categories of “masculine” and “feminine”. This progression would do justice to the multiplicity of gender as well as sex, and should not ignore the exercise of power that constrains subjective sex
and/or gender positions. Instead it should attempt to reconcile the un-dimorphic manifestation of physical sex, as well as the un-binary potential of gender (Hester, 2004). Within the current research exploring heterosexual relationships, these insights into constructions of gender shall require a focus on the contextual and relational specificities between partners. This focus, on the relationship, could help to reveal the contingency of assumptions that underlie constructions of gendered, physical, emotional togetherness.

Conclusion

While this chapter has been quite broad and abstract in scope, the following two chapters shall be directed at grounding the research within the specificities of the South African context. In this chapter I have presented a particular understanding of processes that go towards the construction of sexuality. Foucault’s (1979) understandings of the instruments and effects of power suggest that it is disciplinary structures and practices that delimit norms. These norms are constructed through the assumptions of individual and social bodies (Smart, 2002). In this way the knowledges derived from disciplines shape and constrain society and the individual. While this conception suggests that power structures every aspect of lived existence, I also argue that each individual is able to resist normalisation. Technologies of the self may employ certain methods to coerce an individual toward a behavioural, psychological, social or physical norm (Gauntlett, 2002), but stylistic innovations in performance and decisions regarding the delivery of an utterance can open the space for an individual to enact a resistant subjectivity (Butler, 1993).

Foucault’s (1984) accounts of power can be used as a lens to understand normalisation, and I have extended this understanding by locating it within a queer theoretical framework. This framework provides an account of the roles that the body and space could play in normalisation and in resistance. Central to the queer position is the potential to enact subverted forms of norms, especially sexual norms. Butler’s (1993) understanding of performance is central to understanding how social actors repeat and alter social scripts, thereby performing resistance. This conception of performance is central to the framework
I shall utilise to structure the research. It is an embodied, dialogic, relational and socially
eMBEDDING stance that directs the research toward understanding the relationship between
oppositional binary positions (such as male/female and homosexual/heterosexual), to
attending to the role of the physical body and material space, to exploring non-normative
and politically active positionings.

In the following chapters I shall apply this framework first to literature regarding
heteronormativity, attending especially its to opposition homosexuality and to the ways
that gender binaries influence the performance. Secondly, I shall apply the stance to the
South African context by describing what the country’s unequal and violent political past
brings to bear within heterosexual relationship. Thirdly, I shall outline the ways that the
stance has influenced the methodological decisions regarding the research procedures,
and here I shall go into depth regarding the narrativist approach as it extends the dialogic
and relational framework.
In the previous chapter I described a theoretical position from which heterosexuality could be viewed as a normative prescription that structures everyday social performances but which can be performed in resistive ways. It is now necessary to locate this norm in specific instances between men and women through a review of literature dealing with heterosexuality. This review shall outline how it is that men and women act both for and against normative dictates by presenting experiences that tell of resistance alongside those that define the norm. My theoretical stance has suggested that although heteronormativity tends toward a monologue, there are instances of heteroglossia in performances of the norm. While centrifugal forces pull performances of sexuality and gender toward conformity, through the repetition of these performances and because of the inherent influence of centripetal forces (Bakhtin, 1994), the norm is sometimes diffused. In everyday life men and women perform in ways that more or less conform to, or subvert the norm, and assume a variety of positions and performances depending on their context (Gardiner, 2000).

Initially literature that describes heteronormativity, as it is different from homosexuality and as it relies on gender difference, shall be presented. The review will then make use of three focal points that unify heteronormativity to further discuss the norm. Firstly, the discussion shall detail marriage as an indicator of the economic, social and relationship dynamics at play in male and female togetherness. Secondly, it shall define sex as fixed by notions of penetration and the ways that this implies domination as a central dynamic of sexual intercourse. Thirdly, the discussion shall cover literature concerning love, usually in the context of explorations of sexual behaviour or marriage, and I shall draw certain conclusions regarding the social construction of love from these contexts.

Heteronormativity as difference
Foucault's (1984) understanding of the functions and effects of power suggests that subjectivity is structured by disciplinary authorities’ normalising technologies. While subjectivity is shaped by this constraint, the activity of performance as well as the activity of language, suggests that subjects may be able to perform with, and also against normative scripts. This understanding is significant to accounting for the conforming and resisting sexual subject as I shall present them in the analysis chapters. In the following section I shall discuss literature that describes the monologue of heterosexuality as it is constituted through opposition to the heteroglossia of homosexuality. Within the context of sexual identity, these opposing centripetal and centrifugal forces constitute heterosexuality and homosexuality as a mutually constructive binary, and the discussion of homosexuality is included in part to incorporate understandings of the performance of sexuality that are not always embraced and described. Research suggests that homosexual subjects are required to justify and explain their sexuality, while heterosexuality is assumed and requires no explanation. It is also assumed that partners can and will be assigned opposite gender roles. I shall discuss research that describes gender difference as the rationale for the assumption of heterosexuality. Literature that describes these two forms of difference, heterosexuality from homosexuality and between partners, shall be explored in the following sections.

**Difference as exclusion**

The literature I shall present in the following section suggests that heteronorms exclude various and diverse performances of sexuality, and thus sexual subjectivity can be seen to coalesce around a fixed point of meaning. This monologue is fixed in opposition to the diversity and difference of homosexuality. In this section I shall attempt to formulate an understanding of constructions of homosexuality as a category that functions as a boundary-marker for the heterosexual norm (Cocks, 2006). This is a norm that remains an unspoken subtext in the narratives I shall present in the analysis chapters. While homosexuality might also in some instances be subject to particular normative constraints, the present discussion shall focus on explanatory narratives that situate homosexuality as different and opposite to heterosexuality. Such explanatory narratives may be employed in order to construct acceptability, such that homosexuality might assume a degree of normality in a predominantly heterosexual context. However, this language activity, the act of engaging in explanatory description, functions to place the homosexual speaker in a position of powerlessness in which their position must be justified (Whisman, 1996). These
kinds of justificatory narratives also appear in the narratives of heterosexual togetherness, although they are used to explain the kinds of behaviour not sanctioned by normative constructions.

According to Whisman's (1996) exploration of “coming out” narratives among American men and women, three types of narrative may be used to describe same-sex sexual orientation: a “determined”, “chosen” or “mixed” narrative. Some believe that they always knew that they were different, and that they could not have escaped this influence. Determined narratives, that make use of biological or innate qualities to justify sexuality, function to abdicate responsibility for that quality. If homosexuality is an essential and/or genetic characteristic, it need not be defended since it is not a choice for which a person can be held accountable. This kind of language activity thus reproduces the belief that sexuality is natural, determined by biological sex, and that it is a matter that lies beyond the control of any individual. This strategy can be read as an attempt to locate homosexuality within normative understandings of the body, of gender and of sexuality, but without acknowledging the political implications of normative structures (Jackson, 2003). The basic assumption, that bodies reliably confer sexuality (Butler, 1993), remains unspoken and unquestioned.

This kind of speaking through a monologic concept of sexuality may be reflected in scientific attempts to locate homosexuality in the body: Rice (2006) locates same-sex attraction in genetic structures, Habr-Alencar, Dias, Teodorov and Bernardi (2006) in hormonal origins, McConaghy, Hadvi-Pavlovic, Stevens, Manicavasagar, Buhrich and Vollmer-Conna (2006) in fraternal birth order. Le Vay’s (1991) research has focused on brain structure, particularly the hypothalamus. This structure has been shown to be in part responsible for heterosexual behaviour, and Le Vay's (1991) research showed that hypothalamus structures are larger in individuals who are attracted to male others, regardless of that individual’s sex. In other research that situated homosexuality in the body, T.T. Williams, Pepitone, Christenson, Cooke, Huberman, Breedlove, Breedlove, Jordan and Breedlove (2000) examined the relationship between sexuality and finger length ratio. Their work suggested that women usually have a longer ratio between the second and fourth finger on the right hand. Homosexual men were also shown to have on average longer finger length ratios than straight men, while lesbian women were found to have shorter finger length ratios on average than heterosexual women.
Despite the political intention of some of this research, to liberate homosexuality from mere personal preference and associated claims of perversion, such research does not necessarily transcend a heterosexist explanatory framework (Hegarty, 2004; Spanier, 2005). In Le Vay’s study the men’s brains were assumed to be heterosexual in the absence of evidence that they had self identified as homosexual during their lives. Since gay men do not always publicly self identify as homosexual, this is not an unproblematic assumption. By not questioning this hypothesis Le Vay’s study is shown to be not only methodologically flawed but may be understood as implicated in the replication of heteronormative assumptions (Spanier, 2005). Often research that seeks to identify the physical origins of same-sex attraction takes the form of a comparison to heterosexual bodies. Here it is significant that it is not these bodies that the research seeks to explain (Spaulding, 1993). There is thus an unseen, uneven explanatory focus on understanding homosexuality. Difference, in homosexual men’s brains, in finger length ratios, or other physical characteristics, is measured against and compared to a norm that is ubiquitously heterosexual and frequently male (Hegarty, 2004; Hegarty & Pratto, 2004). While such accounts rely on biologically determined structures and processes to provide a neutral justification for the acceptability of homosexuality, this does not necessarily provide these grounds. Rather the act of comparing homosexual physicality to heterosexual physicality may invite interpretations of homosexual structures as a result of dysfunction or disease (Hegarty & Pratto, 2004; Spanier, 2005).

In this way, such research presents heterosexuality as beyond the need for explanation, and as a taken-for-granted assumption (Spaulding, 1993). This demonstrates the organising principle of heteronormativity, in that alternate ways of being are required to construct explanatory frameworks in order to account for their existence (Jackson, 2003; Kritzinger & Wilkinson, 1995). It is seldom the case that heterosexual men and women are asked to justify their sexuality, and it is thus possible that they perform a monologue, a normative performance. Accounts that rely on notions of innate-ness seem to function to abdicate responsibility for a performance of sexuality and attempt to claim a neutral position that is equal to heterosexuality (Hegarty & Pratto, 2004; Whisman, 1996).

In contrast to the narrative that positions heterosexuality as a non-choice, accounts that included Whisman’s (1996) “chosen” narratives seemed to have an inherently political
Rather than construct their sexuality as a matter fixed by characteristics beyond their control, these individuals self-consciously argued that their choice should be understood as equally valid to the choice to be heterosexual (Biddy, 1994). Kritzinger and Wilkinson (1995) have explored the identity construction of women who have chosen lesbianism following a long period of identification as heterosexual. They demonstrate that a lesbian identity is actively constructed and argue that only when the trait of homosexuality is removed from immutable characteristics of the essential self or the physical body can a political function be served (Biddy, 1994; Kasindorf, 1993). For some women, the choice to be lesbian marked the choice to remove themselves from gender inequality they understood as inherent in heterosexual relationships. As such, the choice to begin the transition to a lesbian identity was accompanied with the feeling of release from the oppression they had experienced with male partners, and the sense that a new world of opportunities was opening to them (Wilkinson & Kritzinger, 1992).

These women can be understood to have sought an alternate performance that goes against normal enactments of gender and sexuality (Biddy, 1994). This kind of consciously chosen, alternative performance can be interpreted as serving a queer agenda. In so far as these women are attempting to revolutionise their own performances of gender and sexuality they are undermining monologic social scripts that write them as owning a static sexuality, usually assumed to be heterosexual (Wilkinson & Kritzinger, 1992). Homosexuality is not the only form of sexual subjectivity that unsettles heterosexuality. Orgies, fetishism, sadomasochism can be interpreted in various ways as opposed to normative ways of being. However, homosexuality can be read as a performance that is constructed as fundamentally different and opposed to heterosexuality (Jackson, 2006; Laqueur, 1997), and thus epitomises difference from the norm. It therefore could offer, in some case, the most obvious resistant alternative to women (or men) who find themselves constrained by expressions of heterosexuality. While homosexuality represents a position that evades the centripetal forces that fix heterosexuality as a norm, it is possible that homosexuality may also be performed in a monologic manner. Bakhtin (1994) contends that all utterances are structured by both monologic and heteroglossic tendencies and performances of homosexuality are not excluded from these forces. Particularly as the performance becomes increasingly visible through media, legal, spatial, social representations, it is likely that the performance might become increasingly unified and fixed.
Difference as rationale

In Whisman’s (1996) study it is notable that only women made use of the political function of narratives of choice. Men claimed idiosyncratic reasons based on personal, particular life experiences, without noting any oppression or constraint that the choice of homosexuality assisted them in avoiding. This may be because, in a patriarchal society, a “masculine” gender performance enables a monologue of power over their “feminine” partners, but a “feminine” performance does not (Puwar, 2004; Spaulding, 1993). As such it is unlikely that a man would seek relationships with other men as a means of avoiding gender-conferred power in their partners (Whisman, 1996). The following section shall explore literature on gender in order to come to an understanding of the relationship between heteronormativity and gender constructions. Jackson (2006) has argued that the normative status of both gender and heterosexism are organising principles that structure the social world. Here the ways that gender is understood as biologically-based becomes an explanatory monologue to describe the link between sex and gender, although it is possible that some performances of sexuality and gender subtly undermine this clear association (Solis, 2007).

To return to research that relies on immutable physical characteristics, T.T. William’s et al. (2000) research shows that the finger length ratios of heterosexual men and homosexual women tend to be similarly shorter than heterosexual women. This implies a comparison between lesbian women and straight men (Hegarty, 2004). Such research can be read as reproducing the notion of the heterosexual matrix described by Butler (1993). In this matrix, the body is understood to unproblematically determine a gender performance, and gender is understood to confer sexual desire for the opposite sex. Thus, sexuality can be understood as a role influenced by gender, while gender is strongly linked to biological sex. In the case of a person who is attracted to female partners this person should, according to the matrix, be a “masculine”-type person. An interpretation of a lesbian woman’s physical characteristics as tending toward male norms is understandable in terms of this matrix (Hegarty, 2004).
The notion that biological sex plays a determining role over gender is pervasive (Hester, 2004; Hird, 2000). For example, testosterone has been linked to aggression. Since this hormone is an androgen, more prevalent in male bodies than in female bodies, it is seen as a male hormone. It is also linked to aggression, and therefore corresponds to beliefs that describe men as more physical, powerful and forceful than women. The muscular and larger bodies of men in general also support this view (R. Stainton Rogers & W. Stainton Rogers, 2001). However, research into the effects of hormones such as testosterone, is inconclusive. Research points toward culture as a factor in the ways that hormones affect individuals. Dabbs and his colleagues (1998, in R. Stainton Rogers & W. Stainton Rogers, 2001) have suggested that levels of testosterone differ in men of various professions. They demonstrated that football players and actors have on average higher levels of the hormone than priests. This is interpreted as an effect of context working on the body, and this mitigates the belief that hormones lead directly to behaviour. However, it is difficult to assess the direction of this relationship, since the evidence could also suggest that football players and priests may be biologically predisposed by the androgen levels their bodies produce, to take up their professions.

The first interpretation undermines the association between biological characteristics and gender because it suggests that there are influences other than the body that control gender performances. The second could extend conceptions of physical characteristics such that the effects of the body extend into and structure the social world. As such biological characteristics may be mitigated by social contexts and may not be fixed and binding. Rather, these characteristics manifest differently in different social contexts and at different historical moments (J. Harding, 1998). Although sex is most often understood to be a simple binary of male and female, Margaret Mead (1978, in R. Stainton Rogers & W. Stainton Rogers, 2001) has shown that there is diversity in the ways that cultures interpret sex difference. Mead has reported that both men and women of the Arapesh behave in what a Western anthropologist would define as a “feminine” manner, and that both men and women of the Mundugumor behave in a “masculine” way. In the Tchambuli however, women behave in a masculine manner and men in a “feminine” manner. As such it is suggested that gender roles are not innate to human bodies, but rather to a set of learned customs, rituals and rules.
A heteroglossia of difference

Although I present heteronormativity and "masculinity" as a monologue, it cannot be denied that they are also subject to the influence of heteroglossia. In the following chapter, I discuss the historical, social and political influences that have shaped masculinities and sexualities in South Africa. Breckenridge (1998), Glaser (1998), Mooney (1998) and Swart (1998) locate specific versions of masculinity in South Africa within specific social and political movements. I also relate the story of Linda Ncgobo as an illustration of the ways that notions of sexual identity changed with the fall of Apartheid (Donham, 2005; Posel, 2000). It can thus be seen that norms associated with gender and sexuality are not static and fixed, but change over time, and in different social and cultural contexts. In some cases, practices that have been viewed as non-normative may be incorporated into normative practices. For example, Puar (2006) suggests that homosexual subjects in the United States assist in perpetuating normative constructions of national identity. Homosexual subjects that have become integrated and accepted into American society prove the overarching tolerance that is assumed to be part of American society. This is a counterpoint that serves to fix America society as intrinsically tolerant, accepting and liberal in comparison to intolerant, conservative, “terrorist” nations.

In this way it is possible to argue that there are multiple masculinities (Connell, 2001; Kimmel, 1993; Torrien & Durrheim, 2001, Walker, 2005), as it is argued there are multiple femininities (Gergen, M., 1992; hooks, 1997; Piontek, 2002) and sexualities (Epprecht, 1998; Hubbard, 2001) influenced by race, class, ethnicity (Hird, 2000). Although I suggest that homosexuality and “femininity” are pulled away from monologues of heterosexuality and “masculinity” respectively, this is not to deny that these performances are also subject to centrifugal forces that pull towards the fixed point of a monologue. Bakhtin's (1994) dialogic ontology contends that all utterances are subject to both centripetal and centrifugal forces, and so homosexuality and heterosexuality, femininity and masculinity, contain both monologic and heteroglossic tendencies. However, I have argued that within the category of sexuality the norm of heterosexuality in part relies on the opposition of non-normative homosexuality. Homosexuality could be understood as constructed under heteroglossic influences while heterosexuality could be understood as inclined to monologic strength, and that within the category of sex/gender femininity may be opposed to a monologue of masculinity.
I draw attention to the fixed point in masculinity and in heterosexuality so as to emphasise the ways in which these constructs can be described as oppressive, and I view these monologues as ultimately performed contextually, within specific relationships with social, spatial and temporal contingencies structured according to the concerns of answerability and addressivity (Bakhtin, 1994). In the following sections I shall discuss literature that portrays differences between the performances men and women undertake in marriage, sex and romance. Central to these descriptions is a binary construction of gender that enables the conditions under which a feminine performer is disempowered (Torrien & Durrheim, 2001). In these descriptions, by virtue of being opposite and different to femininity, masculinity is provided power and dominance in these descriptions. Although there are many performances of masculinity this power-imbued form assumes a hegemonic status. The concept of hegemonic masculinity developed by Connell (1995, 2001) refers to the kind of masculine performance that is positioned as dominant and authoritative within a society. While this concept may seem abstract, Warren (2003) argues that young boys encounter these kinds of constructions in actual men who perform these kinds of masculinity, although it is unlikely that all men perform this way all the time. Similarly, certain performances of heterosexuality could be understood as hegemonic, in so far as they express dominance and authority, both over other kinds of sexuality and of one gender over another. While it is beyond the scope of this project to attend to the multiple versions of sexualities and genders, I intend to present an understanding of the ways that gender has been performed within narratives of sexuality in order to understand how these might be or might become queered.

In the above sections, it has been my aim to describe some ways in which heteronorms are constructed in terms of difference from other sexualities, and reliance on gender difference between partners. In the next three sections I shall extend the description of heteronormativity by focusing on three constructs that are central to heteronorms: marriage, sexual intercourse and romantic love. The exploration of literature pertaining to these three focal points is intended to provide a broader perspective of heteronorms by providing specific instances and examples in which couples experience heteronormative constraint.
The following section serves as an exploration of the potential for gender or sexuality inequality as it arises in the marriage relationship. Marriage in its idealised, institutional form can be understood to reproduce heteronormative standards in a formal, legislated manner, and could be perceived as the principle form of heterosexuality (Jackson, 1995). In so far as matrimony has been conceived within Roman-Dutch law as the union between a man and woman such that the husband has exclusive sexual rights to his wife, thereby ensuring the paternity of his children, it may be viewed as an institutional expression of heteronorms (Borneman, 1999). In this way, the marriage relationship can be understood to represent a point at which meanings regarding heterosexual relatedness have become fixed. These constructions appear in the current research the narratives couple tell, even when the couple is not contractually obligated to one another, and this attests to the way in which constructions of marriage permeate constructions of heterosexual togetherness.

This fixed meaning appears to be exclusive of other forms of relatedness, and relies on partners assuming dissimilar roles. In the first part of the section I shall address these concerns in greater depth. Rutter and Schwartz (1998) suggest that cohabitation is often conceived of as practice for marriage, and Waite (1995) suggests that the main difference between these forms of partnership could be that marriage may be more permanent than cohabitation and this might encourage a greater investment of resources by partners. Secondly, I shall explore how the binary construction of gender that underlies heterosexual relationships implies inequality between partners. The distribution of resources and the division of labour in cohabiting partnerships, including marriage, is a central theme in the literature and provides insights into the kinds of dynamics and processes that manage various kinds of resources in both formal and informal heterosexual relationships (Rutter & Schwartz, 1998). There is little literature that describes marriage and cohabitation in South Africa specifically, but where possible this has been included or findings have been compared to the South African socio-economic circumstance. Finally I shall explore the implication associated with legislation that excludes homosexual partners from marriage.
The socio-economics of matrimony

It can be argued that marriage can impart numerous socio-economic advantages to a couple. In contemporary society, a couple that is legally joined together is able, more easily than non-contractual couples, to make use of mutual economic and social resources. Insurance policies, medical aids, bank accounts, citizenship are all more easily shared for a married couple than for a cohabiting partnership that has no legal contract (Hirschl, Altobelli & Rank, 2003; Shuit, 2004; Wilkinson & Kritzinger, 2004). Waite (1995) shows that European couples benefit not only from pooled resources, but also from economies of scale, by the connections of meaning and obligation that an extended family entails, and by being able to make (with reasonable security and certainty) long term decisions that will bring rewards at a future date. Marriage is thus associated with better health (Pienta, Hayward & Jenkins, 2000; Wright, 2005), longer life (Pienta, Hayward & Jenkins, 2000), more sexual satisfaction (Rutter & Schwartz, 1998), more financial wealth and higher earnings (Hirschl, Altobelli & Rank, 2003; Pela, 2007) than non-contractual partnerships.

In accordance with these findings, Hirschl, Altobelli and Rank (2003) indicate that among American couples, affluence is significantly associated with marriage. However, this association may be mitigated by an understanding of marriage as imparting different advantages according to race, class and gender. In chapter nine I shall describe how differences in socio-economic class of two couples remain silent within their narratives, and this silence marks their narratives in different ways. The division of labour between a married couple usually assigns men work in the office and women in the home caring for a house and children (Noonan, Estes & Glass, 2007), and this is probably in part influenced by employment options and salary scales that continue to favour men. Kalmijn, Loeve and Manting (2007) note that unequal income, in which a husband earns more than his wife, reduces the risk of marriage dissolution in couples in the Netherlands. American men may be more likely than women to seek marriage because in general the flow of material, sexual, emotional and social resources is from wives to husbands (Rutter & Schwartz, 1998). Because a man is more able than a woman to be gainfully employed, a husband’s work is often prioritised over a wife’s work, possibly because he may earn more or because his masculinity is more invested in employment than his wife (Allan & Crow,
In general it can be argued that in America, marriage benefits the white male population more than it does women or black men (Hirschl, Altobelli & Rank, 2003).

Research outlined in this section has been conducted in a socio-economic context that is different from the South African one. However, given that employment patterns in South African appear to be similar, it is likely that similar patterns emerge in marriage relationship in South Africa. The South African employment environment reflects the same kind of gender difference, as statistics show that women are more likely to be unemployed than men, regardless of their level of education. The table below depicts these statistics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>African</th>
<th>Coloured</th>
<th>Indian</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of South African adults 15 years old and above employed for each population group (Statistics South Africa, 2006)

More white women (54%) are employed than African men, but this is not true of any other population group, although African men do earn on average more than white women. It is thus evident that gender and race continues to be a factor in the South African employment environment: white men are most likely (73%), while African men are least likely (43%) of male South Africans to be employed (Statistics South Africa, 2006).

The division of labour and resources

It can thus be argued that a socio-economic context that continues to benefit male employees above female workers contributes to the asymmetry of marriage relationships. Indeed, where there is little difference between the earning potential between male and female population groups, marriage in this population group is less frequent (Hirschl, Altobelli & Rank, 2003; Kalmijn, Loeve & Manting, 2007). This may in part account for the lower statistical likelihood of African American men and women to marry (Rutter & Schwartz, 1998). In South Africa, more women than men are employed in unskilled, informal sector jobs that are lower paying (Statistics South Africa, 2006), and so it is likely that many South African women are also in an economically disadvantaged position in
relationships. Women in the Netherlands (Kalmijn, Loeve & Manting, 2007) and America (Noonan, Estes & Glass, 2007) experience disadvantage in bargaining for resources within their marriage. This may also be due to their lower economic potential relative to their male partners. Many wives stay at home to care for children and the home, because their husbands have a greater earning potential (Kalmijn, Loeve & Manting, 2007; Noonan, Estes & Glass, 2007). This earning potential also translates into greater power within the relationship, expressed through greater influence in decisions and decision making processes. In this way, women in particular social contexts become more economically dependent on marriage in general and their partners specifically, than do male counterparts (Lundberg & Pollak, 1996; Rutter & Schwartz, 1998). In the sample used in the current research, three female partners are not in paid employment while their male partners are, one couple owns a business together and in the other couples both partners are in paid employment. The theory and literature I have presented in this section shall provide a lens through which to understand the ways in which employment influences these couples, and shall be elucidated in chapter nine.

There is evidence that suggests that socio-economic power translates into power within a relationship. Kollock, Blumstein and Schwartz (1997, in Rutter & Schwartz, 1998) analysed conversational tactics between American men and women that were married or cohabiting. Communication strategies that convey power, such as interruptions and minimal responses that functioned to minimise communication were often used by economically and socially powerful partners. The less powerful speaker often asked for their partner’s opinions regarding a matter through tag-questions, which probed their partner for their feelings or opinions. Although the powerful partner (in terms of social and economic status) frequently employed powerful communications strategies regardless of gender, in heterosexual couples the powerful partner tended to be the man. Similarly Dryden’s (1999) research into division of labour in British heterosexual couples suggests that husbands have a body of behaviours and conversational techniques that ensure that their wives remain under their power. These tactics convey power in much the same way Kollock and Blumstein (1997, in Rutter & Schwartz, 1998) suggest, and include silence, emotional distance, and refusal of particular domestic work. Similar distancing techniques appear in two couple’s narratives featured in this research. In these narratives distance and boundaries are used by two male partners to enforce a separation between paid
employment and the relationship. I shall argue in chapter nine that this separation produces and reproduces a normative division of gender and labour of “masculine” public realm from the “feminine” private domain.

Such constructions of gender within the context of marriage enable husbands to retain a position in which wives allow them privilege within the couple and within the family. While wives assume a passive, nurturing role, their husbands assume an active, protecting, breadwinning role (Dryden, 1999). Within marriage such roles could be described in terms of a division of labour: women assume emotional work, while men assume responsibility for economically rewarding work (Van Every, 1995a, 1995b). In chapter nine I shall outline the ways in which some couples reflect this division of labour, in so far as it is predominantly the female partner who assumes the burden of emotional work.

In this way, both husbands or male partners and wives or female partners are bound by particular roles, and it is possible that both men and women experience dissatisfaction due to these limitations. Umberson, Anderson, William and Chen (2003) show an association between the kinds of emotional repression described by Dryden (1999) and domestic violence in American men. While American men may not experience the same kind of oppression and exploitation as women, the role of husband is also constraining and some may experience this constraint as painful (Seidler, 1994).

Social constructions of “masculinity” may inhibit men in expressing emotions (Seidler, 1994). An analysis of an advice column text in a South African women’s magazine suggests that women specifically are targeted to embark on emotional work in South African relationships. Women are sometimes expected to undertake psychological work in order to ensure a relationship’s integrity, and often assume responsibility for relationship difficulties. This can be viewed as an example of institutional power used to encourage female partners in a heterosexual couple to submit to the needs and desires of their male partners (Wilbraham, 1996). It also suggests that a similar division of labour may occur to those outlined by Dryden (1999) in South African relationships.
This literature has suggested that both economic and interpersonal constructions affect the ways in which marriage is performed by couples. These concerns are intertwined and the manner in which these constructions of work in relationships appear in the couples’ narratives shall be discussed in chapter nine. Although legislation places both partners on an abstractly equal footing, the socio-economic context in which the relationship is lived through still provides the male partner with advantages that his wife does not experience (Bennett, 2001). Further, marriage provides benefits to affluent men, and so the benefits of being a husband are not the same for all races and classes (Hirschl, Altobelli & Rank, 2003). As such, marriage derives power for partners, but partners who perform from the position of an authoritarian gaze derive more advantage than other partners.

**Same-sex marriage**

While marriage is usually associated legislatively with heterosexual couples, in South Africa recent legislation has attempted to make marriage an option for same-sex partners. Ordinarily marriage is defined as the union between one man and one woman, thereby entrenching norms of heterosexuality and monogamy (Borneman, 1999). While the literature I have discussed in the preceding sections has suggested that marriage confers social, political and economic benefits, it has also suggested that these benefits are unevenly granted and that race, gender and class influence the uptake of advantages (Hirschl, Altobelli & Rank, 2003; Noonan, Estes & Glass, 2007; Rutter & Schwartz, 1998), and that these benefits are not conferred onto homosexual couples. While not all of the couples in the sample are married and/or cohabiting, the couples do not recognise that they are advantaged by virtue of their sexuality. That is, the heterosexist bias of matrimony is unspoken within the couples’ narratives.

As such, the campaign to include homosexual South Africans in marriage laws represents a way that the heteronormative institution can be appropriated by same-sex partnered men and women as a means of accruing certain social, economic and political advantages (Reddy, 2006). The same-sex community has sought the same benefits, provided to heterosexual couples by virtue of a legally recognised union, and directed its efforts at ensuring the same kind of legally recognised union (that is marriage). Wilkinson and Kritzinger (2004) contend that marriage, rather than a civil union or other alternative to registering a partnership, provides equality for same-sex couples to their opposite-sex counterparts. It is argued that only through inclusion of same-sex couples within marriage
legislation can these couples receive equal social, political, economic and religious benefits (K. Williams, 2004). Any other form of union separates same-sex couples from opposite-sex couples, and thus perpetuates division and inequality based on sexuality (Reddy, 2006; K. Williams, 2004; Wilkinson & Kritzinger, 2004). In his discussion included in the verdict by the South African Constitutional court, Judge Cameron referred to the exclusively heterosexual nature of marriage and the absence of freedom of choice this implies for same-sex partners. He draws attention to the inferiority this implies for same-sex partnerships, in that these partnerships are not fully included in the community as is promised by South Africa’s very inclusive constitution (Shäfer, 2006). As such, the verdict by the Constitutional Court that underpins South Africa’s recent same-sex marriage legislation is based on conceptions of equality and the ideal of the integration of same-sex couples into a broader social status quo (J.A. Robinson & Swanepoel, 2004), although the legislation as it has been implemented falls short of these ideals (E. Naidu, personal communication, February 18, 2007).

While equality for homosexual South African citizens is a worthy and just goal (Reddy, 2006), it is arguable how possible such equality is within an institution that has been thoroughly critiqued as oppressive (Wilkinson & Kritzinger, 2004). In the previous sections I have outlined some of the ways that the context of marriage implies disadvantage and inequality between partners (Borneman, 1999; Jackson, 2006). While it may be possible that same-sex partners could perform from a position that alters this institution, it is also possible that heteronorms would continue to shape same-sex marriages as well (Thomas, 2000). I have shown how marriage could be interpreted as oppressive, but this oppression has been largely ignored within the debate about same-sex marriage in South Africa.

The debates have focused on the inclusion of a marginalised category within legislation (J.A. Robinson & Swanepoel, 2004), and challenges to the institution by heterosexual couples have been notably absent. Given arguments of marriage as an oppressive institution, it is significant that at the time of debate regarding legislation of same-sex marriages no gender activists lobbied that the Marriage Act be erased and all unions be legislated by the Civil Unions Act. Such a statement might have presented an opportunity to queer heterosexuality and it is remarkable the opportunity was not made use of to challenge heteronormative assumptions. In the following chapter I shall discuss the close association in the South African political context of sexual liberation with racial liberation
(Cock, 2005). Because of this association, the South African context was particularly suited to serving a queer agenda of political emancipation (Sedgwick, 1995; Stein & Plummer, 1994), and this agenda could have been included within the campaign for same-sex marriage in South African statutes.

The invention of (hetero)sex

Borneman (1999) argues that marriage is structured primarily to protect the paternity of a man’s children. In so far as this is true, it is possible that sex is a requirement of the heterosexual couple: the heterosexual matrix relies heavily on notions of naturalness (Butler, 1997), and heterosexuality is in part justified by the possibility of sexual reproduction (Potts, 2001). Again the construction of gender as binary and necessary to procreative sex shapes the ways that this kind of sexual behaviour is experienced and performed (Carlson, 2006). A monologue that expresses dominance over and difference from “feminine” subjects (Bennett, 2001), and a monologue expressing the naturalness of heterosexuality (Laqueur, 1997) are central to notions of heterosex. In the current research, the couples’ narratives construct physical proximity, epitomised by sexual interactions, as fundamental to togetherness. This construction in part relies on the surveillance activities that I describe in the theoretical chapter and in chapter seven, and it seems that physical closeness provides the opportunity for observation techniques. The following section explores constructions of sex as a merging of opposite gendered individuals, idealised through orgasm. Literature that describes the interplay and influence of gender and sexual expression shall be used to demonstrate the influence of performances of sex on heteronorms.

Constructions of heterosex

Potts (2001) argues that the act of sex is usually understood to entail penetrative intercourse, idealised and epitomised by the experience of orgasm. Her individual interviews and focus group discussions concerning heterosexual health, conducted with
male and female New Zealanders, reveals that orgasm is viewed as the “be-all-end-all” (p. 61) of a sexual response cycle. According to this view, participants understand sexual excitement and arousal to arise principally from penetration of a vagina by a penis, and to culminate in a mystical merging that takes place primarily between the minds and not the bodies of sexual partners. Although the transcendence associated with orgasm is linked to physical sensation, it is the emotional, psychological, spiritual aspects of orgasm that are emphasised by the descriptions of participants. The “arrival” or “achievement” of the “joining of souls” (p. 63) that participants focus on is described as requiring the literal genital bonding and penetration of heterosex.

This privileging of penetrative sex tends to exclude other forms of sexual intercourse as a valid constituent of that category. In so far as sex is understood to refer only to penetrative, heterosexual intercourse, other sexual activities are not perceived as the same category of act (Lewis, 2005; Potts, 2001; Torien & Durrheim, 2001). In this way the monologue of heterosex excludes a multiplicity of sexual acts and sexual subjectivities. Interestingly, subjects can appropriate this to make sense of contradictory needs. In Mauritius, for example, sexual intercourse has been defined in terms of pain. A woman can negotiate interactions that are not defined as sexual, thereby maintaining the virtue of virginity, by allowing penetration so long as it does not cause pain. While this may seem to be a creative subversion of constructions of sexuality, it may curtail a woman’s ability to negotiate for condom usage, thereby placing her at risk of contracting a sexually transmitted disease (Weis, Whelan & Gupta, 2000).

Notions of vaginal penetration central to heterosex exclude other expressions of sexuality, including the kind of penetration enacted in homosex. This construction also consolidates and glorifies the role of a male sexual partner. Lindegger and Durheim’s (2000) theoretical analysis of hegemonic forms of masculinity, suggests that constructions of penetration are central to South African masculinity. Their analysis details five discourses that construct the male subject position: The Male Sex Drive discourse [as described by Hollway (1984)], conquest, penetration, domination and the idealised body. Within this description, sex is understood as natural and unstoppable, executed by an idealised, “masculine” body that invests men with the power to physically dominate. According to this
conception, penetration of the opposite sex body is essential, and associated with control or domination of natural elements, and specifically the female body.

The Male Sex Drive discourse, initially detailed by Hollway (1984), emphasises the significance of “masculinity” to sexual interactions. Within this discourse, male sexuality is defined as an unstoppable, biological imperative (Hare-Mustin, 2004; Lindegger & Durrheim, 2000), while women are obliged to accomplish a romantic and emotional bond (with a partner of the opposite sex), and then to take responsibility for maintaining that relationship (Wilbraham, 1996). The latter Hollway has termed the Have-Hold discourse. Tension between Hollway’s (1984) two discursive positions has consequences: a woman must labour to ensure her male partner’s fidelity and continued commitment, and it is therefore her responsibility to provide her partner with sex. She must grant him a means to experience his “masculinity”, or risk losing a context in which to express her own “femininity”. In this way women assume the position of object in relation to the male subject position. In particular, a woman subjugates her relationship needs to her male partner’s need for sex.

In a sexual encounter, women in Britain and New Zealand seem to be concerned that their partners derive pleasure from the act, and this focus on his pleasure may prevent her from deriving any herself (Potts, 2001). When describing sex, women are less able to articulate their needs and may leave their desires unspoken (Holland, Ramazanoglu, Sharpe & Thompson, 2003). In these instances, women may suppress their own desires in deference to their male partner’s wants and needs, even though the association of penetration and masculinity places pressure on men to perform sexually and to please their female partners. This kind of emphasis on orgasm as the epitome of heterosexual experience may even lead some women to fake orgasm in order to reassure their partners of their masculinity and worth (Lewis, 2005; Potts, 2001).

Even though constructions of the Permissive Discourse link heterosexual pleasure to the well-being of both men and women, it seems that men are able to define that pleasure. Hollway (1984) has detailed a Permissive Discourse that is common to both “masculine” and “feminine” gender positions. According to this discourse, sexual pleasure is a need of
both genders, and implies that both men and women should pursue sexual gratification as a natural right. Significantly, this discourse describes a position that both men and women should adopt toward sexuality. The Permissive Discourse is thus superficially a site of equality between gender positions. However, the discourse serves to make access to sex easier for masculine actors, who require sexual interactions to construct a masculine identity. As such, men are benefited by the belief that individuals of both genders are permitted and even required to seek sexual relationships (Hollway, 1984).

While some performances of masculinity might recognise the need for emotional closeness and connectedness in relationships (Welwood, 1991), a hegemonic masculine performance does not need relationships in the same way that a feminine performance does. A relationship with a woman is not integral to a man's gender identity in the same way that it is for a woman (Firestone, 1998; Jackson, 1995). Although a relationship implies that the source of sex is predictable and secure, a relationship is not the only context for a masculine performer to get what he needs (Hollway, 1984). It is after all permissible and to some preferable to have casual sex with a number of women. In this way, the concept of sexual difference, vital to the enactment of penetrative sex (Potts, 2001), confers power on masculine actors (Hollway, 1984). While there are almost certainly diverse ways of performing penetration, it is likely that a level of dominance characterises these interactions.

**Sex, coercion and control**

In South Africa, there is evidence that a powerful, penetrating masculine role is quite pervasive. It is possible that this construction is in part attributable to the ways in which colonial and Apartheid governance shaped gender relations in South Africa. In the next chapter I shall discuss the ways that colonial and Apartheid understandings of gender have become inscribed spatially onto the South African landscape through control exercised over homes and the domestic realm (Posel, 2006). The domination of the black majority was in part effected through authority over houses and the men and women who inhabited these structures. Within these homes, black males were provided more freedom than women, but were still oppressed and dehumanised by legislative controls. It is possible this shame was experienced as a threat to masculinity, and in some cases men
may have sought to reclaim a degree of power by asserting their power over women (Bennett, 2001). This is often expressed within the household and may manifest as sexual and/or domestic violence, such as that described by one participant and that I relate in chapter seven.

For Zulu men an identity that expresses sexual power has been valued and called isoka (M. Hunter, 2004). The imperative towards a number of partners in part defines sexuality in urban, Johannesburg townships (Posel, 2000; Selikow, Zulu & Cedras, 2002). For men it is desirable to be an ingagara, which is to have an expensive car, fashionable clothes and access to many women. The many women that a man accumulates can be categorised as cherries, temporary girlfriends used primarily for sex, or the regte, a woman who is the “right one” and a “wife to be”. In a context of increasing consumerism, the deterioration of traditional institutions of masculinity and a predominance of patriarchal values, sexual partners confer prestige and popularity, and women become a commodity (Selikow, Zulu & Cedras, 2002). It is this kind of masculinity that Macheke and Campbell (1998) link to high-risk sexual behaviour among gold mine-workers in Johannesburg. Although a woman in a Johannesburg township may also seek multiple sexual partners for particular socio-economic ends, the same kind of power is not conferred on her. The situation is complex, and women are subject to certain constraints. She cannot be overt about her partners and may be coerced into sex without the protection of a condom, because this is associated with trust in a partner and is highly valued as such (Selikow, Zulu & Cedras, 2002).

This situation seems to extend beyond the township context, as in the arena of sexual interactions, black and coloured women (Strebel & Lindegger, 1998), as well as white, Cape Town, university students (Wood & D. Foster, 1995), seem to have less power to negotiate for safer sex and condom usage. Women are often expected to initiate the use of condoms, but are not able to successfully bargain for their usage. Male partners either directly refuse or indirectly disapprove, thereby preventing the use of condoms. Shefer, Strebel and D. Foster (2000) suggest that among black South African students, the power men hold in relationships with women is sometimes expressed through coercion and/or violence against female partners. When women attempt to take control of interactions,
men are willing and able to force (using physical or psychological means) their partners to maintain the status quo of the relationship.

Hollway’s (1984) discourses suggest that the potential for women to assume a role similar to their male partners within the Permissive discourse is complicated by the need for emotional intimacy (Firestone, 1998; Jackson, 1995), as well physical intimacy. A female subject must balance her needs against the needs of her male partner. There are thus two needs that a female subject must meet: one associated with the Permissive discourse and another with the Have/Hold discourse (Hollway, 1984). These needs, though not always contradictory, are not necessarily compatible either. It is the female subject’s burden to resolve or negotiate the disjunction between the two, since a male subject need not experience a similar inconsistency in his needs. In a South African context, this contradiction is complicated by economic concerns that tie women to the financial benefits of some male partners, and also by the patriarchal culture of South African society (Selikow, Zulu & Cedras, 2002). The negotiation required to make sense of these contradictory discourses may thus place some women in danger of physical violence (Bennett, 2001).

A survey of southern African adolescent’s attitudes to sex suggests that African women risk physical retaliation should they be too overt and assertive of their sexuality. Women who pursue partners, especially “sugar daddies” who will bring them material benefit, are perceived to be violating cultural prescriptions by being too Western and sexually provocative. Such behaviour may be experienced as an attack on the masculinity of the men who are not able to attract such a woman and this affront may require physical retribution. Girls must make use of subtle ways of making their attraction to boys known, and should not directly “propose love” to him. Only boys can initiate a relationship (Pattman, 2005). South African youth in rural Kwa-Zulu Natal have expressed the view that it is the “masculine” position to “bring a woman into line” with the rules and regulations that delineate gender roles. A woman may initiate sex or be too eager to have sex, and she may need to be hit in order to demonstrate that this behaviour is wrong (Rassol Bassodien & Hochfeld, 2005). This act of violence is thus also constructed as an act of
love, of protection and teaching. Within the context of a sexual relationship, a male partner becomes the most immediate source of restraint (Sathiparsad, 2005).

It is possible that these performances of control and violence arise from a pervasive culture of violence that characterises South Africa’s long history of conflict (Bennett, 2001). Descriptions of various forms of South African masculinity detail the historical location of violence and violence against women: Swart (1998) emphasises how Afrikaner men at the turn of the twentieth century objectified their wives, and in the 1914 Rebellion sought to reclaim a lost masculinity through armed rebellion; Glaser (1998) situates gang violence in Soweto between 1960 and 1976 within notions of territory and masculinity; Mooney (1998) demonstrates links between the Ducktail culture and expressions of violence, especially against women; Breckenridge (1998) shows how masculinity for African and Afrikaner goldmine workers between 1900 and 1960 relied on aggression between races, and how this form of masculinity excluded women. Resistance to Apartheid often took the form of violence, which in turn called for violent retaliation. After the 1994 elections, this violence still characterises South African society, although it may now appear as criminal rather than political. Much of this violence is directed at children and women, and South Africa has a high prevalence of rape (Posel, 2000). In the following chapter I shall discuss links between this culture of violence against women and sexism in South Africa. This sexism can be associated with colonial constructions of women as sexual objects or as minors, and these past constructions are reproduced in contemporary notions of “femininity” (Levine, 2004)

Heterosexuals and heteronorms

While the participant in this research who experienced domestic violence from an ex-husband, describes this violence as in the past, with her current relationship being defined in opposition to this past, it can be argued that no heterosexual relationship entirely escapes the potential for physical domination. In a sense, heterosexuality imposes a dynamic in which women are dominated, and heterosex is always potentially an enactment of domination, whether it is physically violent or not (Dunne, 2003; Firestone, 1998; Rowland, 1992). Confronted by the power that men possess by virtue of their sex, some feminist theorists believe it is best to opt for political lesbianism. It is argued that so
long as men and women are not ideologically equal it is not possible for individual men and women to evade these structures of power. As such, women could place themselves beyond the grip of domination by refusing to enter into heterosexual relationships (Dunne, 2003). Similarly, Wilkinson and Kritzinger (1992) suggest that women acknowledge that the choice to remain heterosexual is implicated in a particular uneven, political status quo.

Heterosexuality is sometimes taken for granted (Cocks, 2006; Richardson, 1996) and has posed as a non-choice (Kanneh, 1992). Sexuality may feel very like preference that is natural and beyond question, but it may also be understood as a role socially constructed as normative. In such a normative form heterosexuality marginalises other sexual subjectivities, and relies on difference in gender, which in turn leads to asymmetries in power between men and women in relationship (Brown, 1994). The choice to enact heterosexuality thus requires a degree of political reflexivity to think through the implications of the position and assume the performance with political awareness (Wilkinson & Kritzinger, 1992).

It is not heterosexual relationships and heterosexual pleasure in themselves that are problematic. Rather it is the organising effects that construct these as a norm to the exclusion of others (Wilkinson & Kritzinger, 1992), and as I have outlined in preceding sections concerning constructions of heterosex. Rowland (1996) suggests that women challenge their performances of their relationship, but that they do not necessarily have to question their sexuality. She argues that heterosexual subjectivity can be assumed in less inequitable ways between specific men and women, and that an awareness of power and openness to dialogue is necessary. Reinharz (1992) also maintains that feminist women can assume a heterosexual position in their personal lives. She proposes that this involves the avoidance of oppressive interpersonal dynamics and the assumption of a queer stance to sexuality. These two suggestions are by no means easy to effect within the lived experience of women, and neither provides specific plans for how this might be accomplished. Jackson (1995) is more explicit, and locates political interventions to alter heteronorms specifically in the activities of decentring penetration, of claiming an assertive (as opposed to passive) sexuality, and the creation of a language that expresses heterosexual desire without shame.
While these proposals for action point towards the assertion of a particular politics of heterosexual pleasure, a focus solely on sexual gratification could result in what Dworkin (1981) describes as the “eroticisation of oppression”. Hollway’s (1984) description of heterosexuality as a choice based on personal satisfaction and fulfilment through a particular kind of erotic activity obscures the far-reaching effects of heteronorms. A focus on sexual intercourse, between a man and a woman, fails to admit the many manifestations of heteronormative oppression (Jackson, 1995; Van Every, 1995b). Brown (1994) points to the socially constructed nature of pleasure, and the manner in which (hetero)sexual satisfaction could conceivably be experienced in ways not admitted by contemporary understandings of sexuality. He presents an understanding of heteronormativity as simultaneously oppressive, and also capable of moments of “jouissance”. According to this view, the unpalatable and objectionable aspects of heterosexual oppression exist alongside, and in part enable, moments in which enjoyment unencumbered by cruelty can be experienced. This view is borne out by the current research, in so far as the couples’ narratives are shown to contain both monologic and heteroglossic readings.

In this way, it is argued that heterosexuality can be negotiated to avoid oppressive interactions between specific partners. M. Gergen (1992) draws attention to multiplicity in performances of heterosexuality and suggests that this variety can be used to undermine construction of heterosexuality as monolithic. Such an understanding of heterosexuality is necessary to understand how feminist theorists could assume a heterosexual subject position (Gill & Walker, 1992; A. Hunter, 1992; Jackson, 1995; Kanneh, 1992; Ramazanoglu, 1992; Reinharz, 1992; Rowland, 1992) while maintaining an awareness of its political aspects. Central to assuming this contradictory and complex standpoint is the recognition of the extent to which heteronorms structure society (Jackson, 1995, 2006; Wilkinson & Kritzinger, 1992). Heterosexual oppression relies on relationships between specific men and women, and it is also a larger organising principle that structures society, therefore the labour required to queer a heterosexual relationship is relatively onerous. It may be possible that not all heterosexual relationships enact violent dominance, because partners may negotiate a personally constructed form of togetherness that is to a degree equitable (M. Gergen, 1992; Rowland, 1992, 1996). These privately enacted differences
from the norm notwithstanding, heterosexual oppression may be ubiquitous, invisible and unavoidable within society. Since sexual difference and heteronormativity organise and structure a variety of social contexts this inequality may be a pervasive characteristic of social lived experience (Brown, 1994; Jackson, 2006; Wilkinson & Kritzinger, 1992).

(U)thinking through love

The following section shall present a picture of the role constructions of love, especially as they are linked to understandings of marriage and sex, play in structuring heteronormativity. This construction can be understood to have been shaped by the consumerist concerns of industrial culture, and rely on a particular understanding of emotions. Love is usually understood as a possession of each partner (Evans, 2003), and this confers a certain stability to the emotion (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995; Jackson, 2003). At the same time, it is not an emotion often questioned and could be viewed in this sense as defined by openness, variety and dispersal. It is usually accepted without thought, and this prevents men and women from critically interrogating their relationships and/or sometimes their partner (Firestone, 1998). While it appears to be an open concept, this masks the ways in which the concept is foreclosed by constructions of gender and sexuality (Jackson, 2006).

In love: consuming difference

Constructions of love can be associated with modern conceptions of subjectivity that Foucault (1984) argues is constructed through technologies of self. In chapter seven I argue that relationships are constituted in a similar manner, with similar concerns for uniqueness, by technologies of relationship. Here constructions of romance, as a distinctive feature of relationships, are implicated in the monitoring and observation of togetherness. In the context of love, the rise of individualism associated with industrial culture can be understood to have provided an increasing proliferation of consumer products, and introduced the notion of choice as a right of all human beings (K. Gergen, 1991). Consumable products (perfumes, romantic get-aways, music, flowers) are also a means of creating the necessary romantic ideal and provide cues to personal identity that signal compatibility with another (Illouz, 1998; Evans, 2003). Individuals are thereby enabled to try out different partners with the aim of finding that special person who
complements and completes the self. This search may be aided by constructions such as the Permissive Discourse that suggests that both men and women benefit from the experience and enjoyment of sexual activity (Hollway, 1984), since this completion is often viewed as possible only from a partner of the opposite sex/gender (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995).

Thus the monologue of gender difference is central to constructions of love, and love assumes heteronormative characteristics (Jackson, 2006). The centrality of difference and particularly gender difference to romance could imply that homosexual couples are less likely to love one another. This may in part account for constructions of American homosexual men at the beginning of the HIV/AIDS epidemic as promiscuous (Rofes, 1998), and of relationships between lesbian women in America understood as primarily a deep friendship or sisterhood, instead of a romance (Rothblum, 1994). The view that homosexual men have multiple partners and seldom create long lasting affective bonds with their partners (Rofes, 1998), and the understanding of lesbian women as close friends (Rothblum, 1994) may have arisen from understandings of gender difference as essential to romantic love.

Romantic relationships in industrialised cultures can be viewed as increasingly constructed as equal partnerships in which both partners pursue their own lives, make their own choices while also supporting the other in their needs (Illouz, 1998). In this way love may be viewed as a concept without a monologic fixed point. Romance is conceived of as a necessarily personal experience that relies on the idiosyncratic personalities and preferences of two partners (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995). This is what Giddens (1992) refers to as the “pure relationship”, an ideal that he believes is frequently enacted by couples of today. Similarly to the Permissive Discourse that appears to be gender neutral but is played out differently for men and women (Hollway, 1984), this conception may not entirely escape the monologue of gender difference. The “pure relationship” may be problematised (although not exactly contradicted) by a need to assert and express individuality (Bachen & Illouz, 1996). It seems likely that partners in love would end up in constant jousting matches as each tries to express their own individual choices. Rather than co-existing in equality, in which both have their choices recognised and satisfied, a
couple in which two individuals pursue their own ends could become a battle to make each of their voices heard before the other’s (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995).

Further, the tendency to view love as ineffable and irrational, and in a sense heteroglossic, may prevent women, and some extent men, from rationally interrogating their performance of heterosexual romance. Firestone (1998) argues that love obscures the ways, inherent in relationships, that men dominate women. Holland, Ramazanoglu, Sharpe & Thompson (1998) note that in describing heterosexual relationships, British youth felt they could not transgress languages appropriate to their gender: women could not speak of their sexual desires and men could not speak of love. In this way monologic conceptions of gender structure a monologue of love. While it is possible that men are provided a position of authority by gendered monologues of love, it is also possible that male partners are constrained by these same constructions in romantic contexts. Seidler (1994) and Metcalf and Morrison (1992) suggest that men experience emotional pain at their inability to openly communicate their connection to their partner, and suggest that it is dominant constructions of “masculinity” as rational rather than expressive that prevent such closeness.

In so far as domination is a characteristic of heterosexual relationships, the construction of love as heteroglossic and irrational may prevent men and women from escaping constraint (Jackson, 2003). Such unwillingness to think through the emotive experience of love may contribute to the relative dearth of social science literature that explores love. This may be attributable to difficulties in measuring or defining the experience of love, since love is usually perceived to be an emotion that is irrational and ineffable. The lack of research may also reflect an underlying belief that it is a frivolous subject, not serious enough to warrant in depth inquiry through research (Jackson, 1995).

The biological and social construction of love

There have been some attempts at constructing measures of love, and these conceptualise love as an attitude that is linked to certain behaviours like dating, and sexual intercourse (Cramer & Howitt, 1998). This relationship is reflected in the association in much of the literature between love and sex or marriage. Some
understandings of love view the experience as a biologically hard-wired necessity. Such a notion might arise from the conception of gender difference as located in biological sex (Hird, 2000) and such difference as central to the attraction between romantic partners (Irigaray, 2004). Moore (1998) compares descriptions of love as experienced by Chinese students to that of American students. These similarities are associated with biological processes that produce physical sensations in those who love. Cross-cultural differences in the experience of love, such as those between American and Chinese students, are attributed to differences in micro-level schemas. Macro-level schemas, such as the pervasive social imperative to love another, are understood as a consequence of attachment needs based on the infantile relationship with the mother and are understood as biological at base. As such these broad categories of experience are conceptualised as universal. The gendered aspects of love remain unspoken, presumably a consequence of interaction with gender-schemas and/or biological predispositions.

While these biological underpinnings of love could provide the basis of a romance monologue, it is notable that this formulation emphasises the role of socially derived meaning in constructing the experience of love. This inclusion of contextual specificity again includes notions of the heteroglossic dispersal of romance. Along these lines, De Munck (1998) has explored the meanings of love marriages in a rural Sri Lankan village called Kutali. Traditionally Sri Lankan marriages are arranged between cross-cousins (the children of opposite sex siblings). Although these marriages are arranged, they are often experienced as love matches by the husband and wife, possibly because certain culturally prescribed events that encourage cross-cousins to view one another as potential love interests, and the lack of social taboos on friendship between cross-cousins. This mediation of love by cultural norms is also in evidence in the Indo-Canadian community. Traditionally parents arrange a marriage between two young people, but in the small Indian community of Canada this process is more difficult than in India. Parents will often allow their children to make their own choice of marriage partner or will give their children the freedom to pull out of a match they feel no romantic attraction for. Even when individuals do choose their own partner based on their romantic feelings, their choice is usually mediated by the wishes of their parents. In this way the Western notion of love as dramatic, emotional and irrational is reconciled with an Indian conception of love as growing through social and cultural similarities between partners (Netting, 2006).
At the time of writing, no literature was available that detailed directly the experience of love in South Africa. Only through research that focused on sexual behaviour are there glimpses of South African love. Pattman’s (2005) survey of South African youths found that they used the verb “propose” (as in “to propose love”) to speak of initiating a romantic relationship. He suggests that the word refers to the seriousness of a boy and girl seeing each other on a romantic basis, especially in patriarchal context where the behaviour of girls is controlled to prevent premarital sex. Selikow, Zulu and Cedras (2002) do not mention love in their exploration of Johannesburg township relationships. However, they suggest that the woman whom a man decides he will marry (known as the regte) has certain privileges on his resources, even though she is unlikely to be able to insist that he be faithful to her.

It is significant that it is only through the research into sex in South African that some understandings of love can be induced, since sex and love are often perceived to be only weakly related. Cramer and Howitt’s (1998) review of literature concludes that while sexual activity and love are positively correlated there is little evidence to say which direction the relationship runs. However, they argue that during sex the relationship breaks down, citing surveys that show sexual fantasies seldom involve a romantic partner, even when partners are engaged in sexual activity together. The silence regarding love in South Africa, and the relative abundance of literature concerning sex (probably due to the extent of HIV/AIDS across the African continent especially) implies that South Africans have sex, but do not necessarily love. Since love is correlated with sexual behaviour (at least in a Western context) it remains for the relationship to be explored in a South African setting. The seriousness of “proposing” a relationship (Pattman, 2005), and the association it may have with marriage (suggested by Selikow, Zulu and Cedras, 2002) hint at an area that requires further exploration.

**Conclusion**

The literature I have reviewed in this chapter situates constructions of heterosexuality as the silent assumption against which homosexual others must explain and justify themselves. Whisman (1996) details some forms of explanation that subjects may use.
Some situate their sexuality as a biological fact. While this kind of explanation appears to situate heterosexuality and homosexuality on an equal footing by making both beyond choice, this kind of research into brain structure and other body manifestations of sexuality do not treat homosexuality as merely another kind of biological state. Instead the research attempts to explain the difference homosexuality poses against heterosexuality, and in this way, these kinds of explanations reproduce the assumption of the ubiquity of heterosexuality (Spanier, 2005).

Similarly, understandings of gender as located in biological sex characteristics support the understanding that heterosexuality is omnipresent. The belief that hormones, genes, brain structure and other physical characteristics endow men and women with certain qualities and behaviours, suggests that sexuality is a kind of gender role. In this way, it is possible that assumptions of the naturalness of gender could lead easily to the naturalness of heterosexuality (R. Stainton Rogers & E. Stainton Rogers, 2001). However, the easy transfer of sex to gender and sexuality is unsettled by certain kinds of performances, including transsexuality and intersexuality (Hester, 2004; Hird, 2000).

This rigid binary becomes visible in research of marriage, sex and love as well. As a legal entity, a married couple is theoretically given equal rights and benefits by their association. However, there is evidence that the financial, emotional, sexual and labour resources are directed disproportionately towards husbands. That is, marriage benefits men more than it does women. This seems to be in part because of a socio-economic context that still favours men with better jobs, more numerous employment opportunities than for women, higher wages and gender roles that undermine emotional work and privilege performances of “masculinity” (Rutter & Schwartz, 1998). In so far as marriage can be understood as the ideal configuration of heterosexual togetherness, it betrays the underlying gender hierarchy that hinders and burdens women in a more oppressive manner than it does men, and excludes particular, non-normative expressions of togetherness and sexuality (Borneman, 1999).

Normative performances of “masculinity”, particularly in South Africa, rely on physical power and also enactments of this power through penetrative heterosex. This form of “masculinity” relies on the opposition to “femininity”, and may enact domination sometimes in the form of physical violence. Particularly in the context of sex, women are in danger of
being “put in line” by men should they transgress in some way, usually if they enact a
gender performance that tends towards “masculine” levels of sexual activity (Sathiparsad,
2005). Although multiple sexual partners are in theory permissible to both genders
(Hollway, 1984), and is a source of positive “masculine” identity (M. Hunter, 2004), some
South African women must be covert in their sexual activity. A woman must be careful to
hide the numbers of partners she has, especially to her main boyfriend, and she must
provide him certain assurance of sexual fidelity, such as allowing sex with him without a
condom (Selikow, Zulu & Cedras, 2002).

These sexual performances are associated with the experience of love. Although romance
is not explicitly dealt with by research in the South African context, it is implied by the
seriousness of relationships with girlfriends or boyfriends that are potential marriage
partners, and by the expression used to initiate a relationship, “proposing love” (Pattman,
2005). The literature I have presented associated love most often with sex or marriage,
and situate it as biological reaction, as well as a social construction involving rites,
customs and norms. It also suggests that lovers may be subject to biological necessity or
to social requirements. However, it is also possible to negotiate scripts, as Indo-Canadian
men and women do in finding a marriage partner (Netting, 2006).

In this chapter I have tried to outline the broad construction of heteronormativity as it is
scripted and assumed within socially constructed norms. While it is a pervasive organising
principle, it usually remains an unspoken one. As Jackson (2003) suggests, heteronorms
maintain a position of silence that does not compel justification. Rather it is deviations from
that path require explanation. However, individual men, women and couples are able to
enact positions of resistance: women who have been in long term heterosexual
relationships choose to be lesbian to avoid the power of their male partners (Kritzinger &
Wilkinson, 1995); homosexual couples create “families of choice” that meet their needs of
intimacy and support (Weeks, Donvan & Heaphy, 1999); Indo-Canadian men and women
choose marriage partners that will meet the criterion stipulated by their parents (Netting,
2006); individual couples may be aware of power and chose an alternate form of
heterosexuality (M. Gergen, 1992; Rowland, 1996; Reinharz, 1992); individuals may
reinterpret sex such that penetration is decentred (Weis, Whelan & Gupta, 2000). While
these positions of subversion are possible and becoming prevalent, they remain positions
that go against heteronorms. As such, they are positions that reveal the centrifugal
tendencies that are contained by centripetal forces within constructions of heteronormativity.
4 Contextual backdrop
Building a heterosexual nation

In the previous chapter, I argue that heteronorms structure the experience of men and women in relationships, and in a multitude of other contexts. Using three focal points to organise the discussion I discuss how heterosexuality is implicated in the arrangement of relationships into normative, unitary patterns. I have used the literature to sketch some of the general concerns that contribute to constructions of heteronormativity, and also provide evidence of resistance and multiplicity that escapes these monologues. While I have tried to ground this discussion in South African concerns, in this chapter I shall to address in more depth some specific historical, political and legislative circumstances that shape the particular South African context.

I shall argue that some techniques of the Apartheid government to dominate the black majority of the country have been characterised by control of the domestic realm. These dynamics serve to enforce a particular kind of heteronormativity within the context of the home, and I shall explore some of the ways that these constructions developed historically. I shall also draw comparisons between the experience of women in South Africa, and the struggle for sexual liberation. Black women and homosexual men (and some women) have been and continue to be instrumental in the reconstruction of South Africa as a democracy. However, both women and the homosexual community initially have had to fight for the issues of gender and sexual liberation to be kept on the agenda (Cock, 2005), and alterations in rape, domestic violence and marriage laws attest to a degree of success (Bennett, 2001). That these activists have succeeded has however done little to change the experience of women who experience domestic violence or gay men and women who experience hate crimes (Bennett, 2001; Reddy, 2004).

In this chapter I shall provide a reading of South African history as demonstrating the underlying heterosexual bias within a specific social milieu. Firstly, I shall describe legislation during the Apartheid era that shaped understandings of houses and heterosexual togetherness. Legislation was in place to award black, married couples with
homes in Witwatersrand townships in order to control the population in Johannesburg (Posel, 2006), and also to enforce the use of contraceptives in order to limit the “non-white” population (Klausen, 2004). This heterosexist bias is also apparent in the “new South Africa” in the context of new legislation that allows same-sex marriage, and I shall outline concerns that intersect with this debate in the second part of the chapter. Reddy (2006) argues laws have gradually been altered to provide homosexual men and women with the same citizenship rights as heterosexual men and women. In this way, homosexuality has progressively been decriminalised in post-Apartheid South Africa, and alterations of marriage legislation will complete the process. Although this process is important, there is also a danger that it could normalise the politically revolutionary potential of a homosexual subject position. The South African socio-political context is thus characterised by these tensions and contradictions.

**Ruling domesticity**

In the following section I shall present J. Comaroff and J.L. Comaroff’s (1997) analysis of missionary restructuring of Tswana homes as an attempt to control what was perceived to be the chaos and lassitude of that community. This analysis of colonial efforts to domesticate the populace shall then be extended to an exploration of the ways that Apartheid legislation sought to enforce certain kinds of domesticity. I shall interpret this tendency of the minority rule in both colonial and post-colonial contexts to direct its efforts towards homes, and I shall argue that these technologies imply a particular kind of heterosexuality, that is normative heterosexuality. These concerns shall be taken up in chapter eight in order to extend a discussion of the ways that heteronorms become fixed in space through homes.

J. Comaroff and J.L. Comaroff (1997) suggest that the activity of colonisation in South Africa was directed, in part, at domesticating the Nguni people of the region. Domestication here has a dual meaning, as the process of civilisation was directed both at taming the unfathomably other Tswana people and their way of life, and also at enforcing a household structure that conformed to colonial notions of moral goodness. The round houses of the Tswana and their spiralling settlements with circular roads, were seen as chaotic, dirty and unhygienic by colonial missionaries in South Africa at the turn of the nineteenth century, and thereby implicated in their understandings of evil. By encouraging square houses, with windows to let light into the dark and doors that locked to keep
possessions safe, missionaries attempted to purify and transform their piece of Africa into a land of Godliness and order.

It was significant that men were to build these houses. Where Tswana women had been the builders of homes in the past, men were to be builders of colonial style homes. This shift in division of labour can be interpreted as a move to place these women inside of the home sewing and cleaning, protected by the male members of the household whose duty it was to maintain and defend the homestead from outside the home (J. Comaroff & J.L. Comaroff, 1997). In this way, colonial interpretations of gender and space served to entrench a separation between the public, “masculine” realm of breadwinning labour and the private, “feminine” domain of domesticity (Dryden, 1999; Van Every, 1995b). I have discussed in the previous chapter how this largely artificial separation is reflected in gender roles associated with marriage, and here the division is associated with space and with colonial rule.

Also associated with the Tswana’s unclean lifestyle was the apparent lassitude of the men folk. Tswana women were responsible for growing what few crops were required, while men tended to the cattle that are so central to most Nguni peoples. Cattle were perceived to be integral to the wealth of a man: the animals were exchanged as lobola, loaned to neighbours to create social ties and used as sacrifices to ancestors. All these activities fostered social interrelatedness, duties and responsibilities. However, missionaries interpreted this division of labour as a sign of the men’s laziness, and believed that their proper place was in the fields cultivating crops. This emphasis on agriculture significantly altered the traditional Tswana division of labour. When men took control of crop growing, the produce of this work no longer belonged to the women and the family, and were often sold. This may have contributed to the destitution and dispossession of Tswana families, especially older women and children (J. Comaroff & J.L. Comaroff, 1997).

While J. Comaroff and J.L. Comaroff’s (1997) analysis is quite specific to the Tswana and cannot be generalised, it demonstrates an instance in which the colonial enterprise sought to alter the structure of a social order to conform to a particular norm. It is significant that this attempt was directed at changing gender division of labour and inculcating a “Western” notion of family. The attempt to change the structure of Tswana homes can be understood as an attempt to enforce a particular kind of gender relationship between the
inhabitants of a home, and thereby a particular understanding of heterosexuality. These constructions of gender had the effect of undermining Tswana social relationships, and contributed to the Tswana’s dispossession and destitution. However, these efforts at reforming the assumed degeneracy of the Tswana took effect in uneven and unpredictable ways (for example, traditional, round huts were sometimes built with windows), and this irregular uptake of colonial hegemonies of labour division and family life echo through contemporary South African experience (J. Comaroff & J.L. Comaroff, 1997).

This description of missionary colonisation of the Tswana people can be understood to inscribe particular spatial relationships, and thereby to materialise specific forms of relatedness between genders and between “races” (Burkitt, 1999; Hubbard, 2001). In this way, these patterns foreshadow Apartheid mechanisms of power, and it is possible that the colonial influence towards a Western division of labour and domesticity laid the groundwork for later constructions of women within the context of a growing nationalist movement and racial segregation. Missionaries’ insistence on placing women in the domestic and men in the public realm recurs in constructions of African as well as Afrikaner women that emerged in the colonial, nationalist and Apartheid eras (McClintock, 1991). Control of the domestic realm continued to signify containment of potentially violent forces within the black populace. In the context of a minority which sought to maintain rule over a majority, many operations were directed at limiting the size of the majority populace, especially in urban areas. Such control took many forms, but two are pertinent to the present discussion: management of housing (Posel, 2006) and birth control (Klausen, 2004). It should also be noted that, as in the case of Tswana home building, attempts to conquer and rule had uneven and unexpected effects and that resistance and subversion did take effect.

Marriage and houses: building heteronorms

During the 1950s and 1960s, the migrant labour system drew large numbers of black men and women into the cities, and the government was attempting to control this migration through influx control laws. Initially, women were not subject to as stringent a rule, but gradually, the perception that women living in the townships were promiscuous and immoral, took hold (Posel, 2006). Government then sought to limit the number of women by refusing passes to women who did not have a husband employed in the area. In this way, women became increasingly dependent on a husband to provide a legislative identity
sufficient to remain in an area in which they could find work and have a home (McClintock, 1991). The illicit status of single women in the townships found expression in the perception of these women’s sexual activity as illegitimate, and they were increasingly viewed as “home wreckers”, “husband stealers” and “loose women” (Posel, 2006).

Another means to impose a moral order on township dwellers, was through governmental housing policy. Houses were built in sanctioned areas, but only married couples were eligible for this housing (Posel, 2006). In this way, the Apartheid government provided explicit benefits for heterosexual couples, other than the economic, social and religious benefits I have described in the previous chapter (Hirsch, Altobelli & Rank, 2003; Shuit, 2004; Wilkinson & Kritzinger, 2004). A couple was required to demonstrate proof of their union through a marriage certificate at the Office of Bantu Affairs, and could then be provided with a house. However, in the case of customary marriages, no such certificate was available and this provided a loophole through which unmarried or widowed men and women could gain access to housing. A man and a woman, united by a need for a house, could pretend to have been married under customary law. Other men and women would simply buy a two shilling duty stamp and undergo a civil union. In an even more bizarre arrangement, groups of men and women would assemble in the Office of Bantu Affairs. The men would enter an official’s office and place his hat on the desk. A group of women would then enter and each chose a hat. The man to whom the hat belonged would then become the woman’s husband and they would be assigned a house (Posel, 2006).

In this way, men and women would risk living with a stranger in order to have the security of a house. For many women, and some men, this was the only way to ensure that their children would have a home in the city to live in at all, but for many women this meant risking an abusive or violent man in the house. These unions did not usually last very long, but in some cases the need to have a house kept the couple together despite differences (Posel, 2006). In this way, the heteronormative couple (that has formalised its union through marriage) becomes an acceptable and in part controllable entity. That the government rewarded these couples with homes serves to express in spatial terms the suitability of their relatedness, and their willingness to live as man and woman in government sanctioned areas.
While legislation such as the Immorality Act overtly defined the right and lawful possibilities of heterosex, the Group Areas Act restricted housing for particular races to particular areas. It can be argued that Western-style homes, such as those built for these township couples, reflect a heterosexist bias towards a nuclear family. These homes tend to have clearly defined living areas that include rooms for parents, rooms for children and communal “family-rooms” (Hubbard, 2001). This considered, the practise of providing housing for married couples combined with the Group Areas Act, was instrumental in inscribing Apartheid norms of both race and sexuality onto the South African landscape (Posel, 2006). In this way, the performances possible for men and women in heterosexual relationships were limited to particular forms of relatedness literally constrained by material and physical expressions of that relationship.

It is significant not only that the government sought to impose heterosexuality, formalised through marriage, into the lives of men and women through restricting access to housing, but also the manner in which men and women subverted these restrictions in order to obtain the ends they sought. By placing restrictions on housing, and imposing a moral idea of the good upon the lives of individuals, the government sought to limit the number of black men and especially women in urban areas. Rather than having the desired effect, the laws instead destabilised marriage partnerships by making arbitrary couples like those chosen by hat (Posel, 2006).

Another example of the transience conferred onto marriage by Apartheid practices took place mostly on the Witwatersrand mines. A “mine marriage” involved two men who constructed an association for mutual sexual and economic benefit. Such partnerships most often included a miner, and another male from one of the townships nearby the mine. This usually effeminate miner would take the role of wife, cooking, cleaning and caring for the miner’s possessions. In exchange this man was provided the protection of a stronger, “masculine” other (Gevisser, 1994). In the previous chapter I discuss several versions of “masculinity” and their association with violence. Miners often had a strong sense of masculinity, especially as defined through physical strength and violence, in part due to the ubiquitous danger of working the mines, and racial conflict with white miners (Macheke & Campbell, 1998). As such these marriages reproduced dominant, heteronormative constructions of marriage as involving a strict gender hierarchy. These marriages were often solemnised with a ceremony very like a traditional Christian
marriage with the “wife” wearing a white dress (Gevisser, 1994), perhaps signifying the couple’s willingness not to further subvert relationship norms.

However, these marriages were not legally recognised, and usually disbanded when the mine husband decided or was forced to return to his home in a rural area (Gevisser, 1994). The migrant labour system encouraged impermanence in relationships. Husbands who left the rural areas often took girlfriends or mine wives. These polygamous relationships were seen as beneficial, even by the women in these marriages, and women living in and around Johannesburg in the 1980s described polygamous marriage as better for women than monogamous marriage. Women described several advantages to a polygamous marriage: they believed that they could share labour with other wives, had more resources (for example time and money) at their disposal than women with one husband, could have close companionable relationships with other wives, had greater freedom of influence by their husbands and could develop ties with other wives such that children could be sent to healthier, rural areas than did women in a monogamous marriage. Another factor in the continuance of the practice of polygamy may have been a lack of men of marriageable age. Many men were in prisons for trivial crimes or for their political activities. In the city it was also desirable for women to be married because, under the Group Areas Act, a black woman could not reside in an area if she was not married to a man employed there (Anderson, 2000). These benefits probably provided advantage to wives who were able to remain in the cities. Wives in the rural areas, already impoverished by their lack of resources, may have been more likely to lose contact with their husbands and their income than wives in a monogamous marriage.

Jackson and Scott (1992) describe a resistance to monogamy as a practice that could undermine the hold of heteronorms. By refusing to enter into traditionally monogamous relationships with men, they suggest that women can avoid some of the dominance implicated in heterosexual relationships. However, this resistant practice requires that both male and female partners potentially be allowed to have more than one partner. In the South African context, it is only men who take more than one wife, and women who required the legislative protection of a male partner (especially in the cities). As such, this non-monogamous practice can not be read as resistant to heteronorms. Neither can mine-marriages be understood as entirely resistant, since these unions reproduced in
sometimes violent ways the dominance inherent in heterosexual marriages, of a male miner over his “wife” (Gevisser, 1994; Macheke & Campbell, 1998).

In this section I have described several ways in which South Africans have subverted heteronorms. While these subversions may have been transient, or arose from a legislative context that no longer applies, these are forms of relatedness that historically undermine heteronorms centred on matrimony. Marriage by hat, mine marriages and polygamy are instances in which performers disadvantaged by Apartheid legislation have resisted or had no choice but to resist heteronormative ways of being. This resistance was in part a reaction to legislation that attempted to control South African citizens based on race, and implies that these couples were marginalised not only because of their race but also because of the inability to perform as a normal, heterosexual subject.

**Containing the majority populace**

Yet another way that the government sought to limit the number of black people in the cities was to control population growth. South Africa was the earliest British colony to sanction and embrace contraception and family planning, but this consent to contraceptive use was unevenly applied. Among many of the white population contraceptives were viewed as immoral, on religious grounds, but also because limiting the growth of the white population was perceived as a threat to dominion over the black majority. Initially contraceptive use was endorsed to curb the “poor white problem”. This was a group of white people living below the poverty line after being forced from their land and into the cities by land legislation. Here their standard of living was barely distinguishable from black families, and this was understood to pose a threat to white rule.

As early as 1963 the South African government provided funding for contraceptives, and in 1974 the government established the Family Planning Programme which provided black women (who had little or no access to other medical services) with free contraceptives, often under coercive circumstances (Swartz, 2007). Sometimes women in hospital to deliver a baby were injected with Depo Provera without their knowledge or consent. A senior administrator of the Ministry of Health confessed at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that these initiatives were undertaken with the express purpose of limiting the size of the black population (Klausen, 2004).
Such initiatives may be read as attempts to control the bodies of black women, and thereby ensure the power base of the white minority. In this way, disciplinary powers serve to consolidate power by limiting the corporeal performances available to black women. In a sense, black couples were denied access to a particular expression of heteronormative togetherness. In attempting to limit the “non-white” population of the country, the government tried to create a non-procreative form of heterosexual togetherness in “non-white” couples, and to encourage a super-procreative togetherness in white couples. While non-white couples were limited in this manner, white couples were actively encouraged to procreate. Tax laws favoured larger, white families, and women were encouraged to mark special occasions, such as the centenary of the Great Trek, with the birth of a child (Klausen, 2004). Here constructions of the heteronormative requirement toward procreation are distinctly racialised.

This concern for limiting the size of the black population was justified by the eugenic ideals of a strong white race. All other races were viewed as biologically inferior, and thus the restriction of growth of these populations was reasonable. Another concern for the government was maintaining the purity of the white race, by preventing so-called mixed relationships. That is sexual intercourse of marriages between members of different races. The first anti-miscegenation laws were passed by the officials of the Dutch East India Company in 1685. This law prevented extramarital sex between a black man and a white woman, but not the other way around. Initially, sex between white men and black women was even encouraged in order to increase the white population in the colonies. The need to reproduce may explain the need to protect access to white women, especially as eugenic notions of racial purity seeped into the colony’s consciousness. Only later would the Immorality Act of 1949 further curtail interracial sex with the overt aim of maintaining racial purity, for both religious and genetic reasons, and later the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 strengthened the Apartheid government’s anti-miscegenation policy. Evidence presented by the government appointed Commission on Mixed Marriages begun in 1934 showed that the number of mixed marriages declined between 1930 and 1950, so it is likely that the laws had more symbolic than practical value (Blair, 2003).

This limiting of reproduction demonstrates the intersection of constructions of sexuality and race. The heteronormal couple can be understood as one that is racially pure. In this way, heteronorms may be implicated in maintaining racial boundaries and categories, and
the legislation of this sexual and racial purity allowed these boundaries to be policed and monitored (Blair, 2003). While the legislation no longer remains in contemporary South Africa, it is not clear that these constructions of racial and sexual purity have been dismantled. Couples of “mixed” race are still not common (F.J. Davis, 2003). This concern for the cultural and racial purity of a couple, and perhaps also significantly their progeny, may still hold in the “new” South Africa.

The manner in which the Apartheid government made use of legislation to structure heterosexual relationships, through the awarding of a home and the enforced use of contraceptives, demonstrates the manner in which institutions shape performances between men and women. These are instances in which institutional control is transferred to individual subjects and inter-subjective couples, by means of legislation that may be internalised through technologies of self (Foucault, 1984) and relationship. Possibly because heterosexual couples are the means through which citizens of a nation are reproduced, government institutions have a stake in shaping the manner in which relationships are performed. Acceptable citizens are those that give abide by the laws of the land (Gauntlett, 2002; Reddy, 2006)

The creation of heterosexism
While this discussion has focused on the Apartheid government’s heterosexism and sexism, these prejudices were not limited to those in power. South Africa’s history of political struggle has centred on notions of moral good, linked to what is natural. The Apartheid government argued that black people are naturally less intelligent that white people (Ellison & de Wet, 2002), and that it is natural for people of the same race to live together, that it is unnatural for interracial romance to occur (Ratele, 2005). On the other hand, the African nationalist, resistance movement argued for a different conception of natural that allows all races to live together. Understandably this new conception of South African society was the focus of the struggle, but this focus initially obscured and excluded the needs of women and homosexual individuals (Cock, 2005). In this section I shall examine the ways that issues of gender and sexuality have become politicised, and I shall interpret the implications of these changes.

In the early days of the struggle against Apartheid, much of the resistance leadership felt that racial politics were necessarily a priority, forcing issues of gender and sexual
liberation to be undermined. Many African National Congress (ANC) leaders actually expressed overtly homophobic positions, but this remained unchallenged until the 1990s (Gevisser, 1994). In the end it was the gay activist Peter Tatchell who successfully engineered that the liberation of homosexual South Africans be included alongside racial liberation within ANC political policy. Also the arrest, trial and three year detention of openly gay activist Simon Nkoli as part of the Delmas treason trials, helped to align gay rights with race rights within the struggle (Cock, 2005).

During the Apartheid regime, male homosexuality was legislated as a crime by sodomy laws that prohibited sex between men. This stance relied on patriarchal understandings of naturalness (D. Foster, 1995). It is significant that similar arguments were espoused by the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) in its opposition to the inclusion of gay rights in the new 1994 constitution. Political opposition to the inclusion of homosexuality in the equality clause of the South African Constitution focused on notions of African tradition, Christianity and normality.

In Africa, opposition to homosexuality is often linked to the belief that it is un-African. This view has been most vocally espoused by Zimbabwean president, Robert Mugabe, and the view still persists. However, there is anthropological evidence to the contrary. This research suggests that homosex occurred and occurs in many African cultures, but that this is not perceived as an immutable marker of identity (Cock, 2005). By associating sex (often defined as simply the penetration of a vagina by a penis) with African-ness, constructions of intimacy, pleasure and relatedness are limited to relationships between men and women. While heterosex is at least condoned by this discourse, it is curtailed to the single act that Potts’ (2001) research characterises as culminating in a physical and emotional merging of partners through orgasm. It excludes as illicit numerous variations on the theme, and a performance of sexuality that allows for action that does not arise from a stable and static sexual identity. To the extent that this normalised sexual identity has become associated with African-ness, it is possible to link heterosex with African-ness and homosex with un-African-ness (Ratele, 2005).

Posel (2000) argues that liberation brought with it consumer products that sanctions denied Apartheid South Africans. This led to increasing consumerism and globalisation, accompanied by an influx of Western ideological constructs, including those centred on
sexual activity and sexuality as contributors to individual identity. A changeable notion of sexuality is not compatible with such a construction of sexual subjectivity, and heterosexuality became subject to prescriptions of normality. As such it is possible to understand homophobia, rather than homosexuality, as the Western import.

The autobiography of Linda Ngcobo, a member of the Gay and Lesbian Organisation of the Witwatersrand (GLOW), can be read as demonstrating the close association between heterosexuality and the new South Africa. Linda was a Zulu male, who grew up believing she was female. She wore women’s clothes and played a traditionally female role within her household, a role sanctioned by both her parents. However, he also identified as stabane, the Zulu word used to designate an effeminate partner in a male same-sex couple, and also a skesana, roughly translated as “a boy who likes to be fucked” (Donham, 2005, p. 254). Although she wore women’s clothes some of the time, and acted as a woman in order to seduce men or to keep a relationship going, he also knew that “skesanas always have the biggest dicks” (p. 169) and that this could threaten a male partner (McLean & Ngcobo, 1994). She died of AIDS in 1993.

Linda described sexuality before becoming an activist as a flexible, mutable performance. In a sense it would not be possible for Linda to be other than gay in a context removed from the struggle. Yet, for Linda liberation and gayness made Soweto unsafe for him and other skesanas (Donham, 2005). While a victory over Apartheid included sexual liberation, these notions of sexual liberation (that have led to South Africa’s very inclusive constitution) have made homosexuality increasingly visible as a concrete, immutable identity. This can be read as an instance in which homosexuality has come under the influence of monologic forces that in part have fixed its meaning. However, this increased permanence of homosexuality is not necessarily increased acceptance into heteronormative constructions. The tendency to view same-sex practice as a predetermined identity is an ambiguous development. In a similar sense, same-sex marriage campaign can be read both as a queering of the heteronormative institution of marriage, and as a normalising and de-politicising of same-sex practice. I shall discuss this in more depth in the final section of this chapter.

Further, the visibility implied by the move towards a discernible homosexual identity continues to make same-sex men and women the targets of physical violence. Especially
for those with fewer socio-economic resources available to them, hate-crimes have become more prevalent. Although homosexuality is protected as a human right and legislation continues to broaden the rights of homosexual men and women in South Africa, there is much evidence to suggest that this protects predominantly the white middle class (Reddy, 2004). The legislative advances made by the 1996 Constitution, do not necessarily impact on the lives of all individuals without consideration of race or socio-economic status.

**Sexism in the New South Africa**

Rights for women were not initially included within the agenda of the struggle against Apartheid. Women were not allowed to be members of the ANC at its inception, and were first included in a separate organisation affiliated to the ANC. However, an all-woman march to Parliament to protest pass laws on 9 August 1959 confirmed that women were to play an important role in the struggle (Bennett, 2001). As such, all South African women, of all races have experienced patriarchal domination, although not to the same degree. While it can be argued that both Afrikaner and African women have been associated with nationalism and domesticity, the characteristics of the imagined nation and the constructed home are quite different. Afrikaner women can be understood to have colluded with and benefited from the oppression of African women, even though they experienced the domination of “masculine” others in their lives (McLintock, 1991). These racial differences in gender inequality notwithstanding, there have been increased legislative protection of women of all races in recent years.

The government is ostensibly committed to equal rights for men and women, and encourages affirmative action along gender (as well as racial) lines. In parliament, the 50/50 initiative aims to include 50% women representatives (Ngcuka, 2006). While this highly publicised and highly visible campaign suggests a commitment to gender equality, the governmental statistics bureau reports that white men are still more likely to be employed (73% of the male population) and also to receive higher wages (approximately R17 per hour) than all racial categories of women. African women receive the lowest wages (approximately R1.20 per hour) and are most likely to be unemployed (36% of the female population), probably because a lack of educational, transport and domestic
resources prevent many from even interviewing for employment. Only African men are less likely that even white women to be employed, and there is thus continued racial and gender disadvantage in the South African employment arena (Statistics South Africa, 2006).

Bennett (2001) argues that the legislative protection provided women by the ANC government do not reach individuals. She suggests that “deafness” characterises the South African social, governmental, legislative and economic contexts, and calls for the voices of women to be heard. It is possible to argue that South African law has extended protection to women, but this seems to have done little to change the prevalence of violence and abuse. New legislation implemented by the post-1994 government has included what can be seen as ensuring extensive protection against domestic violence, a redrafting of customary marriage laws that gave wives few rights, a redrafting of the definition of rape to include abuse other than un-consented penetration of the vagina by a penis and also rape within marriage. Despite these liberal alterations, there is little evidence to suggest change in the prevalence of such violence (Jewkes, 2002; Rassol Bassodien & Hochfeld, 2005; Sarthiparsad, 2005). This lack of change could be read as a result of a reluctance or inability to theorise the ways in which gender is linked to issues of HIV and AIDS, to democratisation, and to issues of human rights (Bennett, 2001).

It is also possible to assume the position that violence against women is in general a concern that arises in African countries only in a post-colonial context (Bennett, 2001). The oppression of black women has taken an overtly sexual turn in most colonial contexts. African men and women, perceived by colonists as no better than animals, were understood to be subject to their uncivilised instincts, and therefore promiscuous and sexually predatory. The form of the African female subject became constructed in this historical moment as evidence of disobedience in terms of sexuality, and colonists could be excused for raping women, or severely beating their slave women to keep them in line (Levine, 2004). In this way, it is possible to read South Africa’s colonial past as an exercise of violent control over bodies. As such black women could be understood to experience double discrimination in such a context. In this sense they are subject to control both because of their gender, and because of their race.
It is possible that this discourse of control and violence, especially as directed toward African women, has contributed to the pervasive culture of violence that characterises South Africa in the present day. In the previous chapter I discuss how Breckenridge (1998), Glaser (1998), Mooney (1998) and Swart (1998) detail violence as central to particular and varied South African masculinities within particular social and historical moments. South Africa’s long history of legislated control of other (than white) races, perpetrated by the white elite, and in this context the struggle for freedom occurred (Bennett, 2001). Resistance to Apartheid often took the form of violence, which in turn called for aggressive retaliation. After the 1994 elections, this violence still characterises South African society, although it is now criminal rather than political. Much of this violence is directed at children and women, and South Africa has a high prevalence of rape (Posel, 2000). This rape is often perpetrated within the context of marriage or of intimate relationships. While legislation has been directed at providing increased protection for women against domestic violence, social constructions of relationships as private curtail this protection (Rassol Bassodien & Hochfeld, 2005; Sathiparsad, 2005). In the previous chapter I argue that sexual relationships involve a degree of coercion and violence, and that this performance is a form of hegemonic masculinity, constructed and constrained by disciplinary power (Pattman, 2005; Sathiparsad, 2005; Selikow, Zulu & Cedras, 2002).

“All things less is not equal”
I have argued that it is the colonial and Apartheid past that place South African women in the path of violence. The new political dispensation has won at least superficial victories for women, and similarly for the homosexual community political battles have been won that ensure some protection from a marginalised past. Those victories are in some senses ambiguous in that through the battle for liberation, homosexuality has been named, and thereby disciplinary notions of its pathology have been entrenched (Donham, 2005). The legislative battles won on the homosexual population’s behalf are of value, in so far as they have increased the arenas in which the homosexual subject can be included as a citizen, and have advanced South Africa’s governmental policies ahead of those of some other governments across the globe (Reddy, 2006). However, these victories have also obscured the continuing heterosexual bias of the social context. As such, the South African terrain is a complex one. The Apartheid regime’s firm and overt establishment of a
particular version of heterosexuality as a moral imperative, and the ANC’s early homophobia and reluctance to relinquish notions of normativity point to hidden and ensconced notions of heterosexuality within the political context. It can be argued that the intersection of racial and sexual liberation has served to underscore the heteronormative alignment of South African society. This complexity can be illustrated with reference to the recent campaign for same-sex marriage legislation.

Marriage is currently constructed by legislation to be a relationship in which a man and a women promise certain economic duties and responsibilities to one another, and in South Africa male and female partners of all races are now equally protected under marriage law. As such the kinds of benefits and advantages I have detailed in the previous chapter are at least theoretically available to all heterosexual couples regardless of race, and both partners receive equal legislative protection. Couples who sign no ante nuptial contract are automatically understood to be wed in community of property with accrual. That is their financial and material assets, both those in their possession before marriage and those accumulated during marriage, are viewed as conjoined. By signing a contract, a couple may also marry in community of property without accrual, such that only their property from before the marriage is pooled, or out of community of property, so that both maintain rights over their separate assets. In either case, women are no longer perceived as minors as they were before the 1980s, and are able to sign contracts and own property without the permission of their husbands (Chambers, 2000).

A couple may also be married under customary law, and women now retain full rights to equality, freedom and dignity within such a marriage (Chambers, 2000). A woman who married a man under customary law controlled by Apartheid legislation was viewed as a minor under guardianship of her husband. Many basic rights of these customary wives were curtailed: she could not buy livestock, she could not have custody of her children, she could not sue or be sued, all money she earned automatically fell into her husband’s possession, she could own nothing of her own beyond personal affects, and could not marry without the consent of her father or male guardian (McClintock, 1991).
The same-sex marriage campaign has drawn attention to the unfair exclusion of same-sex couples under this legislation, and has been directed at securing these same rights for couples of the same sex. The case of Fourie v the Minister of Home Affairs, concluded November 30 2004, found that existing legislation unfairly excluded Ms Fourie and her same-sex partner from the rights and benefits of marriage. Roman Dutch law that still underwrites South African legislation defines marriage as between one man and one woman, and this effectively bars same-sex marriage. Having found the existing legislation to contradict the South African Constitution’s clauses for equality, dignity and freedom, the Constitutional Court gave the Department of Home Affairs until December 2006 to make provision for the marriage of same-sex couples in South Africa. Possible options included domestic partnerships (also open to heterosexual couples), civil unions (legislation that would be marriage-like and open to heterosexual couples as well), and the Constitutional Court judgement in Fourie vs the Minister of Home Affairs suggested that marriage (which would involve the drafting of new legislation) was viewed as the only constitutional option (Reddy, 2006).

Judge Cameron, in his reflections on the judgement, stated that the exclusion of same-sex partners from marriage legislation implied inferiority in these couples, and denied them a full part in the community promised by the Constitution (Shäfer, 2006). This judgement reflects the close association that same-sex rights have had with human rights, in the context of the struggle against Apartheid. To exclude same-sex partners from any legislation would contradict the new Constitution, a piece of legislation forged in the violent struggle for basic human rights for all South African citizens and that in part defines the tolerant, inclusive culture at the heart of the “New South Africa” (Cock, 2005; Gevisser, 1994).

Reddy (2006) argues that the South African government has, since the fall of Apartheid, slowly begun the process of instating the homosexual South African citizen. Through the alteration of legislation, homosexuality has gradually been decriminalised. This process can be seen to have begun with the repeal of sodomy laws, such as the Criminal Procedures Act 52 of 1977, the Offences Act 23 of 1982, and the Sexual Offenders Act 23 of 1957. These acts made sodomy, a sexual act strongly associated with male homosexuality, illegal. The repeal of these laws has allowed homosexual men to increase
their claim to a place in the nation by legalising acts strongly associated with homosexuality. Further legislation has instated the rights of homosexual men and women, and the alterations in marriage law can be understood as the final stage in decriminalisation that will provide homosexual South Africans with full citizenship rights. In so far as marriage legislation can be viewed as revealing the state’s relationship with its citizens, marriage laws that exclude same-sex marriage can be understood as the state’s failure to include homosexual men and women as a legitimate part of the nation. By explicitly including homosexual men and women in such legislation, an alternate sexuality is incorporated as a legitimate choice of performance.

While the Constitutional Court ruling suggested that this final barrier to the inclusion of same-sex persons into South African society was to be erased, the Department of Home Affairs has been reluctant to fully embrace the notion of same-sex marriage. Following consultative workshops around the country, and vehement religious and traditional opposition to the inclusion of same-sex marriage within legislation, the Department of Home Affairs instead drafted the Civil Union Bill of 2006. This act makes provision for civil unions between same-sex partners. These unions provide all the legislative benefits of heterosexual marriage, but impinge on the social, cultural and religious meanings associated with matrimony. The Civil Union Bill of 2006 obliges all marriage officers to re-register and to specify their willingness or unwillingness to perform same-sex unions, and does not require that all marriage officers perform this type of union. While the act allows couples to use the word marriage in the ceremony to solemnise their union, the union is recorded as a civil union on a separate register to marriages. The act may allow for heterosexual couples to opt for civil unions (although this is not clear) and in this way it perpetuates a separation between heterosexual marriage and same-sex civil unions. Same-sex factions have been placated by the promise that this legislation marks an interim solution, until the South African populace is more tolerant of same-sex marriage than at present (E. Naidu, personal communication, February 18, 2007).

Both the campaign and it’s (to date) partial success are important to understanding the South African context. In the post-Apartheid political era such a campaign directed at gaining equality for a minority population appeals to the new liberal and inclusive dispensation enshrined by the new Constitution. Such a partial success may reflect the partial acceptance and incomplete assimilation of the homosexual citizen into South
African society. While the battle is a significant one to fight, the campaign is in some ways reproducing and reflecting the heteronormativity that is extant in South African society. I have argued in the second chapter that marriage is a quite pervasive, monolithic and powerful manifestation of heteronormativity, and it is noteworthy that homosexual South Africans should seek to assert their equality by claiming rights to the practice of marriage. Interestingly, the campaign slogan – “Anything less is not equal” – acknowledges that homosexual men and women hold a position of being “less” than the heterosexual majority, a situation the campaign seeks to redress. Rather than assert the already-equal position of homosexual relationships, the South African same-sex marriage campaign has sought to claim equality through entry into the heteronormative construction of marriage. The campaign was not directed at gaining rights for the multiplicity, difference and justifiability of the homosexual community or at questioning heteronormative institutions, but rather at gaining the same formalised sanction of relationships.

In contrast, queer theorists and queer activists might argue for the recognition of the strengths of same-sex relatedness. Rather than reproduce heteronormative patterns of relatedness, queer theory might invite appreciation of the potential for fresh, open, power-neutral, innovative relationships that some homosexual couples are able to create. Thomas (2000) has argued for the “queering” of heterosexuality, and perhaps the campaign for same-sex marriage can be interpreted as such an activity. That is, by including homosexual relationships within the previously heteronormal convention of marriage, this convention may be revitalised, renewed and politicised. However, Thomas (2000) also argues that there is danger in too quickly “queering” heterosexuality. It is possible that the revolutionary and anti-normative potential of homosexual subjectivities would be lost by unthinkingly incorporating them into such a monolithic, heteronormative entity such as marriage. The inclusion of same-sex couples into marriage legislation could also represent a move towards the normalisation of homosexuality, and not perhaps the politicisation or celebration of it.

Although homosexual subjects are not obliged to be political, anti-normative or queer, I have argued that homosexuality is constructed as an opposing and challenging sexuality. In so far as this is the case, the very category homosexual poses an inherent threat to heteronorms (Laqueur, 1997). For this reason, it seems perhaps reckless to attempt to seek the incorporation of this radical and insurgent position within a normative ritual such
as marriage. As such, it seems important to recognise the simultaneously revolutionary and normalising potential of including same-sex marriage into South African society. While it is important to extend full citizenship rights to homosexual South Africans, it is also possible that same-sex marriage represents a retreat from the radical potential of a homosexual or queer position. This critique is thus not intended to suggest that homosexual men and women continue to be legislatively excluded from particular aspects of social custom. However, I wish to argue that there are dangers in too easily appropriating a heteronormative ritual, especially for those individuals who are already disadvantaged by heteronormative structures: that is, as I have argued throughout these chapters, gay men, lesbian women and heterosexual women.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I have provided a broad historical, political and legislative context for heteronormativity in South Africa. I have argued that current constructions of heterosexuality as a norm for South Africans must be located within an understanding of the constraining political climate during colonial and Apartheid eras. These oppressive governing systems have legislated particular conceptions of marriage and the household that reflect and reproduce a heteronormative bias. This bias is also coloured by racial oppression, and this legislation has in part been directed at taming and controlling the indigenous cultures and black populations of South Africa. Processes of heteronormalisation could also thus be implicated in racial discrimination and domination. I have argued that although the transference of these values has had uneven, flexible, heteroglossic effects, it is possible that heteronormative ideals have come to structure and organise monologues of racial, gender and sexual inequality in South African society. For example, the circular houses of the Tswana were deemed disorderly so that missionaries attempted to modify their shape (J. Comaroff & J.L. Comaroff, 1997), and single women in 1950s townships were judged to be loose and government attempted to control them by rewarding heterosexual partners with housing (Posel, 2006).

Such governmental interventions into the lives of men and women have, to a degree, shaped the South African landscape, the spaces that men and women inhabit together as well as the values, ideals, wants and desires of all South Africans. However, the new
A democratically elected government has in part addressed this racial, gender (Bennett, 2001) and sexual (Reddy, 2004) inequality in the years that followed the end of Apartheid. While the politics of gender and sexuality were initially excluded from the politics of liberation, the new government has shown itself willing to attend to issues of gender and sexual discrimination, and there has been much successful, new, innovative legislation and government intervention to protect women (Bennett, 1991), and to a lesser degree homosexual men and women (Reddy, 2004). However, there is debate as to what degree the lives of individuals are benefited by these laws and initiatives. Much progress has been made toward providing rights and recourse to women, and homosexual men and women, but it is possible that a large segment of the population does not have access to these rights (Bennett, 2001; Reddy, 2004).

It is indicative that homosexual men, like Linda Ncgobo, experienced increased discrimination associated with their sexual preferences after the political environment changed (Donham, 2005). This change in attitudes toward homosexuality may be related to Western notions of sexual identity that are associated with consumer goods, advertising and lifestyle choices that became available following South Africa’s release from economic sanctions. Posel (2000) suggests that political liberation has implied sexual liberation, and that Western notions of sex and sexuality have attached to consumer goods and the liberation from social, political and economic constraints. In general, it is possible that these goods have come to imply heterosexuality as a desirable commodity. It could also be argued that consumerism has entrenched further heteronormative standards within South African society. Reddy (2006) notes that South African legislation has gradually decriminalised homosexuality, and has thereby instated homosexual individuals as citizens of the nation. Revision of marriage laws to include homosexual couples could be viewed as an extension of this process (Reddy, 2006), and in addition as a “queering” of the heterosexual tradition of marriage (Thomas, 2000).

While this is a necessary step toward gaining full citizenship for the homosexual community of South Africa, there is a danger that such a move could to a degree normalise homosexuality. Thomas (2000) believes that a queer position that is inclusive of diversity and multiplicity could liberate heterosexuality from the constraint of heteronormativity. It is possible that same-sex marriage could be viewed as a method to accomplish such a goal. However it is also possible that the customs associated with
matrimony and heteronormativity might function to normalise homosexuality. Although the campaign to secure marriage rights for the homosexual community is a political one that attends to the legislative exclusion of homosexual men and women from full access to citizenship, it does not address the political constraint that is represented by heteronormativity as it is idealised by marriage. The slogan “Anything less is not equal” can be interpreted as emphasising the importance of inclusion in heteronorms, rather the importance of politicising the dominion of the norm.
5 Methodology

Narratives of heterosexual togetherness

Previously I provided a theoretical and contextual backdrop for understanding the present research. In this chapter I shall describe the methodological procedures designed to undertake the activity of the research. In the second chapter I outline an understanding of performance that incorporates corporeal expressions of meaning alongside linguistic forms of meaning, and I suggest this understanding can be associated with a narrativist conception of meaning making (Fay, 1996). While narratives are usually strongly embedded within linguistic representations, they are also performances that are embodied (Crossley, 2000). In order to emphasise embodied, performatory aspects of the exploration, narratives shall be viewed as central to the research and data collection has incorporated two forms of data that rely on visual artefacts within the performance. Visual data, from soap opera episodes and photo-elicitation interviews, were collected. Although the visual aspects of the data cannot and do not capture all physical elements of the performances, the visual data extends and enriches the lexical transcriptions of the narratives (Banks, 2001).

In the first sections of this chapter I shall outline a rationale for the choice to assume a narrative stance to this research, and the choice to collect visual as well as lexical data. I argue for a particular use of the narrativist stance toward research that views these narratives as contingent and contextual. While narrative research may often tend toward presenting completed wholes that do not admit dialogue or alteration (Newman, 2000), I argue that narratives should be viewed as malleable and changeable. The specific relationship and context in which the narrative is performed is important to understanding and presenting meaning (Chase, 2005). In the current research the context in which both sets of data are told and performed have implications for the meaning associated with the stories, and I shall argue for a particular way of reading both data sets such that they are intelligible together. Following these motivations, I shall outline the choices I have made...
with regards to the research procedures. For each stage of the research, including sampling, data collection and data analysis, I shall describe the methods I have used and my reasons for these choices.

**Performing stories: a visual narrative framework**

Narrative research has arisen in many different disciplinary contexts including literary criticism, linguistics, sociology, anthropology and psychology. It is also a fairly recent field of inquiry, and is to an extent a “field in the making” (Chase, 2005, p.669). The approach thus benefits from fresh uses and insights into its functions and possibilities, and is relatively adaptable to a variety of purposes. It can be thought of as a fairly broad and diverse field that covers a range of topics, concerns, methodologies and questions. In general, a narrative approach views narratives as focal points for understanding the human social world (Polkinghorne, 1988). While narratives shall be viewed as contingent structures, the structure of narratives tends toward a singular conception of events, thereby obscuring the constructed-ness of subjectivity. This tendency shall be discussed in the following section. In order to describe how narratives can be conceived of as contingent, I shall first provide a definition of narratives as a sequence of events, focused on characters, that moves from a position of disruption to a place of stability. These definitions emphasise the ways that narratives imply coherence. However, it is also possible to view narratives as contingent constructions of meaning by locating narrative within a dialogue between monologic and heteroglossic positions (Bakhtin, 1994; de Peuter, 1998).

Having delineated the narrative stance that has shaped the current research, I shall argue for the inclusion of narratives that rely on visual elements to tell the story. By incorporating some visual data, and referring to data that relies on the performance of the narrative, the research is directed at exploring the performance of heterosexual togetherness. In order to elucidate on the worth of the visual data included in the project I shall outline some concerns regarding visual data within social science research, as well as concerns particular to soap opera and photo elicitation data.
Defining narrative

Narrative can be understood quite broadly or quite specifically. It may be understood as distinct from stories, tales and fictions, or these terms may be used as synonyms. While I shall view narratives as an inclusive, encompassing and extensive term, it is useful to situate this broad understanding within a rigorous definition of narrative. In this section I briefly review some contributions to precise delineations of narrative and narrative inquiry in order to provide a backdrop for a broader understanding of narratives I shall assume.

A structuralist understanding seeks to identify underlying, unifying characteristics that organise and shape all narratives. This may be quite a simple model, or it may be quite complex. Todorov (1967, in Wigston, 2001) recognises five stages in a narrative: a stage that is characterised by balance, a moment in which this stability is disturbed by an action or event, a period of identification of the source of the disturbance, an episode involving activity directed at restoring balance and an interlude in which equilibrium returns. In contrast to Todorov’s relatively straightforward classification of narrative, Propp’s (1969, in Berger, 2005) morphology of narrative structure is far more profuse. It makes use of numerous categories that classify and define each stage of a narrative. These categories are called functions because they define action. There are thirty-two narrative functions, each including numerous subcategories that precisely define each stage. Functions serve as the basic component of a narrative, and are constant elements that follow a stable sequence that is identical across narratives. Functions, according to Propp’s conception, are essential to understanding a narrative, as are the seven, typical narrative characters that perform the narrative activities. Although Propp’s functions refer to fairytales, his morphology can be extended to other narratives as well (Berger, 2005; Toolan, 2001; Wigston, 2001).

Todorov and Propp delineate narrative structure, to varying degrees of complexity. Despite their differences, the significant and unifying feature of the two models can be conceived as the emphasis on the sequential progression of events. In both models, the action proceeds from a state of crisis to some sort of resolution. These similarities in
structural definitions of narrative support Toolan’s (2001, p. 8) proposal that narratives be understood generally as:

...a sequence of logically and chronologically related events, [...] bound together by a recurrent focus [...] on one or more individuals (‘characters’), [...] in which a period of turbulence, crisis and uncertainty is superseded by a later stage of calm, solution or closure...

A narrative defined in this way, may be understood as constructed of two levels that Toolan (2001) refers to as the story and the discourse. Story refers to the structure of the narrative, the interrelated sequence of events performed by actors. Discourse indicates techniques that a storyteller might use to narrate. Here the choices a narrator makes regarding rhythm, pace, perspective, order of events, presentation of characters, as well as the narrator’s relationship with the narrative itself, influence the import of the discourse (Josselson, 1997; Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998).

As such, a narrative is constituted not only by logical and chronological relationships between events, settings, characters and actions, but also through the stylistic, interpretive and imaginative considerations of the narrator (Toolan, 2001). Narrators may not always present a thought-through, sequential or progressive version of a narrative (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998). In performing a story, a teller may repeat details, start in the middle of the tale and then jump forwards or backwards, and could include tangents that help to situate and fill out particulars of the setting, events or characters (Riessman, 1993). While Toolan’s (2001) definition is useful in understanding an ideal delineation of narrative, it shall be viewed as variable and flexible in the performance of narratives.

**Narrative wholeness and narrative partiality**

While this conception of narrative draws attention to idiosyncratic and possibly illogical, achronological stylistic choices in narrative construction, it is also a function of narrative to retrospectively organise experience into a coherent whole through the working of plot (Berger, 2005; Toolan, 2001). A narrative appears to create a unified structure of meaning from a complex set of possibly contradictory and confusing events. In this sense, narratives may simplify and amalgamate disparate elements, such that the narrative appears to be a singular representation of characters and events (de Peuter, 1998;
Newman, 2000). Narratives thus have the potential to make a coherent whole from a set of events, and there is a danger that this whole could function to obscure the ways in which narrators and narratives are active and contingent social products (Newman, 2000).

This property of narrative has been utilised by narrative therapy to assist clients in restructuring aspects of their lives that cause emotional pain. While the narrative is viewed as pliable to this extent, it is still viewed as a possession of the client, whether painful or renewed (Besley, 2002). The narrative approach to research is quite closely allied with narrative therapy, and has thus derived a tendency towards essentialist, interpretive inquiry (Besley, 2002; Newman, 2000).

Structuralist definitions of narrative, such as those proposed by Propp and Todorov, imply that only a limited number of elements exist within narrative, and analysis is a matter of identifying these specific elements as they appear in a specific narrative. In this way, these definitions support an essentialist understanding of narratives as fixed and unchanging entities. However, it is a virtue of narrative knowledge that it does not necessarily foreclose on a diversity of interpretations (Czarniawska-Jeorges, 2004; de Peuter, 1998). The theory that I have used to frame the research, presented in chapter two, suggests that meaning cannot be limited, and the Bakhtinian dialogic stance I shall assume views utterances as subject to competing forces that render meaning complex and contradictory (Gardiner, 2000). In order to capture this multiplicity of meaning, the current research shall make use of the broader, less structured definition provided by Toolan’s (2001), in order to include the narrator as an actor, bystander or observer to the event. Attention to the manner in which a narrative is actively performed and structured by the narrator and their context serve to emphasise the contingency of a narrative (Crossley, 2000). This is a constructivist understanding of narrative (Fay, 1999).

Rather than view the narrative as untied from the subjective choice of the narrator, untied from its performatory, embodied contexts, the narrative method should capture the activity of language that is necessary to queering heterosexuality. Utterances construct meaning in the context of specific relationships between specific people (Gardiner, 2000). Language activity is not only an active process in which two or more people strive to
communicate through words, but also a physical activity that includes (but is not limited to) gesture, movement, posture, spatial positioning and setting. These material aspects of a performance serve to locate the performance in a specific social and spatial setting (Burkitt, 1999), and are as integral and as meaningful as the exchange of immaterial words and phrases (Gardiner, 2000).

Burkitt (1999) argues that lived experience is not reducible to social constructions and discourses, or to the physical body. Rather, it is both the body and society that contribute to an experience. Horton (2002) describes the ritual performances in Kalabari society that involve a complex and subtle interplay of social and religious relatedness, physical skill and material artefacts. It is not only their skill as a dancer or their physical strength and endurance that allow a member of Kalabari society to engage with their gods, it is also painstakingly constructed costuming, their memory for religious information, their relationships to other villagers. While not all stories have such metaphysical connotations, the delivery of a spoken narrative also entails such complexity of social constructions, embodiment and relatedness (Burkitt, 1999).

While social constructions influence a performance, the spatial location of a performance is also important to understanding a performance. The performance of a narrative is shaped by the physical and spatial context in which it is performed. Foucault's (1979) conception of power views it as spatially inscribed, and thus the setting of a performance is integral to understanding that performance. Hetherington (1998) argues that identity is inextricably linked to the places it is performed. Certain performances, especially those that enact political resistance to specific social norms, rely on a particular space on which to stage the performance to derive their meaning. This usually involves conspicuously appropriating a space and staging an oppositional activity, for example mass protests against nuclear weapons, saboteurs disturbing fox hunting, camps set up to disrupt road building, mineral extraction or logging operations. These European examples can be compared to South African instances, such as the 1956 woman’s march to protest the pass laws (McCIntock, 1991), and the use of township and city spaces to create territories for gangs to express their authority (Glaser, 1998) and with current instances of the burning of property in townships to protest poor service delivery.
I have argued in the previous sections that embodied, social and spatial contexts are integral to understanding narratives. However, these aspects of lived experience and narratives are not usually adequately included within narrative approaches. Though narratives may be viewed as performances within other narrative projects, these embodied aspects are most often reduced to a few audible and lexical markers, and the physical, material aspects of the story are lost. The social, cultural, economic, historical, geographical and spatial location of language activity adds to the sense that can be derived from a narrative or language activity (Bakhtin, 1994; Burkitt, 1999; Shotter & Billig, 1998). While it is not possible to include the entirety of these elements into a data set, in the current research visual representations shall be included in the data in order to incorporate some aspects of the corporeal expression of togetherness (Banks, 2001; Emmison & Smith, 2000; Harper, 1998). In the following section I shall outline some central issues surrounding the use of visual data, in order to make sense of the role the television and photographic data could play in understanding South African relationships.

**Visual social research**

Banks (2001) argues that the social sciences, and the academic context, privilege lexical representation above visual representation, in that the communication of concepts is understood as the proper and appropriate function of social and academic research. Visual media is in this way of thinking secondary to linguistic communications (Prosser, 1998). As such, visual representations in the forms of graphs, flow charts, diagrams artistic works and photographs have been understood as supplementary to the text that linguistically communicates findings in “scientific” research papers and academic books (Banks, 2001). This may be especially true of qualitative research, although the visual representations of quantitative findings may be viewed as merely supportive of the lexical text that elucidates the meaning of the data.

The marginalisation of the visual in social research may be related to the politics of representation (Emmison & Smith, 2000). In sociology, this central problematic can be linked to conceptions of visual (especially photographic) evidence as providing a means of surveillance, supervision and government of certain sectors of society. In the first part of
the twentieth century, when cameras and photographs became available to the public, these were understood to form true representations of the world (Prosser, 1998). As such, the camera became a tool within anthropology and sociology for capturing large amounts of data to be empirically studied. Photographs were used as recording devices to document working conditions in factories, living conditions in industrialising cities, and the practices, rituals, and behaviours of human groups (Harper, 2004).

While photographs can be and still are used in this manner, such a realist conception is in counterpoint to the constructionist stance of this research. For this reason, photographs shall be understood as texts that can be interpreted very much like an artistic work (Emmison & Smith, 2000; Harper, 1998). This is a view of visual media as actively constructed, making use of techniques that produce particular effects (Harper, 2004). While the creator of the image may have fixed intentions in its creation, Banks (2001) points out that vision is not a natural and therefore monolithic process. Rather it is an activity that is mediated by cultural and historical specificities that influence the reading of an image. As such, visual media are cultural artefacts that reveal certain expressions of a society (Harper, 2001).

Especially considering digital based images and the technologies that can alter them, the verisimilitude of the photograph or visual media is challenged. Still, there remains an indexical relationship between an image and an object, and most films, photographs and some art objects represent, or stand for the thing that is being depicted (Banks, 1998, 2001; Harper, 2004). This property of visual media can be utilized in the current research, where photographs shall represent aspects of couples’ relationships.

In light of the active construction and editing of photographic representations, the social sciences have had to interrogate the ethics of using of images as research tools (Harper, 1998). Such projects may frequently be viewed as intrusive and insulting to research subjects or to readers. Photographs may display offensive material or could violate the rights of individuals (Emmison & Smith, 2000). Although these considerations have been derived from anthropological and sociological work (Banks, 2001), it is likely that these reasons also contribute to the marginal use of visual research in psychology. Ethical
treatment of photographic material is imperative, considering such political issues concerning representation (Harper, 2004).

This difference extends to the kinds of interpretations and findings that can be derived from such textual artefacts. In order to continue my exploration of the ways that these forms of data can relate to one another, I shall present some important considerations in understanding the textual construction and interpretation of soap operas, and of the photographs used in interviews.

**Soap opera narratives**

It can be argued that in an increasingly globalised and technologised society, power is transmitted predominantly through visual media. Discourses that produce and reproduce subjectivity and the social world become constructed as visual commodities in programming, and distributed extensively across the nation. Visual media can thus be understood as another technology to transmit disciplinary power (Gauntlett, 2002). Within the plethora of visual technologies that convey social norms in this manner, television is arguably the most accessible and pervasive (Barker, 1999). Even in a country like South Africa, where the provision of basic services does not reach every household, the public broadcaster the South African Broadcast Corporation (SABC) boasts of reaching an audience of approximately 17.5 million (89% of all adult television viewers) (SABC, 2007).

There has been much research devoted to understanding the influence that visual messages have over viewers of that message, and such research is premised on the assumption that visual media such as television has some sort of effect on audiences (Livingstone, 1998). This assumption reflects the belief that television messages are by no means neutral, but are constructed so as to convey particular meanings to the viewing public (Ang, 1996). While initial research, such as Bandura’s bobo doll experiments, supported the view that audiences learn behaviour directly from watching visual messages, this analysis has recently come under critical scrutiny (Ang, 1996; Barker, 1999; Livingstone, 1998). Rather than view audiences as cultural dupes, lured into and made stupid by the transient pleasures of illusory capital, audiences are understood to formulate and hold opinions about what they see. Audiences refer to their life experiences,
rhetorically constructed opinions and preferences to interpret visual media (Livingstone, 1998).

While audiences can and do interpret visual materials, these messages can be interpreted as structured by concerns for audience norms. Soap operas can be viewed as constructed in terms of a particular understanding of gender and “femininity”, addressing concerns for the private and what is constructed as the “feminine” domain (Geraghty, 1991). Modeleski (1997) argues the multiple storylines and multiple characters resist identification with a single, overarching perspective, associated with a patriarchal viewpoint. Instead this multiplicity may insist on the significance of each individual character and deny an unambiguous subject position. Fiske (1995) argues that the disruption imposed on the narrative structure prevents the performance of a conclusion. Deferment of the pleasure of conclusion, and the refusal to define through closure can be understood to be “feminine” tendencies, in opposition to the “masculine” need to seek a secure and final ending.

These features notwithstanding, it could be argued that soap operas continue to have a largely female viewership, despite increasing numbers of male viewers (Dentlinger, 1999). They are therefore likely to be constructed to reflect women’s concerns. The implication of the gendered construction of soap operas is arguable. On one hand, Fiske (1995) suggests that the unending middle of the soap opera enslaves women viewers, who are forever denied the satisfaction of a conclusion. Alternatively, Modelski (1997) contends that soap operas provide a perspective that resists patriarchal forms of representation, and thereby celebrates feminine tropes and concerns.

**Photo elicitation narratives**

While soap operas are accessible to any South African with a television set, the narratives that structure couple’s togetherness are accessible to an audience closely related to a particular couple. As such, they are constructed for use of a different audience and in a different context. Photographs are constructed to remind friends and family of significant events and people (Banks, 2001; Prosser & Schwartz, 1998). In this research these artefacts have been used in an entirely different context, and as such these visual texts must be understood within the framework of a research interview.
Photo-elicitation interviewing is a method used primarily in ethnographic settings. In these interviews, a photograph serves as a prompt for discussion. The photo is usually taken from an archive or private collection, from the personal collection of the participant or sometimes the researcher and a participant may take a photograph together, and then discuss this co-constructed image. In each case the image is used to discuss issues related to the photograph’s content as well as broader concerns. A photograph can be helpful in focusing on details that are vague in the memory of the interviewee, and can assist in reminding the participant of specific events, thoughts or information they have experienced regarding the topic of discussion. The presentation of a familiar or unfamiliar image, on a topic of mutual interest, can help the informant remember new information or see things in a new way, thus opening the way for a co-constructed interpretation of the photograph (Banks, 2001; Harper, 2004).

As such, photographs function to structure a research interview. Within this narrative research, the photographs served the invaluable purpose of locating the interview within a narrative framework (Prosser & Schwartz, 1998). In a narrative interview it is essential that the conversation be directed at stories participants tell regarding a topic, rather than at generalities and abstractions. The photographs assisted in setting a tone that placed the participants’ experiences at a position of centrality, and effectively grounded the interview in the lives of the participants (Banks, 2001). In these ways they were an invaluable addition to the narrative interviews.

In narrative research, it is important that the interviewer have an idea of what kinds of stories are told by individuals in a specific culture, organisation or social setting. This enables the interviewer to structure questions that will elicit the kinds of narratives ordinarily told in this setting (Chase, 1995; Czarniawska-Jeorges, 2004). Chase (2005) indicates that narrative interviewers are caught in a paradox: they must be ready with an understanding of what is worthy of storytelling, but a narrative is always particular and original and cannot be prepared for in advance. In the current research interviews, the element of the spontaneous, unpredictable and unplanned, that is required to obtain narrative performances in interviews, arose quite easily from the photographic content.
Photo-elicitation interviewing seems a constructive addition to the narrative interviewing stance.

While a researcher always holds power over the research product and process, the photographs functioned as material evidence that the couples also held a certain degree of power. Rather than an interview controlled by the researcher, the photograph-elicitation opened the way for couples to assume the role of active and authoritative storytellers (Banks, 2001; Emmison & Smith, 2000). The images also helped put the couples at ease. In photo-elicitation interviews the participants are relieved of the need to fill silences, make eye contact, and provide a full account of themselves. The photograph may be referred to as a kind of “neutral third party” (Banks, 2001, p. 88). This relief from the pressure of the interview context was an important mediating factor in the context of a couples’ interview, and helped to set an intimate tone to the conversation.

**Relating television to people and words to pictures**

In the above sections I have argued that the data sets are constructed by different concerns. Because these serials are produced and then aired very rapidly, they reflect immediate, current beliefs and attitudes. South African productions are mandated to present material that deals with specific issues and concerns of the South African viewing public (Dentlinger, 1999), and so the narratives contained in these programmes should reflect up-to-date concerns and preferences of the viewing public. While audiences should be able to make sense of these narratives in many, varied ways, the narratives are created with a certain degree of foreclosure (Bahktin, 1994) because of the characteristics of the genre that I have described (Gergahty, 1991). In this way, the television narratives have been highly crafted, and represent generalised, power-inscribed stories (Modelski, 1997).

Personal depictions of couples, though presented in an unnatural research setting, have a degree of privacy and personal location. Importantly, the couples’ stories were understood to be produced through the social effects of power, as well as their own subjective, stylistic innovations. Because the interview context allows specific aspects of togetherness to be explored and considered, the interview data has provided an in-depth perspective on
relationships that has been enriched by the soap opera narratives. This property of the couples’ narratives provides the opportunity to explore resistance and deviation, as well as the central theme of heteronormativity, and is thus vital to the research. In this way the two data sets were collected to provide alternative and complementary expressions of heterosexual togetherness.

**Performing research procedures**

The research seeks to answer the questions:

- What stories from soap operas and those told by couples in photo-elicitation interviews construct togetherness in the South African context as normative?
- How are narratives that express alternatives to normativity included in stories of heterosexual togetherness?

In the following sections I shall describe the procedures I used in the sampling and collection of materials in order to answer these questions. For each of these procedures, I shall treat the data sets as separate since they are quite different social artefacts.

**Soap opera sampling**

The research focused only on one locally produced television serial for two reasons: Scenes selected from soap opera format were intended to reflect and extend certain themes associated with relationships and not to be representative or exhaustive of all possible portrayals of couples on television. Further, it would be an overwhelmingly large task to sift through all episodes of all South African soaps, especially as many are aired in the same time slot, and so the data set was limited to one particularly apt serial.

Isidingo was chosen for its multiracial cast that reflects the diversity of sampling for the interviews. It has a large audience (second only to the predominantly black audience of Generations). It is performed predominantly in English (with some Afrikaans, Sotho and
Zulu) whereas most South African soaps, such as Sevende Laan, Egoli and Generations, are less multilingual. This could also ensure a diversity of viewership. The action is centred on a business and the families, employees and friends associated with that business, as is typical of soaps. The range of characters included in the drama is in this case less defined than in soaps such as Backstage, which describes the lives of staff and students at a school for the performing arts, or less typical late night soaps, that sometimes deal with more adult themes and are more sexually explicit, like Scandal or Generations (Geraghty, 1991). As such, the soap appeals to the broadest range of viewers, as defined by race and class, of all locally produced soaps, while also adhering to the typical features of the genre.

**Presenting visual stories**

Scenes from Isidingo were chosen to reflect stories that South African society tell of heterosexual togetherness. Stories that could be viewed as contributing to a description of heterosexual relationships were identified. The literature suggests that the issues of marriage, love and sex are central to constructs of heteronormativity, and that heterosexuality is defined as different from homosexuality and partners as different from one another. These themes as well as themes identified from the interview narratives, structured the choice of excerpts included in the study. Excerpts were chosen for their narrative vivacity and dynamism, and their power to evoke a pertinent and indicative moment in a narrative strand presented in the show as aired between March and May 2007.

Scenes from the television episodes were translated into text in order to be analysed. Stills from the scenes in which the narratives took place have not been included because of the difficulty of reducing the scene or narrative strand to a single image. In converting visual and aural data into a written form, it was important to attempt to preserve the meaning of the data. With this in mind, sections from soap opera episodes reflecting relevant issues were converted to text by describing in detail the characters, action, scenery, expressions, gestures, movements. Here aspects of performance (including gesture, facial expression, posture, and spatial placing) that convey meaning were especially important to capture. A transcription of relevant dialogue is provided and in order to contextualise the section, a summary of the drama in which the section is situated have also been provided (Durmaz, 1999). An external viewer was asked to validate these summaries by viewing the excerpts
and reading the transcriptions. Omissions and/or disagreements in descriptions were discussed, until consensus was reached regarding changes to the transcription. (Excerpts from the soap opera are included in this format in Appendix A.)

Although such contextualising features were not included in the interview narratives, they served to include some aspects of the physical performance of the soap opera narratives. Since it is not possible to include within the report the entire visual component of each narrative strand that appeared in the soap opera, these details provided invaluable traces of the embodied performances of the stories. These situating and contextualising elements were necessary for the analysis (Durmaz, 1999), and underline the differences between the interview and soap opera data. While the soap opera narratives are polished performances, spoken with minimal hesitations and involving few digressions and tangents to the central narrative, the interview stories include hesitations, digressions and asides. The significance of these differences shall be dealt with in greater detail in the analysis chapters where relevant.

**Isidingo: The need**

Isidingo is a half hour long serial that premiers daily on weekdays at six thirty in the evenings on SABC 3. Repeat episodes are shown the next day, at eleven in the morning, and again in an omnibus edition, including all episodes from the week, on Sunday from eleven until twelve thirty in the morning on SABC 1. These timeslots are directed at families and a predominantly female viewership, and the show has received audience ratings of between 7.3 and 11.3 reflecting a viewership of approximately 70 to 110 thousand viewers (Woman’s Net, 2007). The series is aired predominantly on SABC 3, a channel that reaches viewers that in general fall between Livings Standard Measure (LSM) 8 to 10 (SABC, 2007) and as such the series is directed toward an affluent viewership.

The action of the series centres on the business and private lives of characters that live and work in Horizon Deep, a fictional mining town just outside Johannesburg. Many of the characters work at the television station owned by Lee Haines and many story lines describe the intrigue of business deals, the politics of working relations, as well as the
after hours machinations played out at Bra-G’s bar situated on the top floor of the On! TV building. In contrast to this high-flying centre of social activity is the bar and restaurant run by Agnes’ Matabane.

During the period in which excerpts were taken from the soap opera episodes, several couples were involved or became involved with each other. Lee Haines and Alec Matthews decided to continue their affair (which began during Lee’s relationship with Rajesh Kumar) as a long distance relationship. Rajesh begins an involvement with Cherel de Villiers, the series’ villain. He has been hurt by Lee’s deceit, so when he and Cherel are held hostage together, they find themselves drawn to one another. However, Cherel’s lack of moral integrity, which Rajesh is initially attracted to, finally repulses him.

Nadipha and Parson’s Matabane continue a largely conflict free marriage, and they are obviously devoted to one another. When Parsons considers a career change in order to make money for Nan’s ARVs, she thinks he may be making a bad decision and this causes conflict. They, together with Parsons’ parents Agnes and Zebedee Matabane, are forced to move into a house with Letti and her new husband Vusi Moletsane. This is initially difficult for all concerned, but slowly they all adapt to the situation. Letti becomes jealous of Siyanda Mazibuko, when Siyanda and Vusi begin work on a new project. Eventually, Vusi and Siyanda do have an affair. After some guilt and considerations of taking another wife, Vusi ends the affair and reaffirms his commitment to his wife.

At the Buller residence, Maggie Webster and Len Cooper, are found naked on the couch after a night of strip poker. Maggie can’t remember anything, but Len says that they had sex. As their different stories emerge, there begins a battle to see whose tale will be believed by their friends, until they strike an amicable compromise between themselves. Len also becomes involved with Sandi, an intern at On! TV. She accuses him of rape, but later it emerges that she was molested as a child and was not comfortable with having sex with Len. She drops the charges, and Len promises to change his ways with women.
The drama does address political and social problems, although the mass of the action centres on the successful, employed, middle class characters employed at On! TV. It is considered a more gritty and realistic than other South African soap operas (Grobler, 2007). There is seldom, overt commentary regarding South African politics, and such newsworthy happenings as the municipal elections, Cape Town power cuts or security guard demonstrations in the city were not even mentioned in passing, although dialogue may refer to current events or public holidays. Some of the stories rely on a particular socio-political context, but these issues usually serve only to initiate another drama centred on a particular character and are only loosely bound to political statements. However, the show has attempted to portray an HIV+ character positively, has introduced the issue of polygamy, has several homosexual male characters, makes reference to South Africa’s inequitable past and the ways this continues to influence the lives of some characters, and in this way has a degree of socio-political consciousness.

Interview sampling

While the images of the couples were constructive data that assisted in meeting the aims of the research, the requirement that couples be in possession of photographs of significant events and/or aspects of their relationships limited the sampling frame. Not all couples take photographs of themselves or events, and not all couples can afford to possess a camera and then to develop the images. As such, the couples that took part in the research constitute a particular population that is conversant with the technology of photography and photographic representation. It is likely that each couple conceptualise their photographs in particular ways, but it is likely that they situate the images within social meanings that construct photographs as devices to store memories, and represent significant events, people and places (Banks, 2001). Indeed this property of photographs is central to the use of the images in the research.

Beyond the exclusion of couples who do not take photographs, or who were not willing to share these images in a research context, several criteria for inclusion were used. Sampling for interviews targeted heterosexual couples who have been in a relationship for one or more years, and who self-identify as being satisfied in their relationship. This was used as a criterion for inclusion in the study in order to minimise the possibility of tension
during the interview, and the potential for harm to the couples’ relationship. It is understood, as Dryden (1999) has suggested, that most couples speak of themselves as a happy, equitable and contented, and that there is pressure for couples to give a favourable accounting of their relationship in order to conform to social constructions of ideal togetherness. As such it is likely that most couples would have described themselves as happy, even if they were not. However, by stating this as a criterion of inclusion in the study, it is possible that couples that were severely unhappy avoided the work required to give a positive account of their relationship. This tendency of couples to provide a harmonious expression of their togetherness silenced stories in which conflict may have appeared. The sampling of couples provided data regarding co-constructed, inter-subjective narratives of togetherness, but could not gather narratives in which couples disagreed or sought divergent constructions of their togetherness. As such, the research does not speak to processes that underlie negotiation of differences between partners.

Ten couples were interviewed, and a diversity of race and socio-economic status was sought: two white, two black, two coloured, two Indian couples and two mixed race couples were interviewed. One middle class couple and one working class couple of each of these racial groups was interviewed. It was assumed that the experience of being a member of one “race” or “class” is different from another “race” or “class”. These race and class categories were used primarily as a means of obtaining diversity of experience, and a degree of representivity within the sample. These categories did not play a role in the research procedures beyond the sampling phase. Here it is important to understand that these categories have not been assumed to be essential markers of identity. However, it should be recognised that they have continued social relevance as a result of the historical legacy of Apartheid. The current research has not sought to define certain experiences, beliefs or opinions as causally related or necessary to, race and class categories, but recognises the pertinence of the political implications of such terms.

Participants were asked what racial category they identified with in order to classify them in the research. In practise the classification of class was problematic, and an initial focus on income was complicated by the number of salaries and people in a household. As such, the notion of Living Standard Measures (LSMs) was incorporated into the sampling
LSMs were developed by the South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF) as a means to categorise consumers according to their social and economic resources. The measure classifies consumers according to their possession and use of goods (such as telephones, televisions, washing machines, magazines) (SAARF, 2007). It is thus a means of classification that is well suited to the South African context, and categorises couples according to the material, social, and economic resources of a household rather than the income of each individual partner. This measure was thus more appropriate to categorising a couple. Couples who fell into LSM-6 or above were considered middle class, and couples LSM-5 or below were classified as working class (South African Advertising Research Foundation, 2007). Although it was not part of the sampling process, the couples were also chosen to reflect diversity of age and parental status.

Initially a purposeful, convenience sample (Kuzel, 1992) of couples was identified from the researcher’s acquaintances. These acquaintances were provided with a brief summary of the aims and purpose of the research and with contact details of the researcher. This information was then passed on to potential participants, and through snowballing to acquaintances of these couples as well. Prospective interviewees were thus able to contact the researcher directly, and this ensured anonymity.

A brief introductory interview to collect biographical details and inform couples about the research procedures was conducted with each couple contacted in these ways. This interview was directed at gauging the suitability of the couples in terms of the duration of their relationship, their happiness in their togetherness, and the need for diversity of race and socio-economic status. These introductory interviews were used to construct a sampling frame from which participants were drawn purposively to best represent the stratification in terms of race and class already described (Kuzel, 1992). Couples who could not be included were told that couples had been randomly selected, so as to minimise harm created by their exclusion.

In order to foster a sense of trust, the interviewees included in the research were again briefed fully on the aims, methods and purpose of the research. Each couple was then
asked to sign consent forms stating their understanding of these issues and willingness to continue with the research. They were then invited to set a date, time and location for the interview. This allowed the couples to choose a setting in which they would feel at ease (Lee, 1993).

Those who were chosen to participate and who gave their stories were offered a gift of gratitude. In thanks for the performance of their narratives for the research, couples were offered R150 endowment. This gift was intended to recognise the generosity involved in telling a stranger one’s personal tales. It was a gesture of thanks for the vulnerability and difficulty couples engaged with by taking part in the research, and also an incentive for couples to take part (Seidman, 1998). Refreshments were provided at each interview, and these gifts helped set an open atmosphere of reciprocity.

**Collecting interview narratives**

Couples were asked to provide two to three photographs of them as a couple, that one or both particularly liked, and that were in some way meaningful to one or both of them. The photographs served two functions central to the research: they provided entry points to a co-constructed reading of visual material related to the couples’ experience of togetherness, and they acted as a focal point (other than the interviewees themselves) that helped to put the couples at ease (Banks, 2001).

The photographs were digitally scanned and returned to the interviewees at the interview, or were emailed to the researcher in electronic format. In this way the couples did not have to give up possession of the images, as it was assumed that these photographs were quite personal and intimate. While the photographs did carry emotional significance, the couples had been briefed on the use of the images in the research and made their choices based on this understanding. The photos were intimate depictions of significant aspects of the couples’ relationship, but not so significant that they could not be presented as data in the research. The use of the images, to provide clues as to the embodied performance and experience of heterosexual togetherness, was invaluable to the aims of the research and this significance was explained to the couples. Photographs provided
some data regarding gesture, posture, spatial placing, facial expression, that shows some traces of the embodied and spatial aspects of heterosexual relationships.

This notwithstanding, the use of photographs could compromise the couple’s anonymity, and therefore each couple was offered a choice of how the images would be used in the project. This choice required that couples negotiate with and interrogate the degree to which they felt comfortable with their participation in the research. J.J. Foster and Parker (1995) suggest that participants who are willing to be identified in research reports demonstrate a willingness to be candid and sincere in an interview, and this understanding shaped the decision to offer the couples a choice to make visible or conceal their identities. Some consented to the use of their names and unaltered photographs, but in this report all couples shall be identified by pseudonyms and all photographs have been altered so as to disguise the couples. While I took great pains to discuss the implications and the contexts in which the report would appear, as well as the aims and methods of the research, it is not clear how well I could describe the academic context of the research and report. Thus it is difficult to tell how well informed the consent of the participants is, and as such I have chosen rather to preserve as much of the participant’s anonymity as possible.

A pilot interview was conducted with a couple identified through the sampling frame, and the photo-elicitation instructions and the interview guide were altered based on this interview. Each interview explored the photographs the couples’ brought to the interview. For each photograph the couple was asked to tell the story that was evoked by the photo, the reason the couple chose to bring that photograph, and the feelings elicited by the memory and the photo. An initial, broad, open-ended question, structured to solicit a narrative response (Chase, 1995), was followed by probing questions, directed at clarification or at gaining details concerning setting, events, and people involved in the narrative. These questions were structured to be sensitive to the participant’s level of comfort with the subject matter (Bar-On & Gilad, 1994).

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews of approximately 1 - 2 hours were conducted with each couple. Most of the interviews took place at the couple’s home, or at the home of one
of the partners. One interview was conducted in a friend’s home, where the couple was visiting from another part of South Africa. In one interview, a translator who shall be identified by the pseudonym Bongani was co-opted into the interview. This interview was conducted in Lungisile and Ayanda’s home that is also the site of an informal business. During the interview customers walked in and out and Ayanda continued to conduct her business. Bongani was not only a customer, but also the acquaintance that introduced me to the couple. His translations were played back to another Xhosa speaker who then compared his translations to the participant’s speech. The translations were found to be sufficiently close to Lungisile’s replies to be used in the research. However, he also included interpretations of his own. Interpretations that seemed to stray too far from the participant’s speech were removed from the narratives and as far as possible Lungisile’s replies in English were used rather than Bongani’s translations.

In any interview, the interviewee is put under pressure to give an account of their lives as they live them (Dryden, 1999), and this interview relationship must be created with respect and care for the already existing relationship between partners. Although the criterion for inclusion in the research specified that the couples should be content in their relationship, and although the photo-elicitation exercise served to put the couples at ease (Banks, 2001), the interview situation was such that dynamics between the couples could have led to difficulties. Had any of the couples experienced such a crisis, they would have been referred to a local couples’ counsellor. This referral would have been commensurable with the couples’ economic resources. However, none of the couples seemed to experience such a crisis. Although some of the couples disagreed, and some partners remained mostly silent in the interview, most extended and built on to the narratives their partner told. Couples asked questions of one another, engaged in conversation with one another, asked for confirmation from each other, and where disagreement arose, it was often followed with performances of agreement or accompanied by joking to lighten the tone. In this way, the couples created rich and layered data centred mostly on agreement and unity, rather than disagreement and disharmony.

Interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. Transcriptions are verbatim and include notation of laughter and other non-verbal responses, as well as pause lengths. (Rough transcriptions and a description of notations used in transcription are included in Appendix
B). This method of transcription is tedious, but renders the words and performance of the narratives more fully than other methods. All transcripts display the storyteller’s pseudonyms (where the couples have asked for this protection) rather than participants’ names in order to preserve anonymity.

**The storytellers**

In order to introduce and assist in identifying the couples, couple’s story has been provided with a title that encapsulates their narrative as a whole. Below is a brief description of each narrative:

Free to be free: Adrianna and Laurent are both artists, who live and work in small, Eastern Cape, coastal town. They are united in their love of art, their world views, and in a love of travel, parties and good times. Laurent is considerably older than Adrianna, and has been instrumental in helping her build her career. They can be classified as middle class and white.

In love in words: Frieda and Fernando met in Berlin and conducted a long, long-distance relationship while Frieda still lived in South Africa and Fernando in Portugal. They share an expansive love of poetry and words, and this love connected them over this distance. They are now married, and live in Portugal. Based on LSMs the couple can be categorised as working class because Frieda is unemployed and Fernando is a student. However, this categorisation does not reflect Fernando’s predominantly middle class background and experiences or the education and experiences that could qualify Frieda to be classified as middle class. The couple was included because of their cross-cultural, cross-national experience unique within the sample, for their eloquence, and because few mixed race couples were identified. They are a couple of mixed race: Frieda is a coloured South African, and Fernando is a white, European.

A good man and a good woman: Lungisile and Ayanda are very proud parents who are trying to provide their daughter with the best opportunities they can. Ayanda works in a small town about 52 kilometres from where Ayanda and their daughter Pumzile live. He only sees the family over the weekends. The accommodation he stays in has no electricity.
or water and is far from schools, so Ayanda and Pumzile stay in a township. They would get married, but they have not saved enough money. Their income is that of the working class, and the couple are both black, Xhosa speakers.

A peaceful life: Nombulelo and Makhaya enjoy spending time together on the farm where Makhaya rents a house, though they know most people do not like the isolation. The peace that characterises this relationship is the opposite of Nombulelo's marriage, in which her ex-husband tried to kill her and her daughters. Their income is that of the middle class, and both are black, Xhosa speakers.

We are different to them: Indira and Haroun are university students and are the youngest couple within the sample. They both work hard in their studies so that they can study further. They live together in a digs, but they abstain from sex. Both have also decided not to drink, and these choices set them apart, as individuals and as a couple, from their peers and friends. Because they are students, they have a working class income, and both are Indian. Their inclusion as a working class couple according to their LSM categorisation belies their perhaps middle class backgrounds, however they were included in to incorporate diversity in terms of age within the sample.

One day we will laugh about it: Dara and Michael met while they were teaching English in Taiwan. The happy-go-lucky life they lived there, and their relationship, was challenged when they bought a pub together on returning to South Africa. Both experiences have taught them that they can overcome any obstacles to their togetherness, especially if they remember the good times they have had together. The couple is white, and because Michael works but does not earn a salary the couple has a working class income.

The work of relationships: Pam and Kelvin started a clothing business soon after they started their relationship. They live and work in the same house where their business and personal lives are interconnected and intertwined. Rather than being difficult for them, they see this as a source of great strength. The couple has a middle class income and is of mixed race: Pam is white and Kelvin is Indian.
These things aren’t love: Brian and Tamara began a long distance relationship while Tamara was working in an Eastern Cape city. She has since found a job in another city, and they have a daughter together. They have chosen not to marry because they feel their house, their daughter and their lives demonstrate their commitment and love. Marriage, white dresses and rings do not do this for them. The couple has a middle class income and are both coloured.

A blessed family: Leland and Veronica have been married for eighteen years and they have two teenage children. They are a close knit family, united by their faith in Christianity. They feel blessed in their children and blessed in their togetherness. The couple subsists from only Leland’s income and is thus working class, and both are coloured.

It’s an important decision: Zureida and Saleem had an arranged marriage only six months before their interview. They feel that marriage is a contract that binds the couple as well as their families, and that their parent’s help in choosing a partner was invaluable. The couple have a middle class income and are both Indian.

Performing analysis
A narrative analysis was used on both sets of materials and the photographs. This involved weaving together material taken from different narrative sources – the couples and the soap operas - into a linear sequence (Oliver, 1998). In this case narratives were constructed that encompassed the stories obtained from interview material and also from soap opera episodes. To begin the analysis I became intimately familiar with the data. This involved repeated readings of transcriptions, several hearings of the audiotapes and numerous viewings of soap opera episodes (Kelly, 1999). These repeated viewings and readings assisted by creating familiarity with the texts, fluency with the details of the narratives and awareness of the subtleties of performances.

Initially the interview, transcripts and photographs were read to identify narratives of heterosexual togetherness for each couple interviewed, and that appeared in soap opera episodes. Riessman’s (1993) suggestion that narratives can be intuitively felt was also
important, especially using the criteria of persuasiveness and coherence as indicators of a narrative (Riessman, 1993). Using Riessman’s suggestion of process, potential narratives were marked in the transcripts, and then scrutinised against the definition of narrative provided by Toolan (2001). Each narrative that matched these conditions were then subject to more detailed transcription. These were regarded as separate chapters within the tale told during the interview. These chapters, and the overall narrative told by the couple were provided with a title, to aid with identification. Photographs were included in chapters that described the event depicted in the photograph. (Detailed transcriptions in chapter format are included in Appendix C.) the same process was used to identify soap opera narratives.

From a narrative standpoint it was of primary importance to first represent each individual story, before narrative themes that travelled between and across narratives were constructed (Chase, 2005). By first delineating the chapters within the over interview-tale, this condition was met. However, an analysis should also extend and interpret narratives (Oliver, 1998; Crossley, 2000). From the couples’ personal narratives, strands that reappeared across couples were identified. In this way, meta-narratives with elements taken from all the interviews were constructed.

At this point, the soap opera excerpts were read to see how they contributed to these narrative strands, and were included with the interview materials such that the meta-narrative was extended and enriched. This was an iterative process, in which the soap opera narratives contributed to both collective narratives, and were then used to re-read the interview data. This reading and re-reading of both data sets continued until a saturation of meaning was reached, and both narratives were as inclusive of both data sets as possible. By reading these two aspects of sexual subjectivity as constructed by opposing forces it was possible to view the narratives as interrelated, and this could be viewed as an exercise in what Thomas (2000, p. 14) calls “queering heterosexuality”. A queer stance applied to this exploration of heterosexuality offers an understanding of sexual subjectivity from a position not normatively assumed (Gauntlett, 2002). This provided the opportunity to tell of an open expression of heterosexuality, inclusive of diverse sexual subject positions. As such, the resulting meta-narratives interweave interview and soap opera transcripts with the interpretations of the researcher (Chase, 2005).
Validity and ethics

While the queer stance provided an inherently political and constructive perspective that is particularly appropriate to the study of normative sexuality, it was not a position that could be easily or unquestioningly assumed (Thomas, 2000). The position of heterosexual woman researcher assuming a queer stance to study heterosexuality was a difficult balancing act. I had a duty to protect my heterosexual participants from harm, and an intellectual obligation to challenge the couples’ performances by assuming a queer theoretical standpoint. I have been in danger of either doing damage to the couple’s narratives, or of appropriating queer subjectivity for heteronormative purposes. A queer position is one associated with marginal subject positions and cannot be taken up without reflexive accounting for the researcher’s relationship with that subject position (Butler, 1997; Sedgwick, 1995; Thomas, 2000). Within the narrative paradigm researchers may view themselves as narrators of the story of their research, and this provides opportunity to include reflexive accounts within the research. Researchers organise and construct coherent meaning; they make use of stories to elaborate, justify and explain results; they are enabled and constrained by their social context; and they co-construct representations with academic communities and participants. In this way narrative researchers must be attentive to issues of interpretive authority and the political implications of representation (Chase, 2005). Consideration of this central issue has shaped many of the choices I have outlined in this chapter regarding the research process.

Fontana and Frey (2005) emphasise that the human subjects of research interviews must be protected from all forms of harm, and they draw attention to the issues of informed consent and right to privacy as widely accepted, uncontested ethical concerns. Only regarding the inclusion of certain couples and exclusion of others did I intentionally mislead potential participants. After the introductory interview to obtain information to ascertain couples’ match to my criterion of inclusion (social class, racial category, duration of relationship and self-identified contentment in their relationship), some couples were excluded because they did not adequately meet one or more criterion. From the pool of those who met the inclusion criteria, some were excluded because another couple fitted the criterion more closely than the other couples. For example, a couple who fell into the working class category was eventually excluded because their income was close to that of
a middle class couple, and because another couple with a clearly working class income had been identified. These couples were told that their exclusion was random and did not reflect any judgement regarding their relationship. Although this partial falsehood might seem unethical, I misinformed these couples in order to minimise feelings of exclusion or inferiority couples might feel.

I was unable to entirely ensure privacy or anonymity to participants who allowed me to include their photographs. However I did make attempts to guard their right to privacy. I have made use of pseudonyms in the narrative presentations and transcripts (Kvale, 1997), and I have blocked out the faces of the participants (or other individuals) in their photographs. While I have taken these measures, it may still be possible to identify the participants from other identifying features in the photos. The use of the photographic representations as material for analysis limits the anonymity available to the couples (Banks, 2001). This potential for harm was made clear to all couples contacted through acquaintances and snowballing, and some did refuse their participation in consideration of this limitation. The couples who did allow me the use of their photographs agreed to limited usage of these pictures, primarily within an academic context. They gave me permission to use the photographs in this thesis and to present the material to co-researchers. For further journal publications or conference presentations I undertook to provide verbal descriptions, but not to display visual representations of the couples.

Of further concern for the validity and ethics of my research is the veracity of the research report (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Although my theoretical position denies the possibility of an objective truth against which my analysis can be compared, I acknowledge a duty towards the couples I interviewed to remain close to their words and stories (Chase, 1995). I also recognise my role in the construction of their narratives and tried to perform as a co-creator of the interview material by presenting myself both as a researcher and as a member of a couple. The manner in which a researcher presents themselves to informants is of primary importance to the performance of the interview, as it sets up a particular kind of relationship (Kvale, 1997).

I made my research aims and academic qualifications explicit, and I also framed the interview as an exploration on a topic of concern to me as a woman in a relationship with a man. In this research I tried to focus the interview talk on the experiences of the couples,
although I also opened myself to “real conversation” (Fontana & Frey, 2005, p. 720) where I felt that this would contribute to the creation of the interview relationship. While it was not intentional, after reading and re-reading the transcripts, I realised that the telling of my own stories seldom challenged the couples’ presentation of themselves, and so may have acted to enforce the couples’ disclosure of normative stories of togetherness. In most of the interviews, I responded to tales of normativity with stories of my own relationships similar normativity. For instance, in when Indira and Haroun discuss dancing, I described how I am not a good dancer while my partner is; Adrienne and Laurent referred in their interviews to my relationship as “unusual” and therefore similar to theirs, based on pre-interview discussions; when Dara jokes about having to clean the couple’s shared space I laugh and joke about my own experiences of domestic chores.

Each of these instances in which I related aspects of my own relationship in narratives to the couple were opportunities to challenge the normative representations we both assumed. Rather than going along with the normative storyline that I made use of, I could have opted to unsettle these representations and thereby possibly open more dialogue. While I had planned to share a photograph of myself and my husband, the image never seemed appropriate. The image is on taken soon after our marriage ceremony, and shows us both standing apart, looking in different directions, playing with our new wedding bands. The image expresses ambivalence about marriage, in that it is an atypical wedding photograph, and suggests a degree of discomfort at the new-ness of marriage, and this may account for my reluctance to share it. While my photograph and stories that may have contested the couples’ relationship narratives could have created some discomfort, they could also have encouraged the telling of resistive stories of togetherness. My own stories, that supported the couples’ tales, may have led the couples’ stories in a normative direction that partially undermined the aims of the research. As such, the thesis is shaped by my own heteronormativity, my inability to directly challenge the norm, and the opportunity to hear more non-normative tales was compromised.

In constructing the narrative analysis, it was necessary to create balance between assuming a position of authority and ownership over the analysis, and playing a supportive role to the participants. Testimonios are narrative projects in which the words of a participant are reproduced directly and the researcher has assumed an editorial function, sometimes annotating the participant’s words with academic comments. In this way the
participant and researcher are literally co-authors in the project (Chase, 2005). This research did not seek this degree of equality, but neither did I want to assume a position of power over the couple’s words. An overly authoritative and analytic presentation of the couple’s narratives would have been disrespectful of their experiences (de Peuter, 1998; Josselson, 1997). Although the gift offered each couple could have been viewed as payment in exchange for ownership of the interview material, I wanted to recognise and respect the contribution of their stories (Seidman, 1998). Since the interviews were performed as a co-construction of meaning I have attempted to present a reading of the couples’ words that is close to the interview dialogue. I have tried to include lengthy, verbatim quotations from the interviews in order to provide readers with the opportunity to read these quotations in ways other than I did myself, and I open the material to multiple and alternate readings (Chase, 2005).

With regards to the validity of this analytic narrative construction, Riessman’s (1993) criteria of persuasiveness, coherence and correspondence are relevant to the research. In addressing these criteria, the concept of reflexivity is invaluable. Reflexivity is the process whereby a researcher attempts to account for analytic decisions, based on a description of theoretical and personal opinions and stances (Parker, 1994). Such a reflexive account would acknowledge the rhetorical construction of persuasiveness. The narrative has been structured in order to persuade the reader of its veracity, but this persuasion will include support from theory, literature and the research material (Riessman, 1993).

Reflexivity could also explicate the manner in which the narrative has become constructed as a coherent whole. Awareness of assumptions concerning the narratives must be informed by the beliefs of the participants, by individual narratives and by specific themes (Riessman, 1993). A reflexive account also explicates the role that the researcher played in co-constructing the research material. Fontana and Frey (2005) warn against a “confessional style” reflexivity, in which the researcher attempts to expunge any difficult or uncomfortable feelings, reactions or situations that occurred during the research. Rather than adopt this mode of reflexive accounting, I have provide accounts of my unspoken biases in this chapter, and where appropriate in the analysis chapters.

Conclusion
In this chapter I have explicated my methodological decisions regarding the procedures I have employed in conducting research with heterosexual couples in South Africa. To begin, I stated that I would perform the research from within a narrative framework that views narratives as central to meaning making within a social context. Narratives can be understood as a means of creating coherence from a set of events, characters and settings. Toolan’s (2001) definition of narratives as a collection of interrelated events, involving a core group of characters that progress from a state of disequilibrium to a state of balance suggests the form that this type of coherence takes. However, I argue that performed narratives are not so clearly structured. Rather a narrator may repeat details, employ side stories to illustrate particular interpretations of the central story, and may begin the story somewhere other than at the state of disequilibrium (Riessman, 1993).

This broader definition of narrative assists me in assuming a stance in which a narrative construction can be seen as a performance that is unique to context in which it is performed. My research has viewed narratives as co-creations between the audience and the storyteller. That is, a story is performed for a particular audience, and decisions regarding the representation of that story take into account the listener (Chase, 2005). For this reason, despite narratives’ property of creating coherence, I have assumed the position that no narrative is a complete or finished representation of events and characters. Rather, all narratives should be viewed and contextually embedded performances that reveal one way in which a narrator can make sense of their experiences (de Peuter, 1998). From this perspective, a narrative structures the kinds of meaning possible to attribute to a set of events, and assumes particular functions within the narrator’s life (Crossley, 2000).

I view the performance of narrative not only as a linguistic construction, but also as an embodied activity. As such, I have argued that I am obligated to explore both verbal and visual manifestations of narratives constructed by couples. For this reason I collected data from the locally produced soap opera Isidingo, and from photo-elicitation interviews with couples. Although they can only be partial, momentary representations of a couples’ togetherness, the visual aspects of these narratives are intended to provide insight into the physical and embodied aspects of the performance of being a couple. These kinds of data serve to represent the competing forces inherent in utterances. Soap opera episodes are
read as producing and reproducing narratives that normalise heterosexual relationships. They may be understood to contain a predominance of monologic, monolithic representations of an apparently unified and static heteronormativity. Photo-elicitation interviews were a quite intimate co-construction, between the couple and myself as interviewer (Chase, 2005). While these stories were also produced by normalised subjectivity, they also contained the potential to represent subversion, and alternate versions of heterosexuality. These stories had the potential to contribute to a heteroglossia narrative of heterosexuality.
Analysis and discussion

Related relationships: the hetero-social network

In this chapter I shall explore the social context of heterosexual togetherness, and the potential for couples to resist or collude with heteronorms. The social network provides a backdrop against which togetherness is performed. In chapter seven I shall describe in detail how couples describe their relationship as unique, and in part as separated from the other social relationships. However they are also always inextricably linked to society and to others. In this way the boundaries between what is internal to inter-subjective coupledom, and what is external is blurred. As such other characters included in the couple’s narratives have considerable influence over the relationship and play a witnessing, guiding and supporting function that often directs the couple towards normative goals and ways of being together. At the same time, the boundaries between what is inside and outside of the couple are only semi-permeable. The couple performs with these other characters in such a way that they position themselves in relation to others. In constructing relatedness in this manner they may position themselves as with or against the normative goals they are directed towards.

There are a number of characters that the couples have included in the telling of their stories. Friends, mothers, fathers, daughters, babies, brothers are included as passing or significant contributors to the narratives. In this chapter, I shall describe some of the functions that these other characters play in heterosexual relationships. In order to make sense of the characters purpose and place in these narratives, I shall refer to basic character types identified by Propp (1968): hero, princess, donor/provider, villain, dispatcher, helper, and false hero. In each narrative the couple will be viewed as the hero and princess (or heroine) and the other types shall be ascribed to other characters that appear in the narratives. Although these types are not central to the overall analysis, they help provide meaning to the other characters’ presence within the narratives.
The analysis has relied on a structuralist interpretation of narrative: that of Propp’s (1968) seven basic characters, and Toolan’s (2001) definition of narrative as moving from crisis to resolution. In this way, the narratives may appear as potentially completed and resolved, as tending toward wholeness. However, resolutions should be understood as momentary, contingent and temporal. The solutions and resolutions that are presented re-assert themselves constantly and a conclusion is not ultimately possible. The couples must continually work with the centripetal and centrifugal forces that pull the meaning of their performances and their narratives in opposite directions. Particularly in Frieda and Fernando’s narrative of marriage, the meaning of the ceremony is inconclusive and partial.

**Donors/providers: finding togetherness**

In the following section I shall explore the role of other characters at the start of a relationship. Many of partners first meet through friends or family members. Both partners enter into the relationship with an already developed circle of friends, family, and colleagues, and in some cases it is the intersection of these circles that leads to the start of the relationship. Thus, one possible supportive role for other characters seems to be to provide the introduction of two people who enter into a relationship, and as such the characters that introduce the partners played the role of donor or provider (Propp, 1968).

Adrianna and Laurent meet one night at a bar in a small coastal town. Laurent explains their bond with reference to the social connections in the first chapter of their story:

Laurent: And I met her brother there. So we were talking. And at a certain moment I saw a girl sitting at a little table there. Ah this is my sister from [another Eastern Cape town]. So we started talking, she said she was an artist, so there was this automatically. You know we, start to communicate about art. We have this common interest.
Adrianna: And we both like to party.

In a similar story, Indira and Haroun meet initially in a group of friends. Indira’s friend Angela is attracted to Haroun’s friend Harry, and they meet in the company of these friends at a university function. They both describe what happened after this first meeting in the first chapter of their story:

Indira: After that, we saw each other with the same friends. And then we went to supper. Like a date (laughs 2). We went on a date.
Haroun: Ja. We saw each other around. Like just, by chance. But our friends. I think your friends too. My friends knew, I liked her. So they would, they would ask her friends, and like her also. To come
In both these narratives, a meeting is facilitated by a character that is neither of the relationship partners. This character provides the context in which the two romantic leads can discover their connection and their feelings for one another. In a sense, the provider or providers donate a ready-made connection between two social circles, and this connection leads to the start of a relationship. Adrianna’s brother introduces her to Laurent as a fellow artist, so that he shows them that they are already members of a common community. Indira and Haroun’s friends even go out of their way to create opportunities for them to meet up. Dispatchers provide the prospect of enacting heteronormative togetherness and assist the couples in finding opportunity to perform as heterosexual subjects. Here social support both produces and reproduces heteronormative performances, and other characters direct partners toward each other and togetherness that could possibly be heteronormative. It is possible that same-sex couples only experience this kind of wider social acceptance with a limited, tolerant community, and that same-sex couples have less assistance finding a partner or acceptance by a social group when they do have a partner.

The possibility of heteronormative togetherness may be intrinsic to this process, because characters probably choose acceptable, sanction-able partners. In Zureida and Saleem’s narrative their parents, who arrange their marriage, perform such a role. The two could only have met and can only be together, because their parents identified one another as suitable candidates for marriage. In making this choice, the parent’s rely on a network of friends and family, both in South Africa and in India. There is an extensive web of other characters that assist in arranging the relationship of these two characters, and their suitability is judged in terms of how well they fit into this extended social network. As such their relationship is constructed as not only about “love”, but also about “the families and your faith”. Zureida explains:

Well, the parents will put the word out, to friends and family. You know, that they are looking for a husband for their daughter. Or a wife for their son. So with us, my parents, they went and visited our family, in India. And they found some men that they thought were suitable. (2) That came from good families, and had education. And were from the Hindu faith. And then they met with them, my mom and dad. (2) And I think they know me, quite well. And then they chose the ones they thought were
best for me, and for them. (2) Its not just about being in love, and those two people. It's also about the families, and your faith.

While this fit is important, they are also given the choice to refuse a match because they do not like them as a partner. This is the kind of process described by Netting (2006) within the Indo-Canadian community, as a combination of traditional Hindu constructions of duty and familial obligation, along with contemporary, Western notions of love that I have described in chapter three. This story takes place in a South African context and suggests that understandings of familial relatedness and love can be incorporated in this context as well.

Zureida and Saleem decide to get married because their families have identified one another as suitable, but also because they feel a connection they did not feel with other suitors.

Zureida: I met some other guys, before Saleem. I didn’t feel like we connected really. But with Saleem I did feel that. A connection. It was that I could talk to him. He was easy to talk to. I felt like he and I had things in common that we made it easy for us just to talk.

Saleem: It wasn’t with some of the women I met. You know, it was awkward. You feel you don’t know what to say. But with Zureida, we just talked, and it was comfortable. We laughed also. I thought that was important. That was good.

Zureida: Ja, his sense of humour. (4) Just, being comfortable.

Although they have an arranged marriage, they still construct their relationship in terms of their unique bond. In this way they still have access to the carnival-space I shall describe in chapter seven. In their case however, this bond is made possible because of their families, because of other people. As such, their constructions of romance and uniqueness incorporate understandings of their social embedded-ness.

This manner in which Zureida and Saleem respond to their network of providers draws attention to the function of these characters in narratives of heterosexual togetherness. Their function is to supply a valuable artefact of some sort (Propp, 1968). This artefact may not be recognised when it is first received, and may only be understood later in the narrative when its irreplaceable function is discovered and used appropriately (Toolan, 2001). Zureida and Saleem do not like the first potential partners they meet, and it is only when they find each other that they discover the value of what their providers are giving them. In this sense, the provider offers a source of momentum to the narrative. In the
narratives told by Adrianna and Laurent, Indira and Haroun, and especially for Zureida and Saleem, it is possible that the couple would not have met without the social networks that merge when they meet, and as such these providers contribution is integral. While the process is formalised in Zureida and Saleem’s narrative, it seems that the informal process is directed at the same goal: to enable heterosexual coupling. The formal process relies on romantic compatibility as well as family opinion, and the informal process emphasises love and compatibility between partners. Netting (2006) suggests that notions of romance can be incorporated into understandings of familial duty, and it is likely that even in the informal process it is likely that partners consider their partners familial status and the potential they have to fit in with their partner’s social network.

**Helpers and dispatchers: staying together**

Another possible supportive role is that of helper. This is a character who offers guidance and support to the hero in his or her quest (Propp, 1968). Such a character can play a role at any point in a narrative (Toolan, 2001). Usually a helper will either assist the hero out of a difficult situation, or teach the hero how to deal with a problem by instructing the hero with arcane knowledge (Propp, 1968). Ma Agnes plays the role of helper or adviser to her daughter Letti. Ma Agnes’ role as helper is ambiguous because she advises Letti not to be jealous of the time her husband Vusi Moletsane is spending with a female business associate and to remain with Vusi instead of going to Cape Town. While Letti is away on this trip Vusi and Siyanda celebatare the success of a business venture and this is the only occasion when they do have sex together. Agnes’ advice to stay is thus a kind of prescience, but her advice not to be jealous may prevent Letti from reading the signs that Vusi is actually having an affair. The implication of her help however, is that Letti is selfish and wilful and that Vusi may not have had the affair had she not decided to go to Cape Town to further her own career. As a helper in this instance, Agnes aligns her performance with heteronormative principles.

Nombulelo and Makhaya’s children play another kind of supportive role. Both partners have children from other marriages. Nombulelo’s daughters are adult and live on their own, while Makhaya’s daughter is a teenager and lives mostly with her mother.

> So but now I am happy. Because my children. Talking with [Makhaya]. Chatting, about everything with him. (3) They love him. They love him. If I can break up with him, my children will be cross with me. Because they love him. If I stay a long time in town they say, mom, go back. Because they don’t want him to stay a long time, on his own. We are all happy.
Considering the abusive marriage she and her daughters experienced, that I shall discuss in the next chapter, it is not surprising that she is pleased that her daughters have a good opinion of her new partner. Nombulelo’s daughter’s approval of Makhaya is an invaluable source of support that demonstrates his trustworthiness and serves to characterise her relationship with Makhaya as different to her violent past. As such, characters might help to identify appropriate and acceptable partners by showing their approval.

In this structuring of the narrative, her daughters are included in a supportive role. As such the girls are also dispatchers. They remind her to return to Makhaya, they send her home, to the tranquillity of their togetherness. In general, dispatchers initiate a course of action within a narrative (Propp, 1968). They direct a hero towards a particular goal or goals. Nombulelo’s daughters have a dual role in her overall narrative, of both dispatchers and helpers. They assure her that Makhaya is a man worthy of her companionship because they like him as a person, and they remind her to keep returning to him after she has been away from the farm too long. In chapter eight I shall argue that living together and seeking physical proximity can be read as a heteronormative form of togetherness, and in this instance dispatchers influence the course of the narrative such that it takes on normative connotations.

For some couples, the family and children they desire, function in their narratives as dispatchers. Dara and Michael, Tamara and Brian, Zureida and Saleem, Leland and Veronica and Pam and Kelvin speak of children as a reason to marry. Children may be viewed as a requirement for a heteronormative marriage (Borneman, 1999), and so children may dispatch a couple towards heteronormative togetherness. This function is most apparent in Lungisile and Ayanda’s narrative concerning their daughter:

Ayanda: (3) Oh, I feel so angry. I am angry that I have this baby. This daughter. And then I go to him. I say, now I have this baby. What must we do now? And he says, you must do the abort. I am so angry. I think, I can’t have this baby. I think, to tell the doctor it must be to abort. I even go to the doctor. The hospital. I don’t want the child. My mother is angry. She says there must be the money, and the man. And the man is not there. And there is no money. My father, my mother must tell my father. And I am scared. But she tells my father, and he says that a child is a child. I must look for the child. And then I am happy. I don’t want to abort. So I go to him and say, this is what my father say. And so I keep the child. Yes, it is hard. There must be money for the hospital. For the food. For the clothes. For the school. (3) And this man, he was not working then. It was difficult to find the work.
Lungisile: (2) Oh, it is so hard. I am stuck, I don’t know what to say. I think she cannot have the baby. She must take it to the hospital. Have it to the hospital. She must abort. Ayanda: But then my father speaks, to him. And he say we can keep it.

Lungisile: Then I am happy. I am happy with this daughter, for this daughter. It is good to have the children. And I must pick myself. I must pick myself up. I have this wife, and this daughter. I must look after, I find the work.

This narrative demonstrates the influence of several characters. Ayanda’s mother seems to embody all the negative possibilities Ayanda is faced with by her pregnancy. Her mother draws attention to the lack of resources the couple has and is angry. She can be read as a villain in the tale, one who provides opposition to the couples’ togetherness by disapproving of the material (re)production of their relationship. Ayanda could be viewed as the princess of the story, and her father a wise and benevolent king. Her father appeals to the positive potential of the baby. He tells his daughter and Lungisile that their child is a blessing, and that she will provide for them when they are older. Here the concerns for progeny, as evidence of heteronormative bond between a couple, overrides the economic concerns that Ayanda describes. This more positive interpretation of her pregnancy draws attention to the wider significance of a child, by invoking a familial and generational continuity embodied by the child. However, their daughter does involve an improvement in the couple’s economic situation. In this sense, the baby that they choose to keep also takes on the role of dispatcher. Ayanda’s pregnancy requires that Lungisile actively seek work. He must assume the role of hero, “pick [him]self up” and find work. It is this work that he finds that provides him with a sense of pride that shall be described in chapter nine.

Significantly, the couple is represented by two photographs that show one partner, another adult and their daughter standing in front of them. One shows Ayanda and Pumzile at her preschool graduation, and the other is of Lungisile and Pumziile at his brother’s circumcision ceremony. In this way, their daughter is a common, bonding element in the photographs. She is a fixed point in the lower half of both photographs, while each of her parents and members of a larger social circle fill the upper half of the photographs. In this way, the photographs emphasise Pumzile’s centrality in the couple’s lives, and also shows their connection to a wider social system.
Her presence in their lives has required that they undertake particular duties and responsibilities. Within their social system they have certain obligations, for example to educate their daughter and to perform certain cultural rituals. Both derive pride and strength from this wider social relatedness. It is significant that the story Ayanda tells, of her father’s affirmation of the value of having a child, connects Pumzile to this social system. This is the realm of significance that their daughter has dispatched the couple into. While these social obligations and connections pull against Western notions of the bounded and autonomous self (K. Gergen, 1991), they can be associated with the norms of Xhosa culture (Bank, 2002). Heteronorms are not necessarily monolithic across cultures, but vary according to religious and cultural characteristics.

**Villains: obstacles to togetherness**

In some cases, the providers, helpers or dispatchers may encourage the partners’ togetherness as I have described in the sections above, but in some instances characters may also provide some form of obstacle to their togetherness. As such, some characters that provide initial assistance through an introduction may also assume the role of villain. Some villainous characters provide an obvious, clear-cut obstacle to the couple’s togetherness. Villains are characters that cause conflict or a crisis that the hero acts to resolve (Propp, 1968). In so far as crisis and its resolution are central to the definition of narrative that Toolan (2001) proposes, the villain is integral to a narrative.
In Isidingo, Lee Haines attempts to come between Rajesh and Cherel by insisting that she continues to be bonded to Rajesh by virtue of their past relationship. Her argument asserts that all couples remain connected to one another because the romantic bond transcends time and space. In this way she undermines the uniqueness that I shall describe as central to constructions of relationships in the next chapter, and constructs relationships as necessarily non-monogamous. Because Lee has a villainous influence in this narrative, and because she is an overall ambiguous character, the story serves to reinforce the normativity of monogamy rather than undermine it. Since I shall argue that Cherel is in general a queer character, it is significant that she is forced by her rival into a normative, monogamous way of being with Rajesh. In some cases, the obstacles villains pose push a couple toward normative ways of being together.

This is also true for Dara and Michael. Michael describes his friends’ reaction to his relationship with Dara:

And it’s also putting up with your friends’ persecution that you are ready to stay with this girl. Well, your friends are part of your life. And all of a sudden you have to put up with someone else, in your life. They have this thing of saying, why are you spending so much time with her? You should spend more time with us. And that’s when you make the decision. Is this the woman I want to be with? And lose the friendships? Or if they are my friends then they will stay with me through this.

Michael’s friends’ jealousy creates a conflict within the couple’s relationship, and the challenge they pose has the effect of bringing the two even closer together. Rather than undermine their relationship, the villains force Michael to examine his feelings more deeply. Their disapproval of the time he spends with her, makes him realise that Dara is worth all the time he has spent with her and all his friends “persecution” for spending time with her. In order to be victorious, Michael must oppose the villain, and in opposing his friends who act as villains takes him further along the path of togetherness with Dara. In this sense, he draws closer to the unity and uniqueness of heteronormative togetherness, and moves away from the social network represented by his friends. Michael defines himself as close to Dara in an exclusive, committed and partially heteronormative manner. To do this he defines himself as more distant from his friends.

A similar dynamic occurs when Adrianna and Laurent first start seeing each other. Adrianna’s parents do not approve of her seeing a much older man. They assume the role
of villain within their relationship, much as Michael’s friends do in Dara and Michael’s story.

It was summer holidays, and I remember I had just finished quite a hectic year. Been recovering from another break-up, a month earlier. Studying a course, in politics, working, just working hard. And I pretty much just wanted to go woosh, you know, have a really good summer. And my family wasn’t too impressed with my behaviour. Because I was partying. And they heard Adrianna is with a much older guy. And dah dah dah. So I went, ok. I definitely know what I’m going to be doing with my summer then. I’m going to be spending it with him (laughs 2).

While the villains in the both Adrianna and Michael’s stories function to bring the couple closer together rather than further apart, these villains have different roles in the overall narrative. As I shall describe in a later section of this chapter, Dara and Michael are able to reintegrate their relatedness to these villainous friends by including them in their wedding ceremony, but Adrianna continues to define her relationship with Laurent as opposed to the values and beliefs represented by family and some friends. This has considerable implications for their respective narratives.

In the narratives I have outlined in this section, the hero and heroine position themselves against the villains. These characters function to place obstacles in the path of the romantic heroes (Propp, 1968). The narrative is then directed at overcoming these obstacles and distancing from the villain. Such villains are implicated in the conflict stage of the narrative process, that the characters direct their efforts at resolving (Toolan, 2001). In the other sections I have described how couples go with, or remain close to the directives and support of other characters, but here couples demonstrate the ability to define other characters in their narrative as either supportive or obstructive. In this way the couples demonstrate their ability to relate themselves in considered and complex ways, to other characters in their social network. Characters function not only to support or challenge the couple. They also provide a backdrop against which the couple can position themselves within a social space that shall be described in more detail later in the course of the chapter.

While the heterosexual couples include these conflicts in their narratives, the conflict is avoidable and resolvable. However, for same-sex couples such conflict is unavoidable in that heteronorms necessarily challenge the togetherness of same-sex partners (Jackson,
The obstacles that are presented are of a particular nature, and are shaped by the norms of heterosexuality. The obstacles that couples experienced focused on age, religion, sexual activity, time spent with friends, and these issues are framed by fundamental constructions of heteronormativity.

In the following sections I shall present narratives in which couples relate themselves to the heteronormative institution of matrimony. I have described socio-economic considerations that shape the institution of marriage in chapter three, and in this chapter I focus on the manner in which couples position themselves in relations to social constructions of matrimony. These narratives reveal further the ways in which a couple may be able to position themselves in relation to some characters in order to argue for alternative ways of being, or to associate themselves with an aspect of heteronorms. In the first instance, couples define matrimony as a false hero from which they distance themselves, and in this case couples must be willing to deal with the discomfort and disadvantage that is implied with a non-normative performance. In the second instance couples embrace the institution in a variety of ways and must perhaps negotiate the constraint, including the fixing of gender roles, that is implied by heteronorms.

**False heroes: “These things aren't love”**

In the above sections, I suggested that other characters in the couple’s narratives provide, dispatch or help the partners towards particular performances of togetherness. In some cases, the dispatchers, providers or helpers are a group of people, or a social norm, and may come to represent false heroes. False heroes are characters that seem to assist the hero and heroine, but ultimately prove to be villainous (Propp, 1968). These characters are particularly complex, because their function within the couples’ narratives is malleable, changeable and ambiguous. In the following section, I shall explore how couples perform with one kind of socially constructed false hero, that of marriage.

Brian and Tamara explain their position on marriage:

Brian: (3) It's like, we are married. We have a child. We live together. We don't need anything else.
(2) Like, what is marriage? It doesn't mean so much. I think, some people think that they have to. For children or for families. I don't really know. It doesn't seem to, you know, mean anything. It's for other things. Not for the people, who get married, like the couple.
Tamara: Ja, like maybe you get married because you are pregnant, or because your mom and dad think you should. Or because your church thinks you should. But, I guess it is also for love. If you love someone, you marry them. You will stay together, spend your lives together. (2) For the romance of it.

Brian: (3) Ja, but if, if you’re going to be together. Like you said, spend your life together. Then there is no reason to marry mos (really). Is there a reason? (4) I don’t know. (3) And it’s so expensive. It’s expensive. The ring, the party, the dress. All that. (2) It’s like things, those things aren’t love.

Tamara: Those things aren’t love. (2) They’re things.

Here Brain, and debatably Tamara also, position marriage, dresses, rings, and parties as things. These things that are expensive consumable and transitory items are contrasted with, rather than equated with, expressions of the love a couple feels for one another (Evans, 2003; Langford, 1999). Brian’s argument positions the couple as against both the norms of marriage and romance as expressed through consumable commodities (Evans, 2003; Illouz, 1998), and in so far as he does this to avoid the boundaries and binaries the institution involves, he is arguing that the couple is opting for a queerer kind of commitment to one another. This rhetorical construction may be likened to those that Billig (1991) suggests that everyday philosopher produce.

Tamara also expresses ambiguity concerning the meaning of matrimony and commitment within their relationship. Brian is certain that marriage is usually, but should not be, based on the wishes of others. While he mentions specifically family, it is likely that he refers also to the institutional and social constructions that I describe in chapter three as associated with marriage. Tamara agrees, and also positions marriage not as a superfluous ceremony, but as an expression of romantic love. Her positioning of marriage as located in romance and staying together presumably for the long-term is undermined by Brian’s assertion that it is not necessary if a couple plans to stay together forever anyway. Ultimately they argue that “those things aren’t love”, and marriage is constructed not as a matter of romance, but as a matter of material things. Both agree that marriage is a false hero that they will not seek, but this agreement silences Tamara’s vision of a romantic wedding, although she does not necessarily frame it within the “white wedding” Ingraham (1999) and Brian rhetorically construct as consumerist. She may envision a ceremony that resists in some ways the traditional norms of marriage and the consumption of romance. As such this interaction demonstrates an instance in which heterosexuality is expressed as a multiple and dynamic construction. Both queer and normative meanings are presented and these meanings intersect, vacillate and interchange in complex and
dynamic ways. Both queer and normative positions are thus momentary accomplishments that remain incomplete and inconclusive.

Tamara may be attempting to avoid an open disagreement in the context of the interview, since Dryden (1999) suggests that couples usually attempt to give a united and contented presentation of themselves in interviews. In the current research, the interviews included both partners in heterosexual relationships, and direct both to tell stories of their togetherness. Because couples are likely to construct themselves as contented and united, and because the interviews targeted the couple as the unit of analysis, stories of disagreement were not present. It is possible that in this narrative Brian is attempting to queer the relationship and that Tamara is attempting to move toward a more normative way of being together. While this conflict may underlie the narrative, the research methods prevented such opposition from being voiced. Conflict within the inter-subjective couple was silenced within the research, and further research is required to explore how couples manage and negotiate such differences.

In the narrative Tamara draws a distinction between the two positions: marriage as expression of love and marriage for others or reliant on material consumables. However, there may be links between the increasing consumerism associated with weddings (Ingraham, 1999) and consumerism associated with romance (Evans, 2003). In both cases, consumable items (white wedding dresses, rings, flowers, food at weddings and food, flowers, getaways for romantic gifts) become symbols that express and display a couple’s compatibility with one another (Evans, 2003; Ingraham, 1999). While these associations between love, marriage and consumerism are located within a more affluent English (Evans, 2003) and American context (Ingraham, 1999), post-Apartheid South African society can be read as increasingly consumerist. This consumption can be linked to constructions of sexuality and romance (Posel, 2000). Tamara may be partially aligning herself with these norms and in part it is these norms that Brain is opposing, although it is not clear what kind of ceremony she pictures when she speaks of marriage for romance. However, unless it is a court-performed civil ceremony without much adornment that she imagines, it is unlikely that she could escape many of the norms of marriage focused on others expectations to which Brian seems opposed to. Later in the chapter I shall describe Frieda and Fernando’s attempts to avoid precisely these norms with their simple, “ironic” civil wedding.
Similarly to Tamara and Brian, Adrianna and Laurent also chose to perform their relationship differently from what others expect of them. They perceive the goal their dispatchers send them towards as misguided and inappropriate to them.

Laurent: Like every couple I think, it is a question of what you like. And I think also it is a question of compromises, and, and, balance. So I don’t think it’s so much different, from a normal couple. Except to that I don’t think we want to go in our relationships for kids. And a few other things that we decided.

Adrianna: I don’t know. When I think traditional. I see like, when people move in, and get the white picket fence, and the dogs, the kids and dah dah dah. Then people start playing roles. The woman starts playing the role of the wife, the mother. Or the breadwinner. It’s more like you have expectations, you know. It’s almost an unspoken set of rules, its marriage or something. Whereas I think we, as much as I sometimes wanted more, and then realise it’s not me. We are very independent.

In this narrative, Adrianna positions “the white picket fence”, “the dogs” and “the kids” as embellishments for the roles of “wife”, “mother”, “breadwinner”, but also as things she occasionally finds herself wanting. She is torn similarly perhaps to Tamara, between viewing the heterosexual relationship as it is epitomised by a “white wedding” (Ingraham, 1999; Jackson, 2006) as a complication or as a blessing, as false hero or prize. Her ambivalence may be related to an understanding of the benefits of adhering to heteronorms that can be termed the heterosexual dividend. Here the age difference between Adrianna and Laurent partially accounts for their differences. Adrianna is younger than Laurent, and might still want a marriage and/or a child, but Laurent is past the age of marrying and parenting. The “compromise” that Laurent describes is perhaps quite a difficult balancing act for them both, because Adrianna must choose between her relationship with Laurent and a more traditional path.

Her characterisation of the false hero in this narrative as “almost an unspoken set of rules” draws attention to the manner in which false heroes in heterosexual narratives of togetherness may sometimes be more than just a person. Brian and Tamara, and Adrianna and Laurent, are attempting to resist a set of norms and expectations that may be concretised in and coalesce around notions of “white picket fences”, “kids”, “mothers”, “breadwinners” and “marriage”. False heroes in these narratives may be one or more of these expressions of heteronormativity, but is not the norm in its entirety. Adrianna, Tamara and Brian are also making it clear that they are aware of norms, and that they not
only take heteronormative ways of being for granted. While they may act with or against these norms, their performances are active negotiations and shapings of norms and expectations. They describe themselves not as unthinking victims of normative constraint, but as attempting to balance and negotiate their own specific terms of togetherness.

In this sense, Adrianna’s description of their relationship as “independent” functions to define the couple as having chosen not to do the expected thing and follow the “unspoken set of rules” laid out by a variety of dispatchers, providers and helpers. For this reason, these characters are all resisted, and never integrated into the narrative to the degree that Michael does some of his villains. In the next section I shall describe the significance of Michael and Dara inviting his villainous friends to their wedding, whereas Adrianna values her “independence” from others including Laurent. While Adrianna and Laurent do not construct their relationship in terms of normative procreative or matrimonial expectations, Adrianna says they replace these expectations with time spent together and shared goals, especially on overseas trips. She explains:

So we, I think to have, things like this to look forward to. Whereas some couples are planning a family, we’re planning a lovely trip. You can’t compare. Because he travels every year. About three times, he’s left me alone for about six weeks. Which has been difficult. But again it’s given me time to be on my own and make friends, and build myself again. And it kind of stabilises you. But time apart. It keeps you balanced. That’s because we love each other. (3) But I think having a trip to look forward to. It’s definitely a wonderful shared goal, a shared excitement.

In this narrative, their focus on romantic getaways arguably aligns the couple with normative romantic expressions. Romance as it is constructed through consumable goods like holidays, situates the emotion as a possession of a bounded and autonomous individual (Evans, 2003; Illouz, 1998). Adrianna’s narrative that describes their relationship as reliant on holiday trips instead of children and marriage, also constructs them as able to spend, and even in need of, time apart. In this sense it relies on and requires that both partners are independent of one another, that they are autonomous individuals.

At the same time, Adrianna is constructing an argument that replaces some of the trappings of the institution of marriage. She argues that the couple is united by their travel plans in a similar manner as couples with children who must plan as well. While this equation may not make sense to others, it assists her in arguing for her position in this context. As such she seems to be telling this narrative so as to argue against heteronorms
and for her position, in the manner that Billig (1991) suggests everyday philosophers do. I
describe this theoretical understanding of resistance to normative ways of being more fully
in chapter two, and I relate it also to Bakhtin’s (1994) notion of the answerability and
addressivity of utterances.

This potential for the couples’ trips to enact resistance is emphasised by a carnivalesque
reading of photograph of their trips. One of the photographs they choose to discuss in the
interview was taken on a trip to Paris, and shows the couple surrounded by cartoon hearts
and angels. It was taken in a booth that superimposes frames onto a photograph. The
couple’s heads are close together and they smile broadly, so that their expression is
exaggerated and comic. While the angels, hearts and flowers are all quite usual
expressions of romance, in this photograph they appear ironic and amusing. The hearts
and angels are roughly drawn, and it is this subtle element of unreality that removes the
photos from the realm of the ordinary. The obviously constructed, clearly unreal signifiers
of romance suggest that the couple does not take their romantic connection too seriously.

The other photograph shows the couple outside of a restaurant at night. They are well
dressed, and leaning close together. The photograph was taken by a passer-by, after a
sumptuous meal in a Paris restaurant. Behind them is another couple, that seems to be
smiling and laughing at them. By their own admission they are extremely drunk, and in fact
leaning on one another to remain standing. The couple behind them is laughing at the way
they have been stumbling and tripping with drunken lack of coordination. Again the
photograph incorporates the carnivalesque by capturing their excessive drinking and lavish eating. While the couples’ trips can be understood as reflecting consumerist notions of romance and individuality as I have argued above, the photographs of their trips suggest that there may be some resistance and carnival at play as well.

In this section, I have described narratives in which two couples position themselves as against the heteronormative institution of marriage. For both couples, this positioning is shown to be the result of a structured, thought-through argument that Billig (1991) suggests allows everyday philosophers to remove themselves from normative constructions. This is a complex and somewhat uneasy performance. Both Adrianna and Tamara describe ambivalence regarding the position, in that both women are simultaneous drawn to and repelled by the norm of matrimony. Possibly because constructions of “femininity” require female partners to invest in relationships and romance (Hollway, 1984), and because marriage promises a reasonably long-term and permanent setting (Rutter & Schwartz, 1998) in which to expresses this kind of “femininity”, the women have more to gain in these terms. While matrimony may benefit husbands over wives in terms of resources, both these couples fell into the middle class sample, and so perhaps these disadvantages might be tolerable for Adrianna and Tamara. Interestingly, it is the male partners who seem more certain in their position of resisting the norm. Both men may have other means to express their “masculinity” outside of the context of their relationship.

Witnesses: “When we need a shoulder to cry on”
While some couples distance themselves from the socially constructed norm of marriage, others embrace the norm in particular ways. Dara and Michael experienced many
difficulties in co-owning a business together, but they are able to strive to stay together through these difficulties. Their narrative as a whole weaves the theme of striving to remain together through many contexts, including notably their wedding. Here the act of struggling requires “shoulders to cry on” and “good examples” in the form of family and friends who will support them through difficulties. They explain the significance of these others to their relationship:

Dara: It's also the people that introduced us and were around there when we first got together. And also people we hadn't seen in a long time. And people came from all over the world to be there. Which was fabulous.

Michael: Part of our life from when we met onwards to that point

Dara: Yeah (2). And hopefully onwards into the future as well. Because it's important I think. These are the people who were there for us on our wedding day who hopefully will be there for us. When we have trouble in our relationship or when we have trouble in the future or when we need a shoulder to cry on. I don't think any relationship can survive without that.

Michael: A support network

Dara: (2) And also example, to be followed. Lots of good examples in that photo... (3) of good relationships.

Michael: Everyone has their own opinion of what makes a good relationship. I think it's just important that you talk. We've been through the stage where you don't talk and it's better if you talk. To know what's bothering you.

Dara: Avoidance techniques.

Michael: I don't know. You learn as you go what makes a relationship.

Dara: Yes

Michael: No one can tell you what makes it work, a "how to".

Dara: Yes. I don’t think I’ve ever had a relationship I can compare to ours.

Michael: You make a relationship as you go. There’s no written laws.

Dara: (2) I think what the relationships in the photo have taught us, I mean we have so many couples that have been together for a long time. But not necessarily. We’ve also in that photo got lots of examples of, like Felicity and Joseph, couples who have gotten married late in life. And Aunty Erica and Uncle Pete. It’s like a don’t-give-up kind of thing as well. (3) You’ll find happiness, and be together you know, as long as you both struggle to keep each other going I think.

Significantly, this narrative arises from a photographic representation chosen by the couple to discuss in the interview. While many wedding photographs focus on the bride, or bride and groom, it is also fairly standard to take photographs of the families of the bride and groom. There may be photographs of the parents with the bridal couple, of the immediate family (including brothers and sisters with parents) of both the bride and groom with the bridal couple, and there is often a combined photograph, of all close family
members from both sides (Ingraham, 1999). It is such a photo that Dara and Michael choose as a representation of their relationship in the interview. This photograph visually embeds the couple within a wider family system. They are surrounded by mothers, fathers, a sister, a brother, aunts, uncles and grandmothers. The couple chose to be married in South Africa, rather than in Taiwan, because they wanted this network of relations to be present with them at the wedding. For the couple, these people are evidence of their shared past and will provide support in the future. Significantly the friends that were jealous of Dara were present at the ceremony and thus incorporated into the social network.

It is also possible to read the influence of these characters as directing Dara and Michael toward a particular kind of relationship. In this sense, the family and friends at the wedding are also dispatchers, characters that direct the couple towards a particular course of action or goal (Propp, 1968). They speak of married couples as examples, and they have a traditional “white wedding”. They may have been directed towards marriage as an idealisation of heterosexual togetherness (Ingraham, 1999). The examples that they speak of thus reflect normative expressions of heterosexuality (Jackson, 1995), and these performers reflect socially constructed understandings of what it is to be a heterosexual couple.

This normative reading of the photograph notwithstanding, their focus on the wider social system of their togetherness can be seen as unusual. Coontz (2004) proposes that that there has been a shift in pre-industrial European and American societies towards viewing marriage as a romantic connection that exists exclusively between two partners. The emphasis in such a marriage is placed on the emotional possessions of two individual
beings, on their romantic feelings for one another, and not necessarily on their families (Evans, 2003). Material accessories and consumable goods may function in such a marriage to provide evidence of the couple’s depth of feeling and compatibility (Illouz, 1998). In contrast, the photograph and story the couple tell of their wedding, serve to connect them to a wider social circle rather than only consumer goods. The merged and thereby enlarged social system has provided them with support for the work and development they have already done on their relationship, and will help them in the future through any difficulties.

In this sense they refer to repetitive, recurrent assistance from numerous, knowledgeable others. As such, the couple describes a strategy that optimises alteration through repetition as described by Butler (1993), by invoking numerous social bonds over time, and also calls upon the kind of social Zone of Proximal Development that Holzman (1991) suggests leads performatory development. In chapter nine I describe Dara and Michael’s experiences of working together, and I suggest that they tend to view their relationship as something to fight for, and to work on. They are committed to finding their way through any difficulties they encounter in the future, and they believe that their friends and family will support them through these difficulties. In this sense, they resist a normative construction of themselves as one man, and one woman (Borneman, 1999), and recast themselves as situated within a system of couples who will support and assist them.

Dara and Michael’s description of being embedded in and reliant on a social network for support is not very different from Saleem’s description of the couple’s reliance on their parents’ opinion in choosing a marriage partner.

And you know you can make a mistake. So many people today, they get divorced. My friends, my Western friends they think this is strange, that they can make the choice for themselves. But if you think about it we’re twenty eight. (laughs 2) What do we know about marriage? We haven’t been married. (laughs) We’re too young. But our parents, they can help us. So then it makes it easier to make that choice. And it has to be for the rest of your life, that you’re married. Like no one plans to get divorced (laughs 2). So it helps to make that really, you know, really important choice.

Dara and Michael emphasise the support they will receive from other relationships, and in this way they seem to have interpreted marriage in a way that bears similarity to Indian (Netting, 2006) and African (Borneman, 1999; Levine, 2004) and pre-industrial European (Coontz, 2004) societies as I have described in the literature review. Within these societies
marriage was perceived as a means of ensuring maximum social, economic and political benefit (Borneman, 1999; Coontz, 2004). While Dara and Michael do not reference the economic or political benefits of their marriage, they view their families as extended and enriched by their marriage and believe that this support network will assist them in their future. Evans (2003) interprets modern forms of romance as premised on individualism and consumerism, but these couples’ interpretations of their marriages incorporate romance and concepts of social related-ness. Both describe it as “a beautiful day”, and both admitted to an out-pouring of emotion, to crying during the ceremony. Zureida and Saleem also describe the process of choosing a partner as “exciting”, and “nerve-wracking”, thus suggesting that they experience the practice as romantic. Colonial powers understood the alliance building function of African marriages to be evidence of less romantic sensibility (Levine, 2004), but Dara and Michael, and Zureida and Saleem’s active inclusion and celebration of their families did not obscure or detract from the romance of the day. Instead both couples describe the day as filled with romance.

While Dara and Michael and Zureida and Saleem emphasise the social aspects of marriage, there are also economic considerations. Ingraham (1999) describes how “white weddings” have become increasingly commoditised in American society and thus a certain economic stature is required to marry. Illouz (1998) identifies the reliance on commodities to express romantic feeling as evidence of an increased association between capitalism and romance. Lungisile and Ayanda do not have the capital required to purchase the necessary commodities to marry, but they do not interpret these commodities as consumable goods that demonstrate the compatibility of couples’ individuality (Evans, 2003). The couple would like to marry, but they are unable to because they cannot save enough money to purchase all the necessary clothes, and make the lobola payments. Bongani, the translator, describes what Lungisile says about their desire to marry. Here it is noted that Bongani is translating Lungisile’s words from Xhosa, but also offering his own interpretations. He inserts his understandings of marriage alongside Lungisile’s and enters the research as another informer on the norms of Xhosa culture:

He says it is right. If the man and the woman, they know this is the person they will live with. Like he knows, she is a woman, he can spend his life with. And she know. He is good to spend my life with. So they know, they will be together, in all things. They can have the child, they can live together, die together. All that. It is all through their life and they know to do these things. If it is serious. If it is not just casual. There must be these things to happen. And also, for us, it is the lobola thing. There is the money to pay to the parents. Or not money, not only money. The woman must have the new clothes.
Those certain clothes, that even a person on the street will know this woman is a married woman. There is a lot of money that is involved.

This narrative serves to demonstrate the couple’s close connection to their wider community, and to Xhosa culture, that I have explored in more depth in a previous section of this chapter. Their emphasis on performing the appropriate social and cultural rituals means that they do not view the clothes and money required for marriage as superficial commodities, or as mere things. In this narrative consumable items are not used to demonstrate individuality and compatibility (Evans, 2003). Rather they are objects that become endowed with particular cultural significance and function to embed the couple deeper into their social context and closer together. As such, Lungisile and Ayanda’s acceptance of the necessity of things, in order to marry, goes against “Western”, post-industrial commodity based forms of romance, but aligns the couple with the norms of Xhosa culture (Bank, 2002).

Interestingly these couples’ narratives of dependence on a social system are interwoven with narratives of independence and consumerism. The couple insist that “everyone has their own opinion of what makes a good relationship”, and that a couple will “learn as they go”. They state that their relationship cannot be “compare[d]” to any other relationship, and that there are “no written [relationship] laws”. This theme of uniqueness and independence co-exists with the theme of interdependence in that they believe that other couples at the wedding have shown them that you “make [a relationship] as you go”, have provided examples of this philosophy and will support them as they construct their own togetherness through the years. This theme will be extended in the next chapter. The manner in which these two themes intertwine suggests that characters external to the relationship function to shape the manner in which a relationship is constructed. These other couples enact social constructions of heterosexual togetherness and act as external observers, witnesses or monitors of the couples own normative display. This witnessing function may embody the gaze of authority that Foucault (1984) argues shapes subjectivity, and may be internalised by subjects. In chapter two I describe this theoretical stance in more detail. In the next chapter I shall relate this surveillance from characters outside of the relationship to performances that seem to have a normalising function on couples.
Leland and Veronica acknowledge the people who have supported their relationship through the years, not as Dara and Michael, and Zureida and Saleem do through culturally prescribed ritual, but through a celebration of their tenth anniversary. Here they draw attention to the witnessing role of their social network. These other characters function in the narrative to watch and listen to the couple, and perhaps direct or control the couple’s togetherness. However, in this narrative the controlling function of the social network is not as clear as in the other narratives in this section.

Leland: Ja, we were kind of rewarding ourselves, for working hard, for doing good together. (2) And I think I have been very blessed in having Veronica in my life. And that party was about that happiness. And about the happiness we will still have. (2) God willing we will live another hundred years, together (laughs 2). And we will have more of that happiness. Just more and more.

Veronica: We wanted to share the happiness as well. With those people, who were there for us. Its like, its fine for us to love each other, and our children. (2) And we must be with people and show them how happy we are. I am also very lucky, very blessed, with Leland in my life. (2) But that’s nothing if I just keep it to myself.

Leland: Ja. (2) Its almost, a promise. To each other (3) Hey? That we will stay together, and be happy, and keep working to be together.

Veronica: Ja. That’s it.

In a sense Leland and Veronica are providing a carnivalesque performance of the witnessing role of other characters. They describe their tenth anniversary party as fun, with dancing and champagne. It is above all a celebration of their togetherness, but it also an opportunity to acknowledge the network of helpers, donors and providers that has assisted them over the years. The party is perhaps an opportunity for the entire network and the couple to relax their vigilance on their behaviour and on their relationships, and to enjoy themselves. While it is likely that these other characters sometimes have a normalising influence over the couple, it is also possible that including them, in this carnivalesque performance, within the enclosure of their unique and extraordinary form of togetherness. In this performance they are acknowledging both their own “blessed”-ness, their specific “happiness” and their love, and asking their friends and family to see it and enjoy it with them. It is this observing function which is central to the event and to the narrative. Leland and Veronica seem to be asking their friends and family to see, observe and possibly evaluate their relationship and their marriage. In several narratives this couple involves themselves in heteronormative togetherness: they are married, have children, own a home. In these ways they enact norms about heterosexual togetherness,
and are perhaps asking other characters to see this, evaluate them as successfully heterosexual and to celebrate this with them.

In a sense, the other characters that couples include in their narratives are witnesses to their togetherness. They observe and in a sense sanction the couples’ togetherness. Particularly in Dara and Michael’s, and Zureida and Saleem’s wedding narratives, other characters feature as people who are present at the ceremony and in their future, and that will play a guiding, directing role for the couple. In this sense other characters assume the position of observer and possibly holder of normative and normalising technologies that I shall describe in depth in chapter seven and eight. The advice and help that Dara and Michael’s family provide may serve to direct the couple toward heteronormative ways of being, in the same way that they were directed toward matrimony by these characters. The evaluation and judgement of Zureida and Saleem as suitable partners for one another is likely to require that both continue to fit in with the family and faith of one another. While both these couples rely on heteronormative understandings of matrimony and romance, there are moments in which the uniqueness and specificity that is sometimes viewed as necessary to heteronormative couples is unsettled.

**Negotiating related-ness: “special inside of that niche”**

In these sections I have described some of the roles that other characters may play in relation to heterosexual couples. The influence of other characters extends even to the initial meeting of the couple, and in a variety of ways other actors show themselves to be central to the course of each narrative. Because of the close relatedness between family and friends in the roles of provider, helper and/or dispatcher, it seems that the limit of the couple and other characters is permeable and flexible. The characters I have described in the preceding sections function to embed the couples within webs of social relationships. Couples rely on and make use of the input of other characters, external to their relationship for a variety of purposes. While couples describe themselves as a unified entity unto themselves, these external relationships and their centrality in the narratives belies this construction. Couples may be able to define themselves as a couple only in contradistinction to other relationships, and therefore couples are defined in relation to other forms of relatedness. For example, Nombulelo describes how couples are different to romantic partners.
You know our parents loves us, but they didn't love us like our boyfriends and husbands love us. You see? So, it is different. There are things that you can't, talk to your mother and you can't do with your father and your mother. And the sex. You see. Sex is [a] very, very important thing to the relationship. See?

In this chapter I have explored narratives that serve to embed the couples within a social network of characters, and I have suggested that couples position themselves in relation to these characters. This positioning helps to define the narrative of their togetherness. In so far as the boundaries between inside and outside of the relationship are blurred, the recognition of social embedded-ness could be a queering of heteronorms. At the same time, couples do still describe themselves as specific and bounded from other characters such that within the web of social relationships, there is a “niche” in which one, special person resides. Dara and Michael explain:

Dara: (6) To share your life with someone. To share your hopes and your happiness. And your failures.

Michael: I think it’s just natural. That’s why you have fifty friends when you’re twelve and maybe five friends when you’re forty. And then there is someone special inside of that niche who is yours as well. Someone you share with. Not that you don’t share.

Dara: But you do.

Michael: Yeah, yeah. I know. Not share in a physical way.

All: (laughs)

Michael: We’re going down that street. But also you don’t share everything with everyone. In a couple you share private moments that you don’t share with others.

Dara: But it’s also cool that you’re comparing it to friendship. I mean I think that’s a big part of it as well.

Here Michael and Dara describe how a couple relates themselves to others, outside of their relationship. The couple is described as spatially set-apart, within a “special niche” and other social relations are arrange around them. Those who are positioned as close to the couple are important connections, while those that are more distant might be less important. Dara insists that a “friendship” with a partner is important and this also emphasises the social interconnection of the heterosexual couple. The comparison of a couple to friends emphasises this proximity, because a couple can still be friends. The couple can “share private moments that [they] don’t share with anyone”, and still be closely related to and embedded in a social system. This recognition partially undoes the distinction between the couple and their social relations.
Significantly Michael seems to take for granted that "sharing" with the person "inside of that niche" is a physical sharing. Because of the way he words his description it seems that he is saying sharing with friends is also physical, and this provokes some laughter from Dara and from me, but this serves to emphasise the assumption of physical exclusivity. In the interview we laugh at the implication that physical sharing could happen with characters outside of the relationship and this serves to show how well defined the inside of the relationship may appear. He then clarifies that you share “private” things, not “everything with everyone”. This theme of physical closeness and sharing shall be extended in chapter eight.

As such, the boundary between what is inside and outside of the couple is unclear, even if the couple does not recognise or state this. The characters, beyond the romantic partners, that drive the action of the narrative are an inextricable part of the narrative, and cannot be separated from it. In the next chapter I shall discuss how the couples seem to define themselves as extraordinary, and as separate from the entire social order. However, they are continually interconnected through the influence of other people. In this way, the set-apart-ness and uniqueness of romantic relationships is diluted and reconfigured. Perhaps because of the permeability of boundaries between the couple and other relationships, it is possible for social norms and expectations to influence the couple. At the same time the couple may make use of this permeability to position themselves as against norms, and by relating themselves to other characters they can derive support for a resistant performance. Adrianna and Laurent, and Brian and Tamara position themselves against the false hero of matrimony, while Zureida and Saleem are supported by their social networks in their search for a marriage partner. As such, the manner in which a couple relates themselves to characters in their social network defines their narrative in particular ways.

The complexity of these positions, in relation to the social network, is evident in Frieda and Fernando’s narrative of their marriage. For this couple, the implications and expectations of other characters in their narrative associated with marriage are more difficult to perform alongside their own interpretations and needs of the event. While they are uncomfortable with the normative social expectations of their dispatchers, they must marry in order to live
together in the same country. This tension allows them to perform their marriage in a manner that is ambiguous and unclear regarding the meaning of the event:

Although. Here in Portugal. Being able to say 'my husband is Portuguese', is sometimes like a magic key to acceptance, to being in place. With these words, I get two-in-one. Being a proper - read married - woman and the wife of a proper - read Portuguese - man. And then there's the institution. The license you get. The seal of authenticity, you receive only upon marriage. But I also missed a wedding in the traditional sense. With a wedding dress. Something old something new, etcetera and bridesmaids. And I missed the presence of my mom, and my sisters, and my friends. And even the complicated rituals. I wrote my own wedding vows that I read to Fernando one morning in South Africa, when everything was still uncertain. We had planned to get married there. But the bureaucratic things yet again were too complicated. Though we found a willing, wonderful reverend. An intelligent sensitive one whom I knew. Just then when it came to the vows the whole 'until god separates us by death' was just too heavy. In a way I am also relieved we could skip those trappings. The forever-ness of it. The fixed man and wife-ness of it. The pressure of arranging everything to please everyone.

In this narrative, Frieda identifies several important, close characters that impact on their experience of planning their wedding. There are her mother and her sisters, her bridesmaids and her friends, whose presence she missed. She speaks, in the interview of feeling like she should have been married in a more traditional manner, because no other women in the family have been. The un-named people who perceive Frieda to be more Portuguese and more “authentic” after she is married adopt a similar position to Frieda’s family and it is these characters that confer on her the approval that is a dividend of heteronormative togetherness. There are also the “bureaucratic things” that stand in the couple’s way of being together, and assume the role of villain within the narrative. These villains seek the normalisation and authentication of the couple, but prevent them from having a traditional “white wedding”. These characters are close to the couple’s “special niche” and to their decision making process.

In this narrative, these close characters pull the couple in opposing directions. Her family and the un-named Portuguese others would like her to have the “white wedding”, but the Portuguese bureaucracy’s suspicion obscures the possibility of a “white wedding”. Frieda experiences this tension as an internal conflict, thus blurring the boundaries of what is inside and what is outside of her: there is a part of herself not fully articulated here that wants to perform the “complicated rituals”, the “something old, something new”, but there is part of herself that recoils from the “forever-ness, the fixed man and wife-ness of it”. In
much the same way that I argue Adrianna, Tamara and Brian show their awareness of norms and a desire to negotiate with these expectations, Frieda and Fernando are at least partially aware of the normative functions of a marriage performance. Frieda particularly is articulating ambiguity, both a desire for and a resistance toward aspects of heteronormativity that shape matrimony. Eventually, the couple recognise the “white wedding” as a false hero, and opt for another kind of ceremony. They still enter into a matrimonial contract, and thereby satisfy all their dispatchers but they do it in their own way.

By having a less traditional wedding, the two fulfil their need to stay together and avoid the “pressure of arranging everything to please everyone”. Their wedding photographs are very different from Dara and Michael’s. While Dara and Michael are immediately identifiable as a newly married couple, surrounded by their family, Frieda and Fernando are not. For Frieda and Fernando, their most immediate concern was being able to stay in the same country together. When they decide on a civil ceremony, they leave behind the dispatchers that sent them in the wrong direction. Their wedding photo shows only the bride and groom, and excludes all other characters. It is a visual representation of their decision to overcome the specific obstacle of distance, and they are victorious over this villain, the false hero and the bureaucracy.

Significantly, Frieda and Fernando’s more “iron[ic]” approach to their wedding is represented visually in their wedding photograph. They are both wearing everyday
clothing, eschewing the traditional formal attire. Although none of the usual markers of a marriage day are apparent in the photo, their depiction is of a close, loving and optimistic couple.

They make use of the civil marriage for their own ends, although they will of course derive all the advantages of the heterosexual dividend I have described in chapter three as due to a married, heterosexual couple. In a sense they satisfy their dispatchers, even though they do not have a white wedding. They also continue to struggle with the definitions and labels they have been given from the ceremony. Their narrative expresses the struggle they have had to negotiate what they want and expect of their togetherness, and what institutions have wanted and needed to sanction of their relationship. Their narrative explicitly states a messy, heteroglossia of positions that are available, prescribed or expected of them as a heterosexual couple, and the conclusion of the story with their marriage does not offer an easy, comfortable or final interpretation of their performances. The lack of conclusion or final meaning shall be discussed further in the next chapter.

This heteroglossic performance could be associated with the ways that they have learnt to communicate with an awareness of their differences in terms of nationality and social groupings.

Fernando: I do think we are special but that is a personal thing. And not a social thing. I don't think we are a special case. (2) Trying to be together, and live like that, makes us a couple, to build togetherness negotiating an other so, to make it possible, finding space beyond convention, finding traps old and new. (2) I guess everyone has to go there sometimes.

Frieda: I think we are a special case socially too. At least I used to. In that I moved from South Africa to Portugal and that before we had this virtual very long, long distance relationship. But since being here I’ve come across similar ‘cases’. I do still also think we’re special like that. Though I suppose more in the personal sense. Socially still, also, in the sense of him being “white, European”. And me being “of colour, African”. I think maybe because of being South African. Here, in Portugal, there’s a history of so-called mixed relationships though.

In this narrative they compare themselves, to other cases, and see themselves the same as other cases and also as different to other cases. They are the “similar” because they have a racially mixed relationship, and “there’s a history of so-called mixed relationships” in Portugal, and because they have had a “long, long distance relationship”. Here the couple equates “special”-ness with “finding space beyond convention”, that is performing

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from a position outside of social norms. At the same time, they believe that “everyone has to go there sometimes”. In this way, they return to the construction of heterosexual couples as the same because they are different. However, they suggest that this is a matter of “finding” and “negotiating” and also a matter of perspective and context. As such they emphasise their social context and embedded-ness within political and social relationships.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have described the different kinds of influence various characters have over a relationship. I have made use of some of the seven character functions that Propp (1968) has identified, to clarify and define the functions that characters, other than the two romantic partners, play within a relationship. The structure of the narratives and the function of other characters construct the togetherness of two romantic partners as closer and more intimate. It is not only individuals that the couple connects with in this way, but also social constructions of norms. The function of helpers, providers and dispatchers, as well as villains and false heroes, is to drive the narrative sequence towards a resolution of some kind. As such, both supportive and challenging characters help to build the relationship, to construct inter-subjectivity and closeness.

In this way, the couples reveal that their relationship is inextricably socially located and the narratives suggest that togetherness is constructed through thoughtful consideration and negotiation in relation to social norms. Couples do not simply reproduce normative ways of being together, but rather perform themselves in relation to others such that they are able to argue for particular ways of being together. Some characters play a witnessing function whereby the approval of others is implicated in the dividends that benefit a heteronormative couple. However, in some narratives the couples position themselves as against socially constructed norms and against characters that express these norms. As such other characters argumentatively construct a position for themselves similarly to the way that Billig (1991) suggests everyday philosophers construct an argumentative position
that may go against normative opinions. Alternately a couple may position themselves as aligned with characters that represent a non-normative way of being and thereby derive support for a resistive performance. This positioning may be associated with Holzman’s (1991) conception of development that may be lead by more proficient performers.

In the following chapter, I shall describe how couples construct themselves as separate and unified, even though they are interconnected and intertwined with other characters, friends, family, peers and colleagues. The couple must actively work to transform or transcend these expectations, or to go along with them. The narratives position the couple, or each partner, is particular forms of related-ness with regard to other characters. The couple may be told as close to or far from another character or social norms. This positioning in part constructs and shapes the meaning of the narratives. Dara and Michael make use of the spatial metaphor of a “niche” to explain how a couple remains separate from, but close to one another. The couple is enclosed by a “niche” and are friends, such that friends and a social circle stand just outside of the “niche”. This spatial metaphor foreshadows the exploration I shall turn to in chapter eight, exploring constructions of space within narratives of heterosexual togetherness.

The focus in the current chapter on other characters, beyond the heterosexual couple, included in heterosexual narratives has obscured the couples come to terms with the terms of their togetherness. For example, every heterosexual couple has at some time to face the issue of marriage. The couple must make the choice to resist matrimony, to have a traditional, Judeo-Christian “white wedding” or a traditional Xhosa ceremony, or to get married in a “different” way. In order to make this choice, the couple would perhaps have to engage in an internal dialogue prior to a dialogue between partners, in which they position themselves in relation to societal meanings, personal meanings, the expectations of close others, the requirements of living among other things. The current research was conducted with couples, and this methodology focused on the presentations the couple made in an interview as a co-construction. Interviews with the partners separately may have allowed the space to interrogate their decision-making process in depth.
In the previous chapter I introduced the theme of heterosexual togetherness as unique and set-apart from other social relationships. In this chapter I explore ways that couples construct their togetherness as based on compromise following from differences, and from similarities in experiences, behaviour and worldview. These special points of connection sometimes assist the couple in positioning themselves, as I have described in the previous chapter, as against normative ways of being together. In order to construct togetherness as unique and special, couples rely in part on mundane, everyday settings and activities that ironically society in general has access to. These everyday connecting rituals provide the couple with the opportunity to monitor their relationship, themselves and their partner. From these observations the couple may normalise their behaviour and in this way mundane togetherness contributes to normal togetherness. As such couples construct relationships as simultaneously the same as all other couples and as fundamentally separate from all other couples. I shall try to emphasise both heteroglossia and monologue within these narratives. Bakhtin (1994) conceives of utterances, such as those expressed in narrative communications, to be constructed simultaneously of centripetal forces (those that pull towards unity) and centrifugal forces (those that disperse). As such, meanings that attach to the couples’ narratives shall be understood as without final conclusive or definite meaning.

Each of the interviewed couples expressed the belief that every couple is different from any other couple. This difference was constructed as the requirement that two people negotiate terms of togetherness acceptable to both. Couples expressed this as the need for “compromise”, “balance”, a “struggle”, a “fight” to stay together, and the outcome of this work was viewed as unique to every couple. There is “no book written about how to have good relationship”, and everyone must make their own way to what “works for them”. In their insistence that all couples are the same in that they are all different, the couples resist a universalising narrative, and claim the specificity of their own stories. At the same
time, the couples seem to be admitting of overarching similarities that unite couples, and in this way they might include constructions of heteronorms.

**Dancing lessons: togetherness through difference**

While I shall argue in the next section of this chapter that the couples may be able to construct togetherness through shared experiences, behaviours and worldviews, the partners in a couple are by definition different. As I have argued in the second chapter, heterosexual relationships rely on differences in gender, and as such this difference is common to all couples. It is a form of difference that must be negotiated by all normative couples. This difference is largely unspoken in the couples’ stories, despite being ubiquitous. Although the stories in this section do not describe difference in gendered terms, I shall draw out implications associated with gender. I shall present three stories: in the first, difference is ultimately a signal of incompatibility, in the second difference may construct a point of connection, and in the third the couple’s difference requires a mutually beneficial co-construction. As such, couples seem to dance between accepting difference and being unable to cope with difference.

Rajesh and Cherel’s romance is built around how dissimilar they are to one another. Rajesh sees Cherel’s dubious moral standards as an “antidote” to ex-partner Lee’s deceit during their relationship, although ironically, he cannot sustain a relationship with Cherel either. Her behaviour becomes increasingly treacherous and erratic after Anton Borneman (the son of Slang Borneman, a man Cherel claims to have killed in self defence many years ago) reappears on the Deep. Cherel is angry that On! TV shows a programme about the Borneman children, and after this programme, Rajesh is unsure of how to act toward her. He thinks Anton’s anger is understandable, “after all [she] did take his father away from him”. He is not sure that she should be engaging with Borneman again, for the sake of the television show. Cherel invites Anton onto her show so that they can discuss his feelings about her killing his father. She feels it will make good television and improve her ratings. On the show she taunts and provokes him until he lunges at her and tries to strangle her.

After the show, Rajesh goes to see her in the hospital. She cannot speak, so she has to write him messages on paper. As he walks through the door, she is sitting cross legged on
the bed. She smiles broadly and happily, and pulls him gently closer to her. She begins writing.

“I believe you saved my life?” she writes.

“Lolly had a lot to do with it as well,” he shrugs her compliment off.
She smiles at him and mouths, “Thank you.” She begins writing again, “I thought that little bastard was going to kill me.”

“You went too far Cherel,” he says to the top of her head, bent over as she writes again. She looks up, surprised as he continues. “You pushed and you pushed that boy, until he snapped.” He pauses, and then goes on slowly, “Yeah, you’ll get your ratings. But right now, that boy is sitting in a holding cell, charged with attempted murder, because you wanted to sell advertising.”

There are tears in her eyes as she shakes her head, and gulps a ragged “No” from her wounded throat.

“I always knew you were ruthless. But I never really knew what that meant. Now I have seen you in action, and I really don’t like what I saw.” His eyes are cold. They do not acknowledge that she is still shaking her head and there are tears in her eyes. “I think what he said is right,” he says, driving his point home, “you really do seem to shoot a lot of people in self defence. People who get near you do always seem to get hurt.” His cold, steady gaze is directed straight into her tear-filled eyes. “And all I know is I need to get the hell away from you.” His jaw is set as he says, “Consider what we had over.”

He turns abruptly without waiting for her to respond and leaves the room.

As the door closes her lips quiver with repressed emotion. She throws her writing pad on the bed, revealing the words “I love you” and turns to look at the door.

In the series, the character of Rajesh is defined by his ethical integrity, his business acumen and his rational, fair-minded decision-making. To an extent, these qualities could be associated with a “masculine” objectivity and entrepreneurialism (Puwar, 2004). While he has also been shown to be a devoted and emotional romantic partner to Lee Haines, it is these aspects of his character that are fore grounded, and it is these characteristics that Cherel offends. In her persecution of Anton Borneman she has “gone too far” rather than remaining detached, has shown herself to be “ruthless” rather than just and thereby shows herself to be incompatible with Rajesh’s more “masculine” attitudes.

In the following chapter I shall discuss how Cherel can be interpreted as a queer character, but in this excerpt, she may be read as more monolithically “feminine”. Throughout the scene Cherel is physically affectionate, pulling him close to her and obviously emotional, crying, and shaking her head. In the scene, Cherel narrowly misses making the depth of her feelings for him known to Rajesh. Significantly she is also silenced by her injuries, unable to speak. At her most vulnerable, he hurts her as deeply
as he possibly could by ending their relationship. It is significant that in this moment of “femininity”, she is punished for her un-feminine, transgressive behaviour. The scene must be understood within a reading of Cherel as the show’s villain, and it is these transgressive activities that Rajesh rejects. Their relationship is acknowledged by both to be unlike their usual behaviour, and could be read as resistive and anti-normative. But the manner in which Rajesh ends of the relationship, with a performance that could be interpreted as a performance of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995), reasserts a more heteronormative status quo. He seems to enact an extremely detached position, ignoring her very apparent emotional pain. She is relegated to a performance of passivity and emotional vulnerability, while he becomes morally judgmental and actively concludes their association. Cherel’s queer performance is ultimately incompatible with and violently rejected by Rajesh’s heteronormativity. As such the incompatibility of the couple’s difference is performed through the opposition of gender roles, as I have described them in chapter three, suggests that couples may have to manage this difference in their togetherness and that this difference may be unmanageable. This opposition and possibly the couple’s incompatibility arise from the binary construction of gender that I describe as contingent in chapter two.

Although in some cases it is viewed as evidence of incompatibility, in some cases difference can be constructive. It may be possible to construct a difference in abilities or opinions as a means to create a point of connection. In this way, couples may sometimes be able to recast a difference as providing the possibility of growth. In this sense the couple may be able to make use of differences between them to construct a sense of same-ness and closeness:

Indira: I don’t know. It’s fun. It’s nice to move together. It’s nice when it feels like we can make our bodies do the same things, co-ordinated. (2) And I like the feeling of being so close. It’s romantic, ok (laughs 2). It’s just romantic. There is nothing so romantic as dancing with someone.
Haroun: I’m too busy trying not to step on her feet. Like hurt her (laughs 3). I’m really, really bad.
Indira: No you’re not. You’re not.
Haroun: Um. (laughs 2) Maybe we should go for lessons?
Indira: Maybe.

The degree to which this couple does cope with their difference in order to construct togetherness is arguable. This form of dancing requires that a female partner be led by, and submit to the directions of her male partner. In a sense, Indira is performing a
“feminine” role, in which she is graceful, in touch with her body and therefore easily able to express her connection with Haroun in a physical manner. Haroun however, is an intellectual “guy”, a “geek”, who may thus be less able to use his body. He enacts a particular kind of “masculine” performance that places emphasis on the mind and denigrates physicality. His offer to go for dancing lessons may also be read as an attempt to seek a less normative performance. In so far as his inability to dance is masculine, and Indira’s more easy physicality can be seen as feminine, the offer of dance lessons functions to shift Haroun from his abstract, mental, “masculinity” and into an innovative performance.

In this sense, Haroun has more responsibility and perhaps therefore more difficulty with assuming his role as prescribed by this activity. As the male partner, it may also be Haroun’s prerogative to direct the couple toward taking dancing lessons, and because he is an intellectual “geek” he may need to be taught. Haroun may require lessons because he cannot take direction from his female partner, but may submit to the direction of a professional. He laughs briefly, before suggesting the lessons, possibly because he is dismissive of Indira’s claim that he is good at dancing, and possibly because he is somewhat indifferent towards the lessons. He is not invested in the lessons or this kind of physical merging, and can be offhand about the idea. In so far as they perform in these masculine and feminine ways, Indira and Haroun’s description of dancing, of the performance of togetherness, may be partially established by the performance of dancing itself.

Although it is possible that Haroun has thought of the possibility of dance lessons before, or that Indira will take him seriously and force him to go to lessons with her, it is more likely that the suggestion was made on the spur of the moment, to make a particular impression in an interview and will not be followed up. While it is a glimpse at a potential innovation on the couples’ performances of gender, it is likely that it shall remain nothing more than an idea. Significantly, this is an instance in which I used self disclosure to encourage the couple’s storytelling. I admitted to the opposite dynamic in my relationship, telling the couple that my partner is a good dancer while I am not. As such I encouraged a development of the dancing story-line, in part directing the couple to a particular, normative gender performance rather than challenging it to explore alternatives. In this way the narrative, and my part in its construction, emphasises that performances of
heteronormativity and resistance to heteronorms is also a kind of dance. The narrative is interpretable both in terms of alteration of and collusion with heteronorms, and its meaning slides inconclusively between these poles. Bakhtin (1994) suggests that utterances are never final since they include opposing tendencies to monologue alongside heteroglossia. Indira and Haroun’s narrative reflects this openness of meaning.

A similar kind of negotiation and complexity of meaning is present between another couple who experience difference. Maggie Webster and Len Cooper of Isidingo are seen as a very mismatched couple. They are even openly mocking of each other. They are not in a traditional relationship, and in fact their association is built on a one-night-stand that didn’t actually happen. However, the manner in which they construct the one-night-stand, in conversations with friends and each other, may be illustrative of how couples could manage differences. Their entanglement takes place after Maggie they get very drunk at a dress-up party at the Buller house where Len, Maggie, Lolly and Paul live. After much drinking at the party everyone goes to sleep, except Maggie and Len. Len suggests that they play strip poker, and in the morning Lolly and Paul wake up to find them both naked, entwined with one another on the couch in the lounge. Maggie insists she remembers nothing. Len tells them that Maggie was winning and then hit a losing streak in which she lost all her clothing. She then had a comeback that left him naked. At this point, he says it is Maggie that seduced him and that they both lost all inhibitions, “like two tigers released from a cage”.

After a few days of sticking to his story, (that they had a passionate, enjoyable, albeit it drunken, one-night-stand that allowed them to satisfy their entirely natural curiosity and understandably ardent desire for one another) Len eventually admits to Lolly and Paul that they were both too drunk and simply passed out. He couldn’t resist the opportunity to play with “the power of suggestion in Maggie’s mind”. Maggie tells Lolly that although she can’t remember anything and has no feelings for Len, it feels good to have had “a night of passion” and “get another notch on the bedpost” with a “little bit of uncomplicated fun”. She believes that since she cannot remember much, it couldn’t have been very good, and she tells people that Len is “not very skilful but sweet”, “cute” and “rather clumsy”. This story is less than satisfying to Len, who has a reputation for expertise and proficiency in sexual matters, and Maggie and Len declare war on one another, vying to see whose story will be believed by their friends.
After several smaller skirmishes Len confronts her. After everyone has left one morning, they talk over the breakfast table.

“I know that you know that nothing happened here the other night Maggie,” says Len, his index finger physically indicating the abstract point he is making. “Do you know what they are saying down at the office? They are saying Maggie suffers from delusions. They know nothing happened.” He licks his fingers as though with satisfaction for people’s opinions of her.

“Well that’s just because of what you’re telling them Len. I know what you’re trying to do, you’re trying to humiliate me. You’re trying to steal my spirit.”

Making emphatic, staccato hand gestures he says, “Well if you continue to insist that we went all the way up the Khyber then you are going to look like an idiot, in anyone’s books. You know what they’re going to say? They’re going to say Sad Mad Maggie.” He commences buttering his toast.

“I’ve learnt a lot about from my book about people wanting to steal my spirit,” she says quietly.

“Poor, sad, mad Maggie,” he sings.

“A month ago I would have been a gibbering wreck,” she says, an edge rising in her voice. Without looking at her he responds. “Well all you have to do to fix it Mags is tell them we didn’t have a thrashing on the sofa. It’s as simple as that.”

“Well I have learnt how to fight,” she says speaking faster and faster. “And if you continue to spread those rumours about me, I’m going to do that. I’m going to move right into Phase Two.”

“Phase Two!” He spits. “What the hell is that?”

She gets up and walks away. “You can take me on Len. I’m not giving up.”

He rises and follows her. There is a note of desperation in his voice. “Whoa. Whoa. What are you talking about? What’s this Phase Two?”

“That’s for me to know and you to find out,” she says, pointing at him. “But rest assured that when a woman is fighting to have her spirit restored, she takes no enemies.”

“Prisoners,” he corrects.

“What?”

“Give me a hint.”

“There is going to be blood on the walls. That’s a hint. You know I’ve just gotten to the chapter in my book about the Amazons. They were these warrior women who cut off their right breast,” she snarls, making a cutting motion with her hand across her ample bosom. “So they could be more accurate with their bows. I have a quiver full of arrows to fire at you Len. And I am warning you, I am not going to be shy about using them.”

He looks away from her and then slowly turns back. A look of weariness is on his face. “Maggie Webster, I have to say that you have balls.”

“And breasts,” she spits back, her hands placed solidly on her hips. “If it’s going to be all out war, I am going to win.”

“I don’t want to fight you Mags, I don’t like that,” he pleads. “You know this about me.”

“Oh course there is another way,” she relents.

“Yeah.”
When Lolly and Nan confront him later that day at the television station, their plan is revealed. They have both agreed to say that they did have sex, and that it was world-changing for both of them. In fact “it was amazing, out of the park”. They experienced “a full on connection that felt like hours and hours” to him. He thinks “Maggie is one hell of a woman”, and he thinks she will say he is “one hell of a guy”. They will not begin a relationship because out of bed they “do not get on” and that was “why it was difficult to admit how spectacular the fireworks were”. In this way they negotiate a story which is acceptable to both of them.

In their story, Len and Maggie take up different and oppositional positions regarding what happened the night of the strip poker game. Len uses the story to provoke Maggie. He uses his openly predatory performance of sexuality to support his story of wild, passionate sex, and as a means to goad Maggie. While Hollway’s (1984) Permissive discourse would suggest that Len and Maggie are equally able to pursue sexual pleasure, in the series the character of Len performs predominantly from the position of the Male Sex Drive discourse, while Maggie enacts the Have-Hold discourse in her sexuality. In this sense, they undertake normative performances of gender as part of their heterosexuality. I have suggested in the literature review, that the Have-Hold discourse limits women who act predominantly from that position, from performing from the position of the Permissive discourse. In Len and Maggie’s story, it is possible that he believes that he can “play with her mind”, because he is known for his sexual exploits and because she usually seeks sex exclusively within the limits of a relationship.

In this sense, Len and Maggie usually occupy two opposite gendered positions on sexuality, but their story is of confrontation because Maggie refuses to perform her usually passive approach. Their stories conflict with one another because Len expects Maggie to feel challenged by the one-night stand. He expects her to be unsettled by a sexual encounter with a man with whom she is not in a relationship, and does not intend to be in a relationship. When she is not challenged, and is instead proud of and pleased by the encounter, his position, as sexually predatory male, is compromised. She takes the night
as “harmless fun”, but unmemorable. In this way, her story challenges his usual position on sex, instead of his story challenging her position on sex.

Their argument, transcribed above is noteworthy because it is performed through these kinds of gendered positions and confrontations. He positions her as over emotional and psychologically disturbed, as “Sad Mad Maggie”. But Maggie appropriates this position, by referring to the self-help book, which has helped her understand her own psyche, and the psyches of those who would wish to “steal her spirit”. Wilbraham’s (1996) study of magazine advice suggests that South African women may be targeted through this media, to undertake psychological work on themselves in order to maintain a relationship. In this confrontation with Len, Maggie assumes such a “feminine” concern for emotional work, but instead of pathologising herself she derives strength to fight the positioning of her as sexually submissive. She threatens him with unspecified emotional warfare, and he tells her she “has balls”.

This compliment, that Maggie “has balls”, is a double bind. In one sense Len is attributing to her honorary “balls”, and therefore the quality of strength that some men possess. However she cannot have “balls” and her having balls would be viewed as medically pathological (Hester, 2004). Her strength is thus cast in “masculine” terms that she can never be given full access to, because physical sex is constructed as oppositional and exclusive (Hird, 2000). She is female and therefore can never be male. Significantly she insists that she has breasts as well. He is forced into the realisation that she is prepared to resist any of his efforts to position her within a sexually passive, non-confrontational, “feminine” frame of reference. She has learnt about the Amazon warriors, who were willing to cut off their right breast to fight better. She is now willing to appropriate this symbol of resistive female-ness, rather than cast this resistance in masculine-ised terms.

The compromise that they reach, and the story that characterises both as sexually powerful, allows both access to the Permissive discourse (Hollway, 1984). Maggie is able to keep her “notch on the bedpost”, even though they did not really have sex. Her story of harmless sexual fun remains the story believed by their friends. In this story, and in her confrontation with Len, she is able to perform as a woman who has power, who can protect herself from “spirit stealers”. In this way, she balances a feminine concern for emotions, with a more masculine, active, Amazon performance. Len is satisfied with the
story in so far as it portrays him as sexually accomplished, and because he no longer has to engage in emotional warfare with Maggie. In this way he performs a masculine, sexually driven position, and also shows a more feminine concern for emotions, by seeking to avoid confrontation. In a sense both perform from the position of the Permissive discourse that apparently allows both feminine and masculine performers access to the same sexual script. However, this is only possible to the extent that performers can separate themselves from the gendered sexual performances defined through the Have-Hold and Male Sex-Drive discourse. To the extent that Len and Maggie accomplish this, their story undoes boundaries that define the gender to the performers. Since gender can be seen as a social imperative (Hester, 2004) it is likely that the couple is unable to give up their gender roles for long though. As such, any resistance they accomplish must be momentary.

Heterosexual relationships require gender difference, because they are constructed as an attraction for a different kind of human being, the opposite gender (Jackson, 1995). Butler's (1993) conception of the heterosexual matrix suggests that sexuality is constructed as easily conferred by biology, which is understood as naturally opposite. As such, heteronormative relationships always require some kind of negotiation of difference, even if it is only in terms of gender difference. Len and Maggie’s battle is characterised by attempts to belittle and undermine each other, and I suggest in the literature review that sexually active, heteronormative relationships hold within them the potential to become similarly abusive and potentially violent (Rowland, 1996). However, Len and Maggie avoid this peril, and their story is ultimately constructive to both of them. They do largely avoid the tendency of heteronormative relationships to fall into performances of patriarchal dominance that may be violent (Dunne, 2003; Firestone, 1998; Rowland, 1996). To an extent, their story is an expression of a kind of heterosexuality that is not normative, although it makes only a momentary difference to their gender and sexual performances.

In so far as both resist monolithically gendered performances, and instead appropriate “masculine” and “feminine” characteristics for these specific, contextual concerns, their performances could be interpreted as queer (Thomas, 2000). It also shows that the “queering” of a heterosexual relationship is a fleeting achievement. Len and Maggie’s compromise is accomplished in one instance, and does not necessarily make any lasting, fixed or permanent change on their sexual performances. Rather it is a momentary
alteration of heteronorms that suggests that the queering of heterosexuality is a flexible process that slides between heteroglossia and monologue without reaching a final conclusion.

Len and Maggie’s story suggests that the dissimilarity inherent in heterosexual relationships, that of gender (Irigaray, 2004), can be negotiated within the inter-subjective space between the couple. It is also noteworthy, that this performance is constructed primarily for public consumption, rather than in the interests of domestic harmony. Their story is constructed so as to perform sexual assertiveness in the presence of others. In this sense, relationships may be played out against the backdrop of other characters as I have described in detail in the previous chapter.

The above stories show how three couples are able to negotiate differences between them. I have tried to emphasise how these differences relate to gender difference, and to an extent the stories explore how couples could negotiate the gender difference that is required of normative couples. For some couples, it is possible to construct togetherness based on difference: Indira and Haroun might make use of dancing lessons to mitigate their difference in terms of dancing skill; Len and Maggie construct a relationship a fictional relationship partially because of their differences in terms of gender. However, Rajesh and Cherel are incompatibly different, and their break-up can be read as a performance of gender roles. While gender difference must be a part of all heterosexual togetherness, this difference is left as an implicit aspect of the tales in this section. The manner in which these three couples deal with difference in general, and the gendered implications of their tales, suggests that dealing with gender is a dance between tolerance and intolerance of differences between partners. For these couples a unique, contextual and therefore specific-to-them compromise is achieved. Though this may be a momentary achievement it constructs the relationship in complex, distinctive and idiosyncratic ways and in this sense goes against heteronorms as a universalising Grand narrative.

The current research has focused on the already-constructed, inter-subjective narratives of couples, and has not had access to the decision making processes that couples use to create these constructions. Further research could inquire as to the processes that underlie the construction of couples’ narratives, but at present the focus has been not on this inter-subjective process, but on the inter-subjective management of norms and
resistance. In so far as couples are able to manage difference, they are able to construct heterosexual togetherness that unites them. The manner in which this negotiation is enacted takes on characteristics that are specific to each couple, and helps to define their togetherness through “compromise”. Significantly, such compromise erases difference in favour of unity. In so far as gender is implicated in tales of difference, as I have suggested in this section, in some cases this could imply that couples must ignore gender difference in order to construct togetherness.

Constructing similarity
While it seems that the negotiation of difference can show that couples are able to “compromise” in order to tell a tale of unity and uniqueness, couples can also insist on the specificity of their relationship by referring to the ways that the two individuals in the relationship can be described as similar. Many of the couples describe their similarities as central to their relationship. These similarities serve to demonstrate how well the couple “fit” together and function as a marker of well-being or success. In the following section three kinds of similarities shall be explored: similarities in experience, behaviours and worldview. I shall review narratives couples tell of their similarity to one another, in order to explore how this aspect of narratives may contribute to, or detract from heteronormative expressions of togetherness.

Firstly, Dara and Michael derive strength from shared experiences, and a similar outlook on life. They met in Taiwan, and spent three years there together teaching English. They both describe their time in Taiwan as free of responsibility and accountability. They are in a country where foreigners are given a certain degree of freedom, because most officials do not speak English and so will not interfere with them. Their work responsibilities are minimal as well, although the pay is good. Their first photographic representation shows the couple during this “happy-go-lucky” period of their lives.
They are standing on a train platform, after a lunch with friends. They are holding each other and each hold a can of beer in their hands. They are laughing. In this photograph they are united both by their physical proximity and their enjoyment of a pleasurable lifestyle involving friends, good food and beer. The light-hearted, pleasurable elements of the photograph and the narrative seem to have wider significance in the context of their relationship. Their relatively care-free, fun and fulfilling years together in Taiwan are seen as a source of strength. Dara describes the strength they derive from this time in their shared lives:

Dara: And I think also that we had such an easy, a wonderful. Not an easy. I don't want to say easy because I don't necessarily think our relationship was easy from the start. But just such a happy-go-lucky time in Taiwan. You know. It's always a fun thing to look back. And say gee we were like that then. And we could be like that in the future. And fight to have. To have back again

Michael: Not that we don't have it now. (2) Not as happy and lucky.

By remembering and celebrating this time, when they could drink beer in public, go out for long, expensive lunches and drive through police road blocks, the couple return to this relatively “easy” time and affirm their togetherness. This emphasis on pleasure suggests an experience of carnival, and implies the separation that the carnival can impart upon relationships provides the couple with the strength they describe (Bakhtin, 1994; Gardiner, 2000). In chapter two I have provided a fuller discussion of the significance within the current research of the concept of carnival. Here the couple returns through remembrance to a separate time and space, and this return invokes the carnival experience of pleasure. Within the context of their everyday togetherness, the metaphoric invocation of carnival seems to function as a means to make light of constraint by invoking the pleasure of this care-free way of being together. This return is also a repetitive action that could assist in the creation of alteration (Butler, 1993).
There is an alternate sense of time employed within the narrative, to locate the couple’s Taiwan experiences as a continuing influence over their lives. Although their time in Taiwan was in another time and another space, they can refer to their photographs, their memories or to similar experiences they have in present-time as well. In this sense, this experience of carnival is ever-present in their relationship, and allows the couple to repeatedly return to their day-to-day existence renewed and enriched (Bakhtin, 1994, Hollway & Kneale, 2000). In much the same way as carnival was a time when citizens purged themselves of sinful desires in preparation of a lawful day-to-day existence (Bakhtin, 1994), Dara and Michael draw close through their shared experiences and in this sense, their narrative expresses the potential to resist norms.

While they may be enabled to resist social norms in their togetherness, their shared experiences may also be read as in part heteronormative. Significantly these shared experiences rely on consumable commodities that construct their romantic compatibility (Bachen & Illouz, 1996). In this sense, this narrative represents both partners as individuals who express and assert their individuality through the choice of consumer products and romantic partner (Illouz, 1998). As such, their Taiwan experiences construct their relationship in normative terms of love (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995). Further, they benefit from these normative performances in that they are able to be together openly and in public. Their photograph shows them openly embracing, obviously a romantic couple in a public space. In this way they are taking advantage of the dividends reserved for heteronormative togetherness that allow them to publicly share experiences (Hubbard, 2001) and to derive pleasure from these experiences (Jackson, 1995). These benefits are experienced both in the past, when they lived in Taiwan, and in the present, when they reclaim memories of their experiences. In this way, the foundation of their togetherness, particularly in so far as their ways of being together rely on these kinds of shared experiences, can be viewed as accessing heteronorms.

Secondly, Nombulelo and Makhaya tell the most uncomplicated and striking tale of similarity in behaviour. Within this tale, her relationship with Makhaya is markedly opposed to her violent marriage:

Because you can’t stay in a relationship that you are not happy. It is not good to stay in a relationship like that that (4). You know in my, in my marriage my husband was abusing me, beating me and the children. In Xhosa tradition the old people said, you must stay at your husband’s house. You see?
Because you are married. So, we can't do anything, go back to your husband. So but now I am happy. Because my children. Talking with [Makhaya]. Chatting, about everything with him. (3) They love him. They love him. If I can break up with him, my children will be cross with me. Because they love him. If I stay a long time in town they say, mom, go back. Because they don't want him to stay a long time, on his own. We are all happy. And we didn't fight. If you know, these years. We didn't fight. So I am happy because he just drive me to, to have a nice, a better future. You see? (7) My marriage was very, very bad. Because I nearly been killed, by my husband. He wanted to kill me and the kids. He's got girlfriends. He stays with the girlfriend and he loves her. She loves him. So he didn't love me now. Because I've got children, then he loved the new girl. See? Then he wanted to kill me and the kids. He didn't want me, to go back to [a small Eastern Cape town]. He wanted to kill me [at home]. So then he hanged me with electric wire. See? So he wanted to go to the kids and, he wanted to slaughter them. Then the kids when I cried, the kids heard that I am crying in the bathroom. Then the kids go to the neighbours. And tell the neighbours Mom is crying in the bathroom, and she was with our father there. Then he goes up, out and looks for the kids. Then he didn't find the house where the kids were. (3) The he goes to the neighbours, the other neighbours and look for the kids. Then we ran away. That is what happened. Then the neighbours, I wasn't got even a cent. The neighbours give me money to go back to [a small Eastern Cape town] with the kids. Because they say. If you stay then you will die. I don’t want him and I divorced him. After the divorce he died. Ja. So that is what I like. I am happy. I am coming from a bad relationship. You see? That was a bad relationship for my kids too.

The couple’s similarity is expressed through behaviour that is conflict-free, peace-loving and non-confrontational. The harmony that is between them seems to be based on a shared desire for calm, peace and quiet, and this tranquillity is expressed through their choice of living space. Their tale also incorporates aspects of the carnivalesque, in that their tranquil lifestyle is reflected in their living space on an isolated farm. This tranquillity sets them apart spatially, but it also separates Nombulelo from her violent past. It is central to their narrative that they do not fight, and that Makhaya is “an angel”, a “sweet man”. While her ex-husband tried to end her life, Makhaya “just drive [her] to, to have a nice, a better future”. In this way the couple resist the violence that is sometimes characteristic of heteronormative relationships (Dunne, 2003; Rowland, 1996).

In chapter three I argue that the kind of violence Nombulelo experienced could be implicit within heteronormative relationships. In so far as heterosexual relationships rely on a gender binary that defines “masculinity” as physically strong, sexually assertive, penetrative and opposed to “femininity” (Lindegger & Durrheim, 2000), dominance that is expressed through violence may become a part of any heteronormative relationship. In
her narrative, Nombulelo describes her experience of this kind of heteronormative oppression within a system of that works to keep her held within the abusive situation. She describes how "in Xhosa tradition the old people [say], you must stay at your husband’s house", and how her neighbours give her some coins so that she can finally take herself and her daughters away from her husband and move to another town. As such she is oppressed by her husband, because of social norms that require a wife remain with her husband no matter what, and by lack of financial resources possibly because her husband controlled them. In this way other characters have both normative and non-normative functions in this narrative. It is significant that the oppression of heteronorms seems to be held in place by socio-economic factors, and heteronormativity is thus implicated in a wider social context. Jackson (2006) argues that heteronorms are a principle that organises a wide range of social relations that extend beyond the relationship between one man and one woman, and Nombulelo’s tale reflects this status quo. While the narrative functions in part to set her present relationship with Makhaya as different from the violence she once experienced, the theory I present suggests that no relationship, regardless of the past, entirely avoids the potential for violence. Although she constructs her relationship with Makhaya as different from her past, it is unclear to what extent she is able to avoid the oppressive implications of heteronormative togetherness. While Nombulelo does not explicitly state an awareness of this potential, a narrative concerning the couple’s use of space that I shall present in the next chapter, suggests not only that she is aware of this potential but also that she manages this implicit violence to a certain extent.

Thirdly, Indira and Haroun’s narrative can be read as focused on the worldview they share. Their tale is primarily one of two people who have made similar choices and that have formed a strong togetherness united against others who do not accept these choices. While they are together, and take pleasure in their togetherness, they are able to withstand the disapproval of others. In this sense, they describe themselves as unique, and this uniqueness is a source of strength that helps them resist the expectations of others:

Haroun: We’re non-drinking, non-meat-eating, non-sexual (laughs 2). In [this town] guys and girls have sex. They drink together, and then have sex (laughs 4).
Indira: (2) And we don’t do that. We’re a little different, ja.
Haroun: Well, it works, for us.
Indira: It’s frustrating. Maybe irritating. (2) Some people we know having sex, and drinking. They can do that. It’s what they want. (2) Like we can be nice, be friends with them anyway. (3) They think we’re crazy. They think there’s something wrong with us. (2) Like they can’t really accept us. And that hurts, sometimes.

Haroun: (2) Ja, but Ind, we’re happy. It’s what we want. (3) They can just do what they want to do. (3) We do what we want.

Indira: Ja, Haroun, but sometimes, they look at us. They’re unkind. It hurts. I scream in a pillow (laughs 3).

Haroun: (laughs 2) She does.

Indira: No, it’s like Haroun says. I know I’ve made the choices I need to. I’m happy. I have Haroun. And he’s very good to me, for me. (3) I watch TV, I make myself cheesecake, or pizza, or comfort food. (3) Like I phase out.

Haroun: (4) I give her a hug. But, like I’m a guy. I have other ways, to be a guy. And I’m not the rugby playing type anyway. (3) So I’m used, to being - different. (2) I’ve always been I suppose a nerd, a geek. But I have other, geek friends (laughs 2). And we’re fine together, us geeks. (4) I’m also happy to have Indira, to be with her. (5) That means a lot.

In this narrative, they describe their uniqueness in terms of their lifestyle: they do not drink and they do not have sex. As such they exclude themselves from particular consumer products (Illouz, 1998), and the norm of penetrative sexual intercourse (Potts, 2001). They position themselves as required to explain or justify their choices to people who do not agree with their lifestyle, and in this sense their narrative resists norms. In this narrative, the social contexts that value and devalue this choice, act as backdrop for the performance. To a degree it seems that they are made to explain their sexuality much as homosexual subjects are required to explain their sexuality (Jackson, 1995; Whisman, 1996). At the same time as their performance of togetherness challenges the norm that requires that heterosexual couples have penetrative sex, it also maintains the normative construction of sexual activity as necessarily penetrative. Sex can include a wide range of activities that do not rely on penetration, but possibly because of heteronorms associated with procreation and “masculinity”, sexual intercourse is usually defined as penetrative (Potts, 2001; Ratele, 2005). Although it is not clear from their tale what, if any, of these other forms of sexual activity the couple may engage in, Indira and Haroun’s narrative seems to rely on a heteronormative of understanding of sex that defines intercourse as penetration of a vagina by a penis (Lewis, 2005; Potts, 2001; Ratele, 2005).
One interpretation of their narrative could suggest that their uniqueness is an equal and reciprocal co-construction, and that both Indira and Haroun rely on each other, on their relationship, to live through the difficulties they describe. Indira needs Haroun’s hugs and his presence, and Haroun is “happy to have Indira”. For Indira, these activities are an enactment of her connection with Haroun, affirmation of their togetherness, their similar world views. In this way, the similarity in choices that both partners have made about the way they want to live their lives, unite them in their relationship and simultaneously separate them from others. They watch television, cook and eat meals together, rather than drinking and having sex together.

While Indira and Haroun construct themselves in these kinds of terms, there is evidence that this emphasis on their equality because of their uniqueness may disguise inequality (Firestone, 1998). Significantly, Haroun refers to his gender as an explanation for his ability to deal with the negative opinions of others outside of their relationship. He is a “guy” but not a usual, typical “guy”, and he notes that he has other ways of being a “guy”. Rather than enacting a physical, aggressive “masculine” power, like “the rugby playing type”, Haroun is an intellectual, a “geek” who expresses his masculinity through his grasp of abstract concepts and his possession of knowledge. Connell (1995) suggests that although there are many expressions of masculinity possible, these masculinities remain endowed with hegemonic power. By affirming his masculinity, even though it is not a masculinity that is the same as particularly powerful forms of masculinity, Haroun’s contribution to the narrative suggests that his masculine performance still has access to hegemonic forms of power. In contrast, Indira experiences the dynamic as more problematic. She is hurt by other’s intolerance. She deals with her hurt by expressing her anger muffled by a pillow, eating comfort food, and performing her togetherness with Haroun through mutually pleasurable activities. In this sense, she relies on Haroun in her difference from others, while he is more able to be a “guy” in “other ways”.

In this section I have presented three narratives that construct similarity between the partners in a heterosexual couple. These tales are not exhaustive within the sample. Many of the couples in the current research construct similarity: Adrianna and Laurent refer to their shared professional experiences as artists and their enjoyment of parties, Pam and Kelvin to the shared experience of losing a past partner to a terminal illness as well as a profession, Zureida and Saleem tell of the social and religious context that required that
their marriage be arranged to their satisfaction and to their family’s satisfaction, Frieda and Fernando to a shared love of words, Leland and Veronica refer to the activities they undertake within their nuclear family, Brian and Tamara to their worldviews and aspirations, Lungisile and Ayanda to their involvement within a wider social context. By referring to shared experiences, behaviour and worldviews, the couples construct themselves as similar, and as close to one another before any other relationships. Within the context of this “special niche” that I have described in the previous chapter, couples may construct a specific, contextual and unique form of togetherness that resists a universalising, normative narrative.

While there are aspects of the carnivalesque in these narratives, the tales also rely to an extent on heteronormative conceptions of togetherness that can be generalised across couples. The couples construct their similarity, their uniqueness in part by appealing to what “works” for them and not what works for others. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) suggest that heterosexual relationships are built on the conception of both partners as unique individuals. Partners may view each other as different from all other men or women, and united by their exceptional and extraordinary characteristics (Illouz, 1998). In much the same way as individuals are perceived to be a unique amalgamation of preferences and characteristics, the couples tell themselves as distinctive in particular ways. This conception of togetherness, that relies on modern constructions of personhood shall be elucidated further later in the chapter.

This narrative trope that constructs togetherness as the same in that couples are all different, suggests that the performance of heterosexual relationships slide unpredictably between centripetal forces (that unify and normalise meaning) and heteroglossic forces (that disperse and innovate the significance of a narrative) (Bakhtin, 1994). Many of the narratives in the above sections incorporate elements of resistance alongside elements of collusion and normative constructions of togetherness. In this sense, the construction of heterosexual relationships as specific and unique functions both to connect couples to normative expectations of heterosexual relatedness (monologues), and in so far as couples are able to insist on their specific experiences, behaviours and worldviews, can also associate heterosexual couples with carnivalesque subversion of the taken-for-granted ways of being together (heteroglossia) (Bakhtin, 1994; Gardiner, 2000; Hollway & Kneale, 2000). The insistence that couples are the same in that they are all different, can
be read as an expression of the ways that couples are caught between competing forces of normality and resistance. It should also be borne in mind that norms are theoretical concepts that do not exist in their entirety within an everyday social context. Rather they are accessed partially at the same time that they are resisted (Foucault, 1984). In this sense, narratives of heterosexual relationships are unlikely to be only heteronormative or resistive, but rather to enmesh elements of both (Bakhtin, 1994).

**Togetherness is mundane**

The belief that all relationships are the same in that they are different reflects the complex and contradictory meanings related to heterosexual togetherness. It is likely that normative and resistive narratives are largely inseparable in narratives of heterosexual togetherness. In the sections above, relationships are constructed as distinctive in meaning because the couple shares specific experiences, behaviours and worldviews. In the following section I shall explore a narrative trope that may be read as an experience that is common to heterosexual couples: that of “mundane”, everyday activities. While each couples’ experience of togetherness may be seen as distinctive, couples may have comparable experiences in so far as their togetherness relies on a day-to-day sharing of experiences, and indeed the everyday setting of relationship performances is central to the manner in which many couples construct togetherness based on shared experiences, behaviours and worldviews. Most couples seem to value drinking coffee, drinking tea, cooking, waking up, sleeping, and watching television together. I shall explore in this section this trope of the “mundane” that arises within the couples’ narratives when they speak of their everyday routines, and how this common experience incorporates heteroglossia and monologue meanings.

Couples present their everyday routines as something to be valued as a point of connection. Here everyday rituals of connection function as elements within a narrative of similar experiences, behaviour or worldview. Nombulelo and Makhaya take pleasure in simply being together. Their togetherness is defined by the absence of conflict or difficulty, and is presented throughout their narrative as largely unproblematic, and also by its focus on ordinary, everyday togetherness. The photograph they offered in the interview context shows them sitting in Makhaya’s home. Their bodies are physically linked, fingers and arms entwined. They are smiling broadly. The photograph is exceptional within the sample of photographs, in that there are few details to identify the place or time when it was shot.
The lack of defining features may render the image as beyond time and space, and provide access to the resistance of the carnivalesque. Significantly, there was no specific occasion or event that it documents. Rather it is directed at capturing the couple primarily, and it accomplishes this within their everyday context. The ordinariness of their surroundings serves to foreground the couple, especially since their expressions and posture shows closeness and pleasure in this closeness.

The mundane-carnival that may be appearing in this photograph is underlined by their description of everyday togetherness. They spend most of their time together at Makhaya’s home on an isolated farm. While their time together is mundane, constructed of everyday activities, it is punctuated by moments of celebration. Nombulelo describes a usual day:

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He is cooking sometimes. Cooking (laughs) sometimes. And playing the music, and dancing together (laughs 3). The music. He is a music man. He likes the music too much. And I like the music that he likes.
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Here the couple describe the simple pleasures of living together, of being together in everyday activities. Importantly the narrative incorporates the construction of similarity, in that Nombulelo “like[s] the music he likes”. She seems to take particular pleasure in Makhaya cooking, and she laughs as she speaks of him undertaking this activity. She laughs, perhaps because it is so unusual for a man to cook, and perhaps because she is pleased to be involved with a man who will cook. Both readings suggest that activity remains gendered in mundane togetherness, but it is unclear if Nombulelo is suggesting that this is a normative constraint, or if it is being resisted.
For the couples who have had to live apart from one another, Brian and Tamara and Frieda and Fernando, the absence of a mundane, everyday life serves to emphasise its importance to their togetherness. Their narratives demonstrate the central importance of this kind of day-to-day partnership, as well as its association with a normative way of being. Brian and Tamara begin their relationship over a distance, until eventually, they decide that they cannot continue to live apart, and Tamara finds a job in Johannesburg. They celebrate finally living together by having parties, going to restaurants and interesting places in Johannesburg. But they also revel in their times at home. Tamara describes their first year living together:

So we just had a lot of fun together. We had parties at the house. You know, to meet his friends. And we went places so I could get to know Jo'burg. (3) Even if we just stayed home. He would cook. Or I would cook. We worked on the house. We watched TV. We made breakfast in bed. All those fun things couples do. And we could do because we were in the same city. (laugh 3) Finally. (3)

When the couple is finally able to enact a day-to-day, mundane, normative togetherness, Tamara describes taking pleasure in this performance. As such, the mundane may be associated with what is socially constructed as normal and right for heterosexual couples. There are things “couples do” by virtue of their togetherness, and it seems that these things are to a certain extent expected, and experienced as difficult when not present. Thus, it is possible that there is an assumed narrative that prescribes these mundane activities and against which couples judge their togetherness. Further, Tamara seems to be suggesting in her narrative that it is pleasurable simply to have another, loved person present in activities she has had to do alone during the time they are apart. However, she does not seem to have questioned what kinds of couples “do” these things together. It is an unspoken imperative that her partner is the opposite gender, and the discomfort she would experience if her partner were the same gender as her is also implicit (Jackson, 1995, 2003, 2006).

Tamara’s narrative also emphasises that public as well as private spaces presuppose and support heterosexual togetherness. She tells of pleasure both in public activities, such as parties, as well as domestic activities, such as cooking. In this way, the narrative reveals how the assumption of private togetherness is reinforced by public performances. Private
performances of togetherness are taken-for-granted by public representations of heterosexual togetherness (Plummer, 1995).

Frieda and Fernando also tell of their togetherness as requiring the performance of mundane, everyday routines to provide a connection for their togetherness. They begin their relationship living in separate countries, writing emails and phoning each other. Though they feel close in words, and communicate often, they miss the mundane activities of everyday life together:

Fernando: But also distance, and lack of mundane. Mundane is good. Life is all about it, and mostly around it (3). But we had nice stories going while we wrote to each other. Remember the waiter Frieda? (2) And it was good and creative. It created at least the possibility of today, I guess. There's always more story, but maybe this is already something.

Frieda: I remember the waiter (laughs) And the postman and the taxi driver (3) Who used to wait on us, in the imaginary, virtual cafe we would meet. And in a way, this was maybe trying to create a day-to-day 'real'. Togetherness. What Fernando calls 'the mundane'. I'm not so okay with the mundane. Whereas, before (3) In the romantic in-between times. I would happily watch him sleep (2) For hours. (2) And having meals together, is still simply wonderful and we love to go shopping. But sometimes. I miss the romantic stuff. Even cheesily so. In love. In words (sighs). Yes. And that was what was good about the old days.

Here Fernando constructs the mundane as essential to togetherness, in this way explaining the reasons for the couple’s creation of an imaginary mundane that unites them across distance. This imaginary mundane is not sufficient however, and they seek a physically close togetherness. While Frieda enjoys the “mundane” she also misses the romantic stuff when they are together. She is “not so okay with the mundane” and feels that the “good old days” when she “would happily watch him sleep” were good too. Here everyday rituals that enact a connection between partners impinge on a couple’s ability to feel the “romantic stuff”. This evidence of heteroglossia shall be explored more fully later in the chapter.

These three narratives suggest that couples derive pleasure from performing everyday rituals that enact their connection both in private spaces between the two partners, and in public spaces, with other people. In the context of private space, talking together was an activity that couples described as providing an everyday connection. Zureida’s description of time spent together revolves around Saleem’s continued presence in her life, with her, and the emotional connection they derive from talking:
But I like having Saleem with me. There is always someone who you can talk to. You know, I’m a person who likes to have someone to share things with. I like to be around people. So it’s been really great, having Saleem with me, to talk to and to share things with.

Zureida "likes to be around people" and having Saleem in her everyday life seems to provide meaning for her. She has another person “to talk to and to share things with”, and this is preferable to being alone. In this sense, Saleem is a person who understands Zureida, and in whom she can confide. In this way, their relationship is associated with an emotional and psychological proximity. This proximity implies a couple’s continued presence with one another and their availability for talk foreshadows the potential for normalising behaviour.

This kind of emotional proximity and the activity of talking may also function to help to relieve the stress derived from relationships outside of the heterosexual couple, particularly at work. Pam and Kelvin own and manage a clothing business together. Their work lives and personal lives are interconnected, and they use everyday connections, for example over a cup of coffee, to take time away from the stress of running their business. In this way they take time away from a difficult aspect of their togetherness:

We’ve always tried to do it, use the relationship to counter the stresses of the work. If we need to spend time together over a cup of coffee, we choose to do that. Where as someone else, who is strictly working will choose to see someone after work.

Similarly, Indira and Haroun make use of their relationship to ease the strain of specific external relationships. The unusual choices they have made as a couple are not accepted by some of their friends, and Indira is sometimes hurt by them. She makes use of everyday activities to comfort herself:

It's nice just to have another person there. Like I know Haroun will be home, around this time. Then I can get a hug. Then we can have tea. Then we can watch Smallville. These kinds of things. On Friday we can watch a movie.

In this sense, these couples make use of their relationship to escape external tensions and difficulties. They enact their togetherness through everyday rituals of connection, and these private and/or public performances help them to cope with the pressures and strains of work relationships, work activities, conflicts with family or friends. The conversation, the sharing of ideas that occurs between partners in privacy, prepares them for their lives apart. In this way, the relationship may be experienced by the partners as a realm of
relatedness that is set apart from, but constructive of other forms of social relatedness. In this way, the mundane activities they perform as a couple may have an influence on both their private lives together, and their time apart. I shall explore this influence in more detail in the following section.

**Everyday surveillance**

In this section I shall explore in more detail the implications of the association between the constructions of togetherness both as unique and as mundane. One particularly full description of ordinary, everyday activities focused on the heterosexual couple was told by Leland and Veronica, and it draws out the association between normative performances and power. They describe the routines they enact on a usual day in their household:

Leland: (4) Well I wake up, and get dressed. Brush my teeth. Ron gets the breakfast ready. The cereals or toast and fruit.

Veronica: And I have to wake the kids up. (laughs 2). That's always difficult.

Leland: (laughs 2) We eat breakfast, and then I take the kids to school. And then I go to work: work, work, work.

Veronica: (2) So then I clear the breakfast things up. And then I just do the housework. Maybe do the washing. The clothes. Or ironing. (2) The floors. The bathrooms. (2) Just the usual housecleaning. And I have the Bible group. And some days, maybe once a month, they might need me, to help out. Or I have to go shopping. The children come home from school. So then I start thinking, what can I make for supper. Or maybe I will do the shopping or the ironing in the afternoon.

Leland: Then maybe I come home, at about 6 o'clock.

Veronica: Then we have tea together, Leland and I. We sit in the kitchen. […] So we sit and drink some tea. And Leland will tell me about his day. And I’ll tell him about my day. Or if, maybe we need to talk about the children's school, their marks, or something they need. (2)

Leland: Ja, it’s a good time. It’s just a bit of quiet for us both. And time together. We catch up, and we decide about things. Then we have supper.

Veronica: Then the children clean up. They clear the table. They do the dishes.

Leland: And we watch TV (laughs 2) […]

Veronica: And then the children do their home work. And we maybe read. Do Bible study homework. Whatever. Leland maybe has some work.

Leland: And then we go to bed. Quite early. Usually. (2)

For this couple, married for eighteen years and parents to two teenage children, a usual day is filled with activity. While I shall suggest that this narrative reflects a heteronormative way of being together, it should be noted that this description implies repetition. This is a description of one day among many that follow a similar course. In this way it is likely that this routine is repeated, and through this repetition resistance to heteronorms may enter
into the performance (Butler, 1993). It is however significant that no indication of such resistance is described, possibly because the couple and their family benefit from the dividends they receive as reward for a heteronormative performance.

The description of their day tells how the couple and their children move in and out of the home, how the family separates and then unites at different times and in different spaces. Overall it is a narrative that constructs the couple’s togetherness as focused on the home and their family, particularly on the mundane activities that support this unity. Thus, to the extent that the home (Hubbard, 2001) and the nuclear family (Borneman, 1999) can be interpreted as heteronormative, this couple describes a usual day as focused on these heteronormative aspects of togetherness. It is noteworthy that husband and wife undertake what can be read as normative performances of gender in maintaining this space (Dryden, 1999; Van Every 1995a): Leland goes to work in part to financially support the household, and Veronica’s day consists of housework, grocery shopping, cooking. In chapter nine I shall explore further the implications of gendered forms of work within the narratives of heterosexual togetherness. At present I want to explore in more depth the association between everyday activities and heteronormativity.

The gendered implications of their performances notwithstanding, Leland and Veronica are at the centre of the interwoven connections and activities of the household (Dryden, 1999). As a couple and as parents, they position themselves at the centre of this family. Husband and wife unite, “sit and drink some tea” and discuss the family. This activity focused on concern for their children, may imply the close association between marriage and procreation. Marriage may in part be conceived of as an institution that protects the paternity of children, and marriages that do not produce progeny may be viewed as abnormal (Borneman, 1999). As such, this activity can be viewed as reflecting a normative concern for the couple’s relationship.

Within their narrative, this time spent together over a cup of tea may be read as a still point to the activity of the day, and is significant in that it is a time of planning and decision making. In this sense the quiet time they spend drinking tea is an expression both of their connection as a couple and of the control they have over the activities that they and their family undertakes. This mundane activity may thus be read as a kind of observation point from which the couple can assume a position of power (Haraway, 1997). Their quiet time
places them at the top of a metaphorical panopticon, providing them a vantage point from which to construct themselves and their family in terms of the production and reproduction of heteronorms (Foucault, 1976). In terms of the repeated cycle of daily activity this narrative presents this routine of connection as a reflection of the incontestability and taken-for-granted-ness of the relationship.

As such, the couple seems to employ “technologies of the self” that apply to both partners, and may be termed technologies of relationship, in order to normalise their togetherness. In the same way as Foucault (1979) argues that subjects internalise the disciplinary gaze and modify their subjectivity to produce and reproduce normative discourses, the couple may act in an inter-subjective manner to provide a normal performance of togetherness. It is noteworthy that couples present themselves as a unique pair, as a unified entity, with reference to their shared, everyday experiences, although this presentation may in part arise from the research methodology that focused on the couple, rather than the separate partners. Modern conceptions of the individual construct identity as fixed to a similarly unique set of characteristics and features (Rose, 1996). As such, both couples and individual subjects are subject to the gaze of authority and constitute their (inter)subjectivity in similar ways.

Significantly for a couple, the gaze of authority is embodied by the presence of the other partner. It is likely that all couples, including same-sex couples, could experience a partner as an observer and enforcer of the disciplinary gaze. While same-sex partners might observe one another, themselves and their relationship, and make use of relationship technologies to normalise the performance, same-sex couples may be able to avoid ideological heteronorms. Because same-sex couples are not included in the norm (Jackson, 1995; Laqueur, 1997), they may have more access to alternate performances of togetherness. Because same-sex couples are necessarily excluded from receiving the full complement of heterosexual dividends, it is likely that these partnerships are more able to enact alternative performances of togetherness. In contrast, for heterosexual couples gender difference might define the experience as different for male and female partners. In so far as the gaze of authority is predominantly a masculine perspective (Haraway, 1997), feminine partners may be likely to experience her partner as an oppressive embodiment of the gaze, while masculine partners may escape at least gendered forms of oppression.
Couples do not describe the gaze of authority within the relationship as only an easy element of their togetherness. While the narratives in the previous section speak of mundane togetherness in positive terms, Leland and Veronica’s description of their life together hints at a kind of constraint of having a partner as a permanent part of one’s life. Zureida and Saleem, Indira and Haroun and Pam and Kelvin view their connection during conversation as a performance that enables them to tackle external relationships with more success, calm and ease. Leland and Veronica experience their interconnected lives as difficult as well as constructive, and this suggests that mundane rituals of connection enacted by heterosexual couples may have another, normative function. Leland and Veronica describe themselves as “blessed”, but also as experiencing difficulties related to heteronormative togetherness. Leland begins a story of a time of difficulty by suggesting that the presence of his partner, some one that “you have to answer to” is a difficulty.

Our lives have been very blessed. We’re healthy, our children are healthy. We have a home. I have a good job. We are very blessed. But it’s not always easy. Ag, I don’t know. I don’t know. It’s not easy, to have some one else you live your life with and that you have to answer to.

In this sense, a cohabiting life partner is a person who is always present to observe and to comment, and perhaps exerts a normalising influence over a partner. Although partners may not always be physically together, especially if the couple is married or otherwise legally institutionally joined together, the presence of the other is always implied and the gaze of authority thereby a ubiquitous attendant of togetherness.

Frieda and Fernando also experience difficulty in the constant physical presence of one another when they reunite in Istanbul after a year of separation:

But also we had to become acquainted with each other's rhythms. Didn’t we, Fernando? (laughs 2). I was amazed at how much and how easily he could sleep. Like he could fall asleep anywhere, in our room not in public that is. Anytime. Kind of like a cat. (2) He was, is very catlike. And he was so, lovingly caring. (4) Even though after this great picture I got an attack of [fever] blisters and did not look too good in subsequent photos.

While they long for the mundane to be part of their togetherness, they find it difficult to integrate their separate existences initially. They are unused to sleeping habits and fever blister attacks in one another and in the presence of one another. In order to find the unity, solidarity and security they desire, they need to accept and integrate these differences. In this sense, Frieda and Fernando suggest that they have a degree of difficulty with the normative expectation that they will spend time together, live together (Jackson, 2003). It is the other’s potential to observe them, perhaps sleeping too much or unhealthily covered
in fever blisters, that in part accounts for their discomfort together. While they are aware of
the benefits of being in the same place together, they are also aware that it requires that
they learn to deal with certain aspects of the other and that this may not necessarily be
easy.

Despite the monitoring and surveillance couples may perform on their relationship,
themselves and one another, couples describe their physical togetherness as very
important. Because heteronorms have a pervasive structuring influence on society
(Jackson, 2006), it is likely that failure to perform as a heterosexual by being in a
relationship may be experienced with discomfort. In the above sections I have described
narratives the couples tell in which their partner’s presence is important. Tamara and Brian
and Frieda and Fernando experience distance from their partner with discomfort and they
seek a “closer closeness”. As such, the everyday rituals of cooking, watching television,
listening to music, dancing may act as performances in which the couple can enact their
connection to one another and display their heteronormativity to one another, to
themselves and to society. While these performances require only the couple, some
performances take place with other people as well: like Brian and Tamara’s parties, Dara
and Michael’s lunches with friends, and Leland and Veronica’s family activities.

Another kind of everyday, connecting ritual takes place in conversations between partners.
Zureida appreciates Saleem’s continued presence because she has someone to talk to
and to share with. It is possible that this activity particularly is an enactment of surveillance
and monitoring. Pam and Kelvin, Indira and Haroun and Leland and Veronica describe
how together they take time away to discuss the stresses and strains of their lives, and it
is possible that these discussions shape the performances that take place outside of the
relationship. In so far as couples take up the position of the metaphorical panopticon in
these conversations, it is possible that heteronormative standards within the relationship
are reproduced outside of the relationship. Jackson (2006) argues that heteronormative
standards extend beyond individual relationships and into social structures and social
performances. It is possible that the couples’ conversations perpetuate, produce and
reproduce these normative standards.

Conclusion
In this chapter I present the narrative trope that describes couples as the same as each other, and also as unique and different. This trope incorporates both centripetal, heteroglossic forces that construct couples as diverse and varied, as well as centrifugal, monologic forces that constitute couples as subject to general conditions and characteristics. As such, the narratives of heterosexual relationships I have described in this chapter hold both elements of resistance and collusion with heteronorms. The meanings that attach to the narratives slip capriciously between monologue and heteroglossia. While some couples tell stories of resistance to norms, this resistance coexists with instances of normativity. As such, resistance is a momentary and elusive accomplishment, not an unchanging and permanent performance.

Couples construct their togetherness though differences that lead to compromise and through similarities in experiences, behaviour and worldview. In these ways, the couple may be able to argue for the specificity of their relationship. Heteronorms are conceptualised as monolithic, universal concepts that apply to all couples at all times. Though these narratives of compromise and similarity do incorporate aspects of the norm, the process of negotiation and cooperation belies the norm. Significantly however, this process is performed in an everyday, mundane setting. In some ways mundanity transcends the norm and couples can access constructions of carnival, but in other ways the everyday setting provides couple with a setting in which to monitor, survey and normalise their togetherness. Because of the emphasis on everyday proximity, the couples are available for monitoring on an extended basis, and discussions that could lead to normalising behaviour could occur at any time.

Such construction of the relationship can be associated with the modern impulse to define individual subjects as unique amalgamations of characteristics and preferences. In much the same way as Foucault (1979) argues that subjects internalise the gaze of authority and make use of “technologies of self” to normalise their behaviours, it seems that couples employ technologies of relationship to constitute themselves as a couple, and to give a normal performance of heterosexual togetherness. The everyday, mundane context that couples use to construct togetherness through similarity, allows the couple to survey their relationship, themselves and one another, and perhaps to normalise their performance.
8 Analysis and discussion

“It's not real, if it isn't together”: locating heteronorms

The monitoring and surveillance I describe couples enacting, and the requirement of mundane togetherness, requires close physical proximity. It seems to be a basic, underlying feature of the couples’ narratives that they share space, and in this chapter I shall explore narratives that tell of how partners share a home, of a bed, or even bodies. Tamara even goes so far as to say that a relationship is “not real, if it isn’t together”. She refers to the time when they lived in separate parts of the country and their decision to live together:

Like we spoke. We wanted to still see each other, but we didn't want to do the long distance anymore. I couldn't do it anymore. I was too tired. I was getting depressed, the doctor, said. I wasn't happy. It takes away your energy, to miss someone all the time. Like I lived for the weekends, and that wasn't right. (3) I didn't have a real life. I could start to make a life. You can't be close over the phone. You can't travel all the time. You have to be together. To have a relationship. It's not real, if it isn't together.

In the following sections I explore the manner in which geographical places and materially structured spaces manifest in and structure the couples’ narratives. Conceptions of space often construct it as a rigid, unalterable entity although it can also be read as subject to change and interpretation. In general the places and spaces a couple inhabits appear as signs of rigid political, governmental or social systems that tend to limit the couple in their performance of their togetherness. The meanings that attach to laws of a land, or the realms of privacy, function to delineate and define what is possible for the couple to do and to be (Gauntlett, 2002) and are rigidified in space (Soja & Hooper, 1993). Hubbard (2001) suggests that legislatively and structurally countries define themselves predominantly as heterosexual. In general, citizens are given room only to perform as heterosexual subjects, both in public and in private. While I shall present the places and spaces that couples describe as constructed in this manner, I shall also present narrative
strands that suggest that couples can and do interpret their spatial surroundings in personal, alternative and innovative ways.

Proximity and nation space
Homes are an important stage on which heterosexual couples perform togetherness and I shall describe this location of heterosexuality in-depth later in the chapter. I shall focus first on the association between nationality, governments and heteronorms. In the following section I focus on the role of geographical spaces in fixing meanings that may attach to narratives of heterosexual togetherness. Nations may tend to construct space as fixed and rigid through the workings of governmental institutions, and thereby assist in reifying heteronorms. In such instances individual subjects are required to maintain the normal functioning of the nation, and the nation legislates the well being of individuals (Foucault, 1984). Through the workings of bio-power geographical place to an extent defines acceptable performances of citizenship and sexuality (Gauntlett, 2002; Reddy, 2006).

Fernando and Frieda had to negotiate international immigration and emigration laws in order to be together in the same nation-space. In this process they come into conflict with the bureaucracy of two countries: South Africa and Portugal.

Fernando: Wedding couple in the garden of Praça da República. The day had come. It was morning, but not too much anymore. (3) We had said to ourselves, before that day had come, or the need for it. That we'd never get married. (3) The day had come though and came with irony. I was happy about it. I was happier even after the wine we had by the river that same day. (laughs 2). It meant that we would not be forced to be apart. And that is a lot. It was just about us. And I liked that. The ironic simplicity of that. That is supposed to be an institution.

Frieda: It was in Portuguese. So I just agreed with whatever Fernando said (laughs 3). (2) The ceremony itself was just about 10 or 15 minutes long. Although the process leading up to it was very long, cumbersome. Lots of paperwork. Getting my birth certificate from South Africa. Twice. Translating everything into Portuguese. Convincing the authorities that I was not already married, and that Fernando was not forcing me into marriage. That it was not a sham. Though we both never thought we'd get married. To anyone. I was very, very happy that we did, at that moment. But more like I was surprised how happy that moment, of being wed, made me. It gave a sense of future and security. Not for the conventional reasons. It was just an important step in managing the process of being together. In the same place. Afterwards more paperwork and red-tape would follow, but right then I wasn't thinking about all that.

Frieda and Fernando’s story is one in which different geographical spaces are central to the narrative. They must find a way to transcend national boundaries and borders, and
institutional conceptions of nationality and citizenship. The institutions make use of particular technologies to maintain national boundaries, and it is clear that the union between a Portuguese man and a South African woman is suspicious. As such, Frieda and Fernando must provide evidence that they and their relationship are valid, authentic and acceptable in institutional terms, before they are allowed to be together in the same place. This requires that they provide a particular representation of their relationship to institutional structures, so that they can be given the appropriate documents to sanction their togetherness through marriage. This institutional sanction allows them to remain in the same country.

Possibly because the heterosexual couple are the means to reproduce the nation’s citizens, the state may be attempting to regulate how couples can be together and encourage certain patterns of interaction. In this sense bio-power is made visible at this intersection between the concerns of the couple and the concerns of governmental control (Foucault, 1984). Similarly the Apartheid government in South Africa made use of policies regarding contraceptives to limit the black population, and to define acceptable forms of heterosexual togetherness (Klausen, 2004). For the Portuguese and South African officials, nationality and citizenship are clearly defined, incontestable and observable. For Frieda and Fernando in this narrative, space is fixed only in so far as it keeps them apart, and is otherwise malleable and flexible. Their relationship unsettles the notion of fixed national identity, by insisting that two people, from two different countries can meet, fall in love and have a relationship. Their continued togetherness, in romantic and spatial terms, has required that they show themselves to be acceptable citizens, but it also renders their countries borders at least semi-permeable and somewhat plastic.

Frieda is given a “sense of the future and security” by the couples’ marriage. These feelings are not related to the “conventional reasons”, but rather because they will be allowed to live in the same geographical location. While their relationship is initially viewed as suspicious by Portuguese society, it is not beyond acceptance. While their togetherness conflicts with governmental notional of acceptability thus unsettling constructions of bio-power, their marriage does allow them to receive the benefits of heteronormative togetherness (Jackson, 2006), including physical togetherness in the same place. This is not always so easy for non-heteronormative persons (Wilkinson & Kritzinger, 2004). While Frieda and Fernando do ultimately receive the benefits of
normative togetherness, the difficulties they have in accomplishing this emphasises the way that their relationship challenges assumptions of country and land as a bounded and fixed entity.

This couple’s negotiation of space is a central theme in their narratives, and it is used as a metaphor to describe their specific performance of inter-subjectivity. While they are pursuing what I shall argue is a heteronormative goal, that of living together in the same space, they perform this togetherness in a dialogic way. Prior to their sanction by governmental institutions, Frieda describes how the couple try to construct and create togetherness through words:

When we met in Berlin, I wrote Fernando a note. Something about our words finding one another in the tiny streets. With reference to Porto’s maze-like little streets in the old part of the city, which Fernando had then told me about. (3) It sounded very romantic. And not get trapped in dead-end silences. And then, the first e-mails we sent to each other, after I was back in South Africa and he in Portugal, was about a bridge and meeting in-between. And so our words met. Like a mirror-ing, also kaleidoscope-like and in this virtual in-between space. We could play and imagine. Together.

Frieda describes their relationship as “a bridge, and a meeting in-between”. This description of their relationship suggests that they have in certain instances accomplished a kind of inter-subjective, creative space. Shotter (1993) refers to this as knowing of the “third kind” because it is a position that builds from both partner’s positions, but is not the same as either. In this way couples may be able to enter into a dialogue regarding their positions, and perhaps to discover an inter-subjective understanding. For this couple, their connection is the meeting of two points of view that merges into the unity of their relationship. Here Frieda suggests that the couple enacts a dialogic togetherness, in which they reach a co-constructed understanding based on their separate utterances (Bakhtin, 1994; Shotter & Billig, 1998). In this way, she expresses how the couple become close through words, or utterances in physical, structural terms as a “bridge”. Here emotional proximity and a resistive way of being together can be metaphorically associated with physical proximity.

Homes and heteronorms
At the centre of Frieda and Fernando’s quest to be together is the desire to be together in the same space. This goal of sharing space, of merging, is common to many couples in the sample and may appear as a taken for granted assumption. Possibly because a
shared residence enables the couple to connect through everyday connecting rituals, it is constructed as central to heterosexual togetherness. In the following section I shall explore further the manner in which couples construct the assumption of shared space. The requirement that heterosexual couples share space is in part produced by and reproduces the central spatial setting of togetherness: the home.

Dara and Michael seemed to take for granted that they would eventually live together. Initially they lived separately, but after they returned from a holiday together Dara never went back to her home, except to pick up some of her things. Michael's contribution in the first chapter of their story shows pleasure in Dara's presence in the realm of the mundane and also nonchalance that points to the taken-for-granted-ness of heteronormative togetherness:

Yeah, ag. I started to get used to it. I mean after a while I thought it was just normal to wake up next to her

Underlying this quote is a sense of pleasure that the couple take in doing the “normal” thing and waking up together. Michael takes Dara’s presence in bed next to him on waking up in the morning for granted as “normal”, and it is likely he would experience her absence as disturbing. They are not in a position where they need to question that their relationship will receive social sanction (Jackson, 2003), and so it seems normal that they will be allowed to be together, specifically in a sexual manner (Borneman, 1999; Potts, 2001). This excerpt points to a kind of pleasure they derive in being together in simple, mundane activities, and towards the comfort that assuming a socially sanctioned performance of sexuality imparts on the performers. In this sense, the couple assumes their right to, and the rightness of, waking up in the same bed together. Later in the chapter I shall argue that the bed is the focal point for fixing heteronormative space, and it is likely that Michael is drawing attention to a normative performance here.

Heterosexual couples may be able to take their togetherness for granted because it is the normative status quo that I describe more fully in chapter two and three. Jackson (2006) suggests that homosexual individuals are required to account for their togetherness, while heterosexual partners seldom are. Heterosexual partners may be able to take their togetherness for granted, and assume the continued presence of their partner in their lives with some certainty, while non-normative couples may be less likely to presume the
inherent possibility of relationships. It is likely that couples who enact a heteronormal performance are able to take their togetherness for granted, to see it as an everyday performance, as “mundane”. It is thus possible that one of the benefits included in the heterosexual dividend is that partners need not construct arguments that justify their togetherness.

While couples take for granted the sharing of space, this space is likely to fix their performances of togetherness in particular ways. Zureida and Saleem seem to view their shared home as a space that provides the setting for everyday, routine togetherness that seems so central to the narratives of togetherness that I present in the previous chapter. Their description of their honeymoon situates their time away from their “everyday lives” as significantly different from the way their lives will be when they return home:

Saleem: Not all couples go on a honeymoon. It isn't traditional, really. I wanted to do something special for her. For us. Because it was a special time, and because we hadn't been together that much. (2) It was our time. And then after that we could go back to our everyday lives. Back to usual.
Zureida: And it was really nice, to start our married life that way I think. It was a good idea (laughs 2). It gave us time away from our everyday lives like they are now. And I mean, when we got back here, back to South Africa. There was a lot to do. I mean, we both started working because we had our degrees. We were finished studying. (2) And Saleem’s parents had bought us a house as a wedding present. So we didn’t have to find a house, but we have had to get furniture, and decorate it. And Saleem always lived with his parents when he was studying.
Saleem: Ja, so I’ve had to learn how to do housework (laughs 2). And cook. (laughs 2).

Soja and Hooper (1993) draw attention to the manner in which space is viewed as a fixed, unalterable entity, and thus buildings that arrange space in certain ways serve to rigidify and specialise space. Hubbard (2001) views homes as structures built for nuclear families headed by a heterosexual couple, and thus as heteronormative spaces. In this narrative, the couple draws attention to the domestic tasks like decorating, cooking and cleaning they must perform in the home space. As such they must act to maintain the heteronormative domain of the home, and the space in part defines their performances. While they do not define the division of labour according to which they perform these domestic duties, it is likely that they will have to confront the gendered nature of work that I describe in chapter nine. In this way, the home may function in the narrative as the space in which they will have to confront their performances of “masculine” and “feminine” work.
In this way the home becomes a site of potentially gendered work, and may thus act as a holder of normative constraints on the couple.

In so far as space is specialised as Hubbard (2001) suggests for the nuclear family headed by the heterosexual couple, it also serves as a marker of the norm of procreation. Leland and Veronica discuss the significance of their first home in these terms in the third chapter of their tale:

Leland: Yes. It was a big thing, that house. To get that house. It was good to have the space for the family. And it was like a milestone. Because we had the family, and we were married. So it was like another step, along that road. The house and the children.

Veronica: The house was sort of, like for the children. So it was about us, getting better, bigger better things for the family. And we felt like everything was working out for us. Then I remember feeling very positive and strong.

Leland: Like an adult. I felt like an adult. My first house, my wife, my family, my children. Like I’d arrived somewhere.

Their first house is constructed as more appropriate than the flat they lived in before, because it provides them with greater space for their growing family, and as a marker of adulthood, strength and autonomy. It is a “milestone”, it is “for the children” and it shows that they have “arrived somewhere”. In this sense, they describe the house as an indicator of their successful negotiation of a path that delineates a heteronormative performance of togetherness. They have gotten married, Leland has a good job and they have two young children, and the home is a further step along this path. In so far as heterosexual couples are constructed as married and procreative (Borneman, 1999), Leland and Veronica’s house is spatial, material evidence of that they belong to this normative category. As such, the positive feelings they describe may have been granted them as part of their heterosexual dividend, because they have successfully performed as a heteronormal couple (Jackson, 1995). Here the association between adulthood, maturity and power emphasise the privilege of performing in a heteronormative manner.

In this way their narrative supports Hubbard’s (2001) conception of the home as a heteronormative domain. It is unclear however, how such spaces might be used differently by other kinds of families. Same-sex partnerships sometimes construct families of choice that are extended, possibly childless, social networks (Weeks, Donovan, Heaphy, 1999). In South Africa child-headed households are increasingly common due to illness, death of
parents and grandparents or migrant employment of parents (Møller & Sotshongaye, 1999). These other families would presumably use the heterosexual space in non-normative ways, or perhaps even organise space in more suitable ways, perhaps in the circular, non-Western living arrangements J. Comaroff and J.L. Comaroff (1997) describe. I shall explore these issues further later in the chapter.

Significantly, Leland and Veronica’s narrative is contrasted with a narrative in which they resist the normative outlines of their parent’s homes, before they had received the heteronormative sanction of marriage. Leland tells the story of how he used to steal his father’s car to see Veronica when they were still teenagers, in the first chapter of their tale:

Leland: (laughs 3) I remember, I would take my father’s car out. Because I didn’t want anything to happen to her. Like the car was safer, to travel in. So I would take my father’s keys, and I’d roll the car out the garage so it wouldn’t make a noise. And I’d even have to roll it down the street a little way (laughs 3). And then I’d get in and drive to her place. And she would have to sneak out, and we’d go to the beach or something. Or if we had some money, maybe the movies. And then I’d have to do it all when I got back home again.

Veronica: Sjoe (laughs 3). We were bad children hey? If Paul or Sandra did that, yoh! We would be so angry (laughs 3).

Leland: Ja. It’s true. And my dad knew, I think. He would like mark the place on the floor, where he parked the car. So he knew, but he couldn’t say anything because he wasn’t sure, sure. Like he didn’t want to shout me, unless he was very, very sure. Ja, so then I had to get the car back, like back into that same place. Where he had marked it. (laughs 3) So I never got caught.

Leland is able to resist the control, albeit moderate, of his father by monitoring carefully the marks on the floor that show where the car rested last. By returning the car to the right place, he can unsettle his father’s suspicion that Leland is not obeying the laws and restrictions that are appropriate to a teenager. By careful surveillance of the limitations his father puts in place, he is able to give the appearance of obeying his father’s laws. Here his father plays a witnessing role as I describe in chapter six, but Leland knows the rules just well enough to get away with breaking them, with resisting the norms his father wants him to abide by. In this way he is able to remove Veronica from her parent’s house, and the couple is able to continue their romance, even though their parents do not approve. While they enact a form of resistance in these illicit meetings, in retrospect they see themselves from the perspective of parents. From this position they think of themselves as “bad children”. In this sense, the control that is exercised in spatial terms by the heteronormative home may be perpetuated even by performers who once resisted them.
His father’s tolerance of Leland taking his car to visit a girlfriend may also reflect an acceptance of Leland’s teenage performance of “masculine” sexuality. Although adolescents are not always sanctioned to perform sexuality in the same way as adults, a certain degree of heteronormative display may be encouraged. Some constructions of masculinity require that a man pursue or seek out women with whom they can perform heterosexuality (Holland, Ramazanoglu, Sharpe & Thomson, 1998). In so far as Leland’s father interprets his behaviour as the pursuit of a masculine and heteronormative performance, he may be disposed toward tacitly encouraging the performance by ignoring it.

These understandings of space as the setting of heterosexual relationships can be associated to the necessity of mundane activities to express togetherness. In the previous chapter I argue that couples make use of everyday connecting rituals to define themselves as in a relationship with a member of the opposite sex, and thereby as performing normative sexuality. The home provides a stage in which the couple has continued access to this performance, and also to surveillance of one another. Cohabiting under one roof allows the partners to observe one another, themselves and their relationship on a regular and frequent basis, and may thus have a normalising function. Living together within a house may have the function of producing and reproducing heteronormative performances in couples.

**Gendering space**

In the preceding section I describe how homes can be read as spaces with fixed meanings attached to them. Homes are thus sites in which a couple confronts heteronormative understandings of togetherness. In this section I shall explore in more depth the norms of the heterosexual home as they are structured by performances of gender. For some of the couples, sharing a home space begins with a negotiation of the meaning of the space, and for some this negotiation is centred on constructions of gender. Dara and Michael describe the story of how they came to share his apartment in Taiwan:

- Michael: Because that place was mine.
- Dara: (3) For the first time sharing a space and my things being...(2) having to take up space in his space.
- Michael: Well you were moving into a male dominated area.
- Dara: I mean it’s not only that it’s like. Is it ok if I put that there?
Michael: That didn’t take long to change though. There were fewer beer cans.
Dara: We cleaned up more regularly. Or I cleaned more regularly.

For the couple, the negotiation begins because Dara is moving into Michael’s space. She feels she should check with him that she is using the space in a way that suits him. Michael describes this as a “male dominated area”, and notes that it didn’t take long for that to change. Dara agrees, and cites her more frequent cleanings of the space as evidence of this. In this narrative, the “male dominated area” that was Michael’s apartment is transformed through Dara’s industrious cleaning on a more regular basis. It is noteworthy that Michael characterises the space before she moved in, in gendered terms, and that the place changes because Dara engages in what can be described as a “feminine” activity, of cleaning (Van Every, 1995a, 1995b). In this way she gets rid of the overt significations of “masculinity”, in this case beer cans, and replaces them with a clean space that both can inhabit together.

A similar transformation of space occurs when Brian and Tamara moved in together. Gender also features in their narrative, although it is slightly more subtle. When Brian and Tamara move in together, they choose to stay in the house where Brian has already been living:

Tamara: We talked about, about finding a bigger place. Like, maybe a place with two garages. Brian had almost paid the place off. And it’s a good investment. A good area. A good size. In a complex. All these things make it a good place, a place people like. And I really liked the house. I knew it really well. I felt at home there. (2) I spent a lot of time there over weekends, visiting.
Brian: Ja. And we talked. We thought maybe, we could do some work on the place. Like make it a better investment. (2) Tamara has been really good. She has a good eye. She’s made the place a great home. (laughs 3) She’s given the place a woman’s touch. Like, I was never one of those skommie (low class) bachelors. Like no washing up. No laundry. No vegetables. We painted. Some of the rooms. And we put in tiles.
Tamara: We did the garden. (2) I always wanted a herb garden. So we put in a small herb garden, near the kitchen. (3) And just some small things: bathroom fittings, light fittings, some decorating (laughs 3) Moving around furniture, putting up paintings, pictures, new curtains. And we cleaned out his stuff. I just say, do that (laughs 2). That goes there (laughs 3). No, we decided about the things, together. Because we both have to live there.
Brian: (2) Ja, but I don’t care mos (really), you know. As long as I can find, like my socks, and my beer, and the TV is somewhere I can see it (laughs 3)
Tamara: And it was fun, to work on something, like that together. We learnt about what the other likes.
Tamara jokes that he did all the work, and that she just had to tell him what to do, and he jokes that he did not really care what changes she made so long as he could still find “[his] socks, [his] beer and the TV is somewhere [he] can see it”. These jokes allow the couple to parody gender roles in which a “masculine” partner watches television, drinks beer and does what his female partner tells him with regards to the aesthetics of a house. He is the brawn of the home improvement operation, while Tamara is the ruler of the domestic realm. While it is likely that to some extent the couple did play these roles, and that their jokes are a way of admitting that they did, it is also likely that they performed otherwise and that they consulted one another about many of the decisions. In this narrative, it would be possible to read Tamara as enacting the “feminine” concerns for her new house, and Brian as enacting “masculine” disregard for this process. Her “woman’s touch” would thereby be the transforming influence over the space. However, Tamara also says that they had “fun”, and that they learnt about the other’s likes and dislikes. This implies a greater level of negotiation than is suggested by their jokes.

Both these couples actively reconfigure the spaces that they share. In both cases this requires a “feminisation” of the space, through decorating and cleaning the space. This strand within these narratives suggests that space can be actively altered to reflect the couples’ concerns and needs. For Dara and Michael the reshaping of the space requires cleaning that allows Dara’s possessions be fitted into a space that previously only Michael and his things inhabited, while for Tamara and Brian, there was also a concern to improve the value and aesthetics of the home Brian lived in on his own. In both cases, the active shaping of the space requires a cleaning up, and then a new imprinting of the space to accommodate partners of both genders. While both spaces were previously male inhabited and thereby “male dominated”, the women transform them into heterosexual spaces. In this way, the space is reconfigured through an expression of “femininity”, into a domestic space under the control of a female subject. This may be explicable, because it is the women that are moving into the men’s homes. As such the house must become imprinted with “feminine” concerns and not “masculine” concerns, although this may be unlikely because homes are often read as feminine spaces (Dryden, 1999; McClintock, 1991; Van Every, 1995b). It is possible that such a cleaning of space and then imprinting could take place when a male partner moves into a female partners’ space also, although
it seems significant that there are no narratives told by the interviewed couples that reflect such a story.

This may point to current understandings of heterosexual relationships as requiring negotiation between partners. Marriage or cohabitation is no longer a matter of a woman moving into a space chosen and pre-ordained by her masculine partner, rather there is a choice as to what space they will occupy together (Ehrenreich & Russell Hoschchild, 2004). This may be her home, his home or an entirely new space chosen together. When the chosen space was previously a masculine space, there must be labour to redefine the space as heterosexual. However, it is likely that the labour required to create a shared space inhabited by masculine and feminine partners may reassert gender roles no matter what roles the partners performed before sharing a home. It is possible that there is too much anxiety and discomfort in altering gender roles, considering that the sharing of space implies more opportunity for surveillance of and between partners.

**Interpreting space**

The narratives of space I have told so far have demonstrated how space may be fixed, particularly by the heteronormative home. In the following section, I shall explore the ways that couples interpret space. Although meaning seems to be reified by space, these meanings are not as unalterable as they may seem. Spaces and places are subject to change and alteration, as well as interpretation. In this sense space is both socially and materially constructed (Bondi, 1993; Soja & Hooper, 1993). While couples seem to assume the sharing of a space, they may interpret this space in alternative ways. To a degree, some couples interpret the space they inhabit as a couple in terms of its practicality and functionality related to concerns for their work, as Kelvin describes:

> And then just very importantly about us and work. Tiffany. Work and personal life is like this, intertwined. Now we work from home. Iggy [the dog] is part of our working day. We're equally committed to work when we work as we are to our personal lives.

What is interesting about this short narrative is that he directs attention to the physical space in which the interview is conducted to support his story. The interview was conducted at their home, where the living areas are littered with fabric and samples of their clothing lines. While some rooms are devoted predominantly to the work of manufacturing clothing, and some to domestic activities such as cooking, the rooms
contain diffusions of all these activities. The home merges public and private spaces, and in the following chapter I shall argue that this largely superficial division reflects gender dualism. In this way their home-business subverts the potential Hubbard (2001) points out for homes to spatially inscribe heteronorms. There are aspects and elements of business and the domestic dispersed throughout the space. To the extent that their home does not delineate particular functions and spheres of work, it is a material manifestation of the ways in which their public and private lives are interconnected. In this sense, the performance of the interview is another example of the way in which all aspects of their lives are intertwined and interconnected. We sat on a couch and chairs, surrounded by fabric and clothing, and spoke of the ways that their romantic and business lives are merged. Thus their narrative was represented, not only in their words, but in the space where the narrative was performed.

Interestingly, Kelvin also speaks of the need for personal space and time and thus for separation as well:

> Not only in the work place. But also personal space. I play football on a Thursday, and Thursdays it's really important for her that I'm happy with soccer. If she goes out with her friends I know it's really important for her. So I'm happy for her. (4) So it's a process. Like, why fuck around. We're in this relationship. We've been here for eight years. We want to start a family. We're secure in this relationship. We're secure with each other. (2) And, that's warts and all.

Personal “space” does not in this narrative refer to a particular physical location that is owned by each partner, rather it seems to claim the partners idiosyncratic, “personal” preferences, opinions and behaviours, and implies a temporal separation as well. Kelvin argues for their independence from one another, and suggests that this requires that they be “secure with each other” and “secure in [their] relationship”. The ability to allow one another “personal space” they must accept all aspects of one another, “warts and all”. The ability to be separate from one another thus requires strength and understanding and acceptance between partners. In the next chapter I describe Kelvin and Pam’s conception of the work that is necessary for successful relationships, and this may be an extension of this conception because it is also viewed as a “process”.

This invocation of a separation between partners seems to go against normative understandings of the couple as sharing mundane rituals of connection in everyday settings, and Dara and Michael, and Frieda and Fernando’s narratives that I have quoted in this section seem to reflect the need for physical proximity to perform their
togetherness. It is possible that their narratives reflect a heteronormative construction of
couples as characterised by physically proximity. This may require cohabitation (Jackson,
1995), or it may require only that the couple live in the same locality. This requirement to
live as a couple in a square home could be interpreted as a particularly middle class,
"Western", colonialist construction and thus as historically contingent (Mills, 2005). While
cohabitation may be constructed as normative in these couples’ narratives and in present-
day, South African society, there are many who cannot access this performance.

Men and women may live in separate huts in a compound or in separate parts of the
country, and a man may have multiple wives (Levine, 2004). Separate living arrangements
may have become necessary for some South African couples, because of legislation put
in place during the Apartheid era that restricted access to land and space in urban areas,
thus creating the migrant labour system. The need to move back and forth between the
cities and rural areas in order to have an income, prevented men and women from
performing normative cohabitation defined as one man and one woman (Borneman,
1999). It is noteworthy that urban houses are usually square buildings, arranged in a
manner that Hubbard (2001) interprets as heteronormative, while rural homes are often
compounds of huts, built in traditional, circular styles. J. Comaroff and J.L. Comaroff
(1997) describe how Tswana homes have been altered under colonial influence, and may
incorporate some of the technologies brought by missionaries at the turn of the nineteenth
century. Homes became a site of struggle between colonial and African ways of being,
centred on notions of domesticity and gender as well as the broader political issues
associated with post-colonialism. As such in the South African context, non-normative
relationships proliferate beyond homosexuality alone: men and women who are
polygamous, who live in a traditional African homestead and/or who are part of the migrant
labour force may also be viewed as non-normative.

Adrianna and Laurent tell a narrative that includes separation, even though their tale takes
place in Western-style, square homes. They do not live together, and each has their own
house in the same town. This separation of houses allows them both to have their own
work space, a studio where they can work on and produce art. Both describe freedom,
seclusion, isolation, autonomy as important to their artistic process. They must have their
own, private space in which they can create freely and without the distraction of others. As
such, their choice to inhabit separate homes is explicable as a means to guard and enact
their artistic independence. They feel that their art benefits from their relationship with the other, in that they offer suggestions and inspiration, share resources and provide social interaction after periods of loneliness in work hours. However, the requirement that they have separate work spaces in an imperative. In this sense, the spaces the couple inhabits are defined by their inhabitant. They need not be defined in terms of heteronormative understandings of a home, and may instead reflect the tastes, needs, and understandings of space particular to each inhabitant. In these spaces they will not always be under the surveillance of their partner, and can shape the space to suit their own concerns rather than the concerns of the relationship.

The couple thus moves between separate domains, and between separation and togetherness. Their narrative is focused on their attempts, in their art, in their lives, and in their relationship, to be independent, free and unconstrained by the expectations, norms and needs of others. As such, their separate living arrangements reflect this need, that both be “free to be free”. Their resistance to sharing a house, to the meanings and delineations that are attached to such a space, allow them to enact a performance that is not limited in heteronormative ways of being together. The couple is thus able to create the kinds of spaces in which they would like to be together in. In this sense they may be able to enact the kind of dialogue I describe Frieda and Fernando engaging in. Shotter (1993) suggests that partners are required to maintain distinct positions from which to co-create a third understanding. Although it is likely that they meet and spend time in each other’s houses and perhaps one house more than the other, it is likely that they can escape many of the gendered connotations of homes and the domestic realm. Their living spaces are defined by the creative pursuits that are staged there, and not by the requirements of heteronorms.

This dance of merging and separation is foreshadowed by an event at the beginning of their relationship that Adrianna describes in the first chapter of their tale:

We met and the on Monday he said to me, oh, there’s an opening of a little art gallery in [a small Eastern Cape town]. And it was the first time I’d been asked to exhibit work, outside of university. And we went and we met. And there were our art pieces, exhibited next to each other. It was very romantic. Ja. Although his was very big. And mine was very small (laughs)

Here Adrianna experiences the viewing of their art, placed side by side on the same wall, as romantic. Their work, that is so important in their relationship and in their lives, is
placed by chance in the same exhibition, on the same wall, thereby displaying their similarity. While their work is close enough in theme to be placed together, they are different pieces of work, by different artists, one small and one large. They are therefore also inherently separated. This reflects their philosophy of togetherness, that they should both be “free to be free”. They value their ability to remain independent from one another even though they also value time together. While I have described how Laurent is advantaged in the relationship because of his age and experience, it seems that in this and perhaps other instances they are partially able to resist normative constraint. At the same time as they enact independence in their relationship, Adrianna draws attention to how his art was “very big” and her art was “very small”, perhaps expressing in spatial terms his power over her.

While some of the couples’ stories situate homes as sites of heteronormative constraint, some are able to resist this constraint. Particularly in terms of gender, homes seem to imply that the heterosexual couple undertake specific performances of togetherness. Nombulelo and Makhaya each have their own homes, but they spend most of their time together on the farm where Makhaya lives. Although many people think that living in this isolated place would be difficult, they both enjoy living on the farm. Nombulelo speaks of her decision to spend as much time as possible with Makhaya, together on the farm:

I wanted to be close to him. I wanted to feel that I owned him (laughs 3). He is not going to get anyone. He is mine. You see? Yes, it is different when you live with someone. You feel you can see him, all the time. I want to see him, at the time I want to see him. Even at night. I just put the light on. I can look at him (laughs). Oh, he is not a fighter. He is not a fighter (laugh 3) He is a sweet man, really. He is an angel. He is an angel.

The physical proximity, her closeness to him, allows her to feel secure. In this way the sharing of a space allows Nombulelo to observe Makhaya on an almost continuous basis, and perhaps to place herself in control of Makhaya, herself and the relationship through this surveillance. The shared space is for Nombulelo a way of providing herself with security and comfort in Makhaya and in their relationship. I have argued in the previous chapter that Nombulelo and Makhaya’s relationship is characterised in narrative terms by accord and harmony, and that this validates and sets it apart from Nombulelo’s past experiences. In the above narrative, about the security she derives from sharing a space, she links this central strand of the narrative of their togetherness to a home space. She
expresses insecurity, a concern that he will become involved with another woman, perhaps expressing her awareness of the potential for oppression implicit to heterosexuality (Dunne, 2003). She wants to “own” him, and she expresses this ownership by living with him in the home, that is, by controlling an apparently stable and material manifestation of their relationship. This may be a way for her to claim power within the implicit inequality of heteronormativity.

Homes and land are often understood as fixed entities that can be owned, sold and bought (Bondi, 1993), and may thus be associated with a degree of affluence. This view of space, as static and unchanging, is appropriated as a source of strength, as a metaphor for the constancy and firmness of their relationship. Nombulelo is able to use this metaphor, of security and stability, because she has experienced Makhaya’s kindness and gentleness. He is an “angel” and a “sweet man”, and he is not like the violent man she was married to. Lindegger and Durrheim (2000) suggest that South African expressions of hegemonic masculinity do in part rely on violent acts committed against women. In so far as this violence continues to define South African masculinity (McClintock, 1991), Makhaya’s sweetness is another kind of masculinity and transcends a particular, hegemonic form of normative masculinity (Connell, 1995). He is “not a fighter”.

In this sense, the space they inhabit relies on refiguring gender within the space, such that Makhaya is angelic, gentle and “sweet”, and Nombulelo is the owner, the observer of their togetherness. In the above narrative, Nombulelo seems to invert gender such that she is the controller of the space, while Makhaya is the passive inhabitant of the space. In this sense, Nombulelo and Makhaya resist the spatial heteronorms associated with gender, by inverting these norms. While they invert the roles they assume according to gender, they do not erase power from the relationship. She wants to “own” him, and she needs to see his sleeping presence next to her in order to feel secure. In this way she is able in part to set her relationship with Makhaya apart from heteronormative expressions of gender and from her past, and to derive an instance of narrative power. It is significant, that the story of Nombulelo and Makhaya is told by Nombulelo almost exclusively. Makhaya contributed very little to the interview. Rather than reading this as an enactment of “masculine” power through silence and distance (Dryden, 1999), it is possible to understand his silence in terms of this inversion of gender roles. In this couple, it is Nombulelo who is outgoing, gregarious and vocal, while Makhaya is silent, shy and acquiescent to her construction of
Events. In this sense, their lives in a home on an isolated farm contain elements of a carnivalesque performance of gender and heterosexuality.

**Beds and bedrooms: bodies in space**

These resistive interpretations of space notwithstanding, the heteronormative aspects of homes may serve to fix not only space but also the relationships between bodies in that space. Within the home it is arguably the bedroom and the bed that is the most important site of sharing, perhaps because of the importance of procreation (Borneman, 1999), and sexual intercourse (Potts, 2001) for heteronormative togetherness. While homes in general may be structured as heteronormative spaces to be inhabited by a couple, there is a space within the home that epitomises the fundamental basis of heterosexual togetherness.

Letti Moletsane of Isidingo constructs a particular object in the home, the bed, as the source of heteronormative power. In chapter seven I suggest that current heteronorms require that a couple be physically and sexually together, and this requires that they live in the same space and place, idealised by their sharing a bed. Letti is jealous of the time her husband Vusi is spending with Siyanda Mazibuko. When he tells her that he will be having a dinner meeting with her and will be home late, she expresses her control over him.

> “Where is this meeting?” she asks, wearily.
> “It’s at the Cinnamon, which means it will be quite late. It’s a crucial networking opportunity for us. You know for the development on Horizon Deep?”
> “Who’s us?” she asks, tilting her head backward and looking at him sideways.
> “Us. Us. Me. And uSiyanda.”
> “Fine,” she says, turning away. She turns back and smiles slowly, “So long as you’re back in my bed before I fall asleep.”

In this way Letti asserts the primacy of her marriage to Vusi over the affair she suspects and is correct in suspecting, Vusi is having with Siyanda. She invokes a private and personal domestic space, “[her] bed”, and thereby reminds Vusi of the exclusivity of the marriage bonds. She appeals to the normative constraints of monogamy and situates this bond as enacted sexually, exclusively by Vusi and her, husband and wife in a particular space. This narrative extends Potts (2001) assertion that sexual intercourse epitomised by orgasm is an indicator of heteronormativity, by locating the performance. Letti’s insistence that Vusi return home to “her bed” gives spatial expression to heteronorms.

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Dara and Michael tell a similar narrative. Before they lived together, they spent most of their time at her flat, because she had her own bedroom, while Michael shared one with a flatmate. Because he shared a bedroom, they could not have sex at his flat. This admission is accompanied by laughter from both of them.

Michael: So I would say the last year or so we lived together.
Dara: Yes. Before then we lived in separate flats but we did, we were definitely together.
Michael: Ja, for sure. I mean, for most of the week I stayed at your house.
Dara: Ja, I mean, I didn’t share a bedroom.
Michael: (laughs)
Dara: (laughs) He shared a bedroom. I didn’t share a bedroom.

This narrative implies that the bedroom provides the space for a couple to be alone, and that this isolation from others is necessary for sexual intercourse between partners. As such, this narrative locates sex between a heterosexual couple in a private space. In this way the heteronormative couple is associated with sexual intercourse, within a couple that is “definitely together”, and in a private space. Their emphasis on Michael’s sharing a bedroom, and thus the reason for them staying at Dara’s flat “most of the week”, is accompanied by laughter. This laughter serves to show both that sex is implied by the sharing of the bed, and that the act is necessarily private and between the couple. As such, the bed, as heteronormative space, is premised on the necessity of sexual intercourse for heteronormativity, and on a private space in which this act can be performed. Heteronormativity may thus be constructed as a performance that takes place “behind closed doors” (Somerville, 2000), although Jackson (2006) argues that it is an organising feature of the social world in general. As such, the necessity of privacy may serve to render the assumption of heteronormativity as invisible, and in part beyond thought (Somerville, 2000). By claiming privacy and the bedroom as a heterosexual space, non-normative performances are disallowed from this space and are perhaps rendered place-less (Hubbard, 2001).

Nandipha and Parsons Matabane of Isidingo also focus on the bed as a stage for their togetherness and their tale emphasises how disruption of the bedroom space is fundamentally problematic. When they fight about what career Parsons should be devoting his energies to, he demonstrates his anger through the disruption of their usual routines. He goes to the Rec after work to drink, without telling her where he has gone. He refuses to eat breakfast with her, saying that he has a meeting to go to. He even thinks of
sleeping on the couch, rather than in bed with her, but he stops short of this disruption. When they are discussing their disagreement in Georgie’s bar they talk about this:

“It was horrible,” said Nandipha. “I thought you were going to sleep on the couch.”

“I’d be lying if I said it didn’t cross my mind.” Parsons bites his lip and looks down.

“What stopped you?”

He looks up slowly and directly into her eyes, “We’ve never slept apart baby.”

In this narrative they reaffirm their mundane, routine of sleeping together because Parsons cannot bring himself to disrupt the routine. Even though he is very angry and expresses his anger by disrupting some routines, he cannot upset their togetherness to that degree. This emphasises the importance of this everyday expression of togetherness to the couple. This exchange happens at the beginning of the argument in which they resolve their differences, and functions to confirm their closeness. This narrative can be read as demonstrating the potential of mundane togetherness to take an ambiguous part in heterosexual narratives of togetherness, because its disruption also disrupts their togetherness and because even in the throws of a bitter disagreement this couple cannot enact this kind of disruption.

Indira and Haroun must contend with these norms as expressed by Letti, Dara and Michael, and Nandipha and Parsons. They encounter and conflict with this normative construction of the bed shared by a couple as the site of sexual intercourse. For the couple sharing of a room in a digs is a helpful way for both to save money on rent. It is also a connection to a circle of friends who all live in the house. However, the sharing of the room, and specifically the bed, is an indicator to others that their relationship is sexual. As they have decided to abstain from sex, because of Indira’s religious upbringing, the sharing of space is ambiguous for them. While they wish to define the space as shared for financial and emotional advantages, others view the space as a signifier of the sexual activity they are opposed to. In this way, their story about their space conflicts with others’ stories about the space.

The couple is unable to insist on their understanding of the space, possibly because physical togetherness is such a fundamental aspect of heteronormative togetherness. For them it is simply a choice of expediency: they save money and see each other more often if they live together and share a room. But they cannot tell Indira’s parents of this choice,
because they will not approve because of the sexual connotations of sharing a room, even though the couple are not sexually active together. Their friends also read the sharing of the bedroom as potentially sexual, and they find the couple’s continued sexual abstinence perplexing and abnormal. As such the space that is shared, the bedroom, is a signifier so fixed in the minds of others, that Indira and Haroun are unable to mould it to their own ends, except in secret or in private. For Indira’s parents and some of the couples’ friends, the bedroom is inextricably linked to heterosexual sexual activity, and all attempts to shape the space in other ways fail. As such, the couple is forced into an uncomfortable position, in which they inhabit a space that fixes how others perceive them and their relationship. While they read the space as a way to share resources and time, and not as a site of sexual interaction, they are forced to see it in this way and to continually account for their non-sexual, un-heteronormative lifestyle.

In this sense, Indira and Haroun may in some moments be able to queer their heterosexuality, by refusing to engage in sexual intercourse. However they are repeatedly confronted with heteronormative interpretations of their behaviour and repeatedly experience discomfort. They find themselves using space in a way that has fixed heteronormative meaning, in an alternative and innovative manner, and are thus forced to account for this performance. It is this repeated performance, of accountability and explanation that Indira finds frustrating, however Butler (1993) suggests that it is through repetition that alteration to performances occurs. While their accountability and their dissatisfaction in being answerable to people who read the space in heteronormal ways, demonstrates how problematic it is to enact a queer performance within a heteronormal setting, their repeated denial of heteronormal interpretations may help to continually reconstruct the space in their terms. They must struggle, actively and repeatedly, to use the space in an alternative manner, while the space resists their innovation because it is fixed by the ways that it is constructed in their social context. In this way they are constrained by interpretations of heterosexuality as always sexual and of bedrooms that are shared as evidence of this sexual performance. Their ability to define their choices as located within the context of their specific relationship and the recurring performance of the space as non-heteronormative may enable them to resist.

“Lips only” – proximity and the gaze of authority
The focus on the bedroom as the specific location within the home, for heterosexual togetherness, suggests that it is not only togetherness but specifically embodied, sexual togetherness that is normative. The potential for partners to monitor and survey one another and their relationship through physical togetherness appears as a theme in a narrative Len’s “Secret Admirer”. After Len receives flirtatious emails from a “Secret Admirer”, she asks to meet him at Papa G’s bar. However she places one condition on their meeting: she wants to kiss him before they speak, because she says a woman can tell all she needs to know from a man by the way he kisses. At first Len feels pressurised by this condition, but it also appeals to him because his admirer seems so assertive and sure of herself. Lolly tells him to kiss her with his eyes closed, because all women want to feel that a man is concentrating fully on them. “Sensitive is good,” he decides, “sensitive opens all kinds of doors.”

Significantly, the woman Len meets at Papa G’s insists that they not speak, and when he introduces himself she tells him “lips only”. As Len closes his eyes, he wipes a fist across his mouth to dry his lips of the whiskey he has been drinking. As he turns around the blonde woman in a glittering black outfit is replaced by Slu, Georgie Zamdele’s right-hand man. With his eyes still closed Len leans forward and gently searches for the lips of the person in front of him. Slu stands very still and straight as Len kisses him passionately. When he gradually opens his eyes a look of horror and disgust appear on his face.

“Hello sexy,” says Slu without a smile on his face or in his voice.

It takes a moment for Len to react. He pulls abruptly away from Slu, hastily wiping a hand across his mouth. “Slu!” he yelled. “What are you doing?”

Slu watches his disgust with distain and irritation. “I’m just doing my job, man,” he said, striding away from Len who is furiously wiping his mouth again.

Lolly and Paul give high-fives to each other behind Len’s back. They laugh and hug one another as they walk away. Len grabs his drink and downs it, turning to Paul, Lolly and blonde haired woman. It turns out that Lolly and Paul have played a trick on him, and created the “Secret Admirer” only to embarrass him.

The “Secret Admirer’s” conditions for meeting suggest that a woman, and perhaps a man also, can tell all they need to from one physical interaction, in this case a kiss. They have communicated over email, but this one act is constructed as encapsulating the entirety of the couple’s compatibility and connection. Through this performance the partners become
able to observe, monitor, survey one another and the physical act of kissing will show all they need to know about one another. While in the previous chapter I tell the other couples’ narratives - Zureida and Saleem, Pam and Kelvin, Indira and Haroun and Leland and Veronica – as observing, monitoring and surveying their relationship through connecting rituals particularly conversation, the narrative of Len and the “Secret Admirer” suggests that physical acts accomplish a similar function. That is, she insists on not speaking, on performing a different, perhaps more intimate and more revealing kind of surveillance than the other couples describe.

In this act, Len is required to prove his sexual proficiency. It is his ability to perform from the position of Hollway’s (1984) Male Sex Drive discourse that will become observable through the act of kissing. He is expected to give a normative, “masculine” enactment of sexuality. Len’s initial dis-ease with this condition serves to emphasise that this physical act does open him to observation and a certain degree of vulnerability accompanies the act. He has particular discomfort with Lolly’s suggestion that he close his eyes to show his sensitivity, possibly because it compromises his ability to perform a hegemonic version of the Male Sex Drive. This role may be particularly threatening because the female “Secret Admirer” is performing as a sexually assertive woman familiar with the Permissive discourse positioning (Hollway, 1984), and possibly enacting the assertive sexuality Jackson (1995) suggests could undermine heteronorms. By closing his eyes he performs as a sensitive, and perhaps more “feminine” male. However he decides that he will act in this way, because “sensitive opens all kinds of doors”. In this way both actors are undermining normative gender roles such that the performance may be read as queer, however, it is significant that the meeting is a sham. A queer performance is held as a potentially inter-subjective position, and ultimately withheld from the couple as a unit.

The kiss itself demonstrates just how much is observable through this kind of surveillance. He does reveal himself, but not to an admirer. In this narrative, Len proves himself to be not the powerful, sexual accomplished male he wants to show himself to be, but rather the performer of a non-normative sexuality. In the soap opera series, the character of Len is both openly sexually predatory and openly non-normative. This narrative places him in a position where he attempts to show his normative, “masculine” sexuality, but instead forces him to display his non-normative bisexuality. Later Lolly and Paul force him to admit that he did not know he was kissing a man, and thereby that he failed to observe that he
was engaged in non-normative behaviour. He thus does not succeed in the enactment of normative sexuality that was expected of him and that he himself was drawn to. For this performance he is taunted and he becomes the butt of many jokes.

While this narrative contains many normative implications for relationships and heterosexual togetherness, it suggests that normative surveillance may be challenged. Len does not realise until he opens his eyes, that he is kissing a man. As such, the act that is constructed in the narrative as revealing, as providing the means for a couple to survey each other, themselves and their relationship, may not always successfully provide this point of observation. Partners may be misled, perhaps by others or perhaps by each other. In the narrative Len is tricked into publicly performing non-normative sexuality, but it is also possible that he did not recognise that he was kissing a man because of a lapse in vigilance, or he could take pleasure in a similar performance with a man he was attracted to. As such, the narrative implies that the metaphorical panopticon I have described in the previous chapter may in some instances be avoided, ignored or forgotten about in the heat of the moment.

While physical proximity might imply the use of relationship technologies that normalise the performance of togetherness, this is not always so. Frieda and Fernando’s narrative of their reunion in Istanbul is one of dialogic co-creation. Significantly the spatial elements of co-creation are reflected in the couple’s use of time in their narrative. The photographic representation of this event shows the couple eating a breakfast on the first morning after their first night together after nearly a year. This photograph presents the couple, in visual and narrative terms, as constructing this set apart inter-subjectivity. The photograph was taken during the first year of their togetherness, at the time when they lived in different countries, and significantly they meet in a third nation.
They are presented in the photograph, facing outward from a space enclosed by leaves. These leaves dominate the photograph, by surrounding the couple on all sides. In the centre of this growing, living enclosure is the table laid for breakfast. Their enclosure, within an arbour of leaves reflects their enclosure in their own experience of each other, of time and of space. They also invoke a special understanding of time, and the breakfast may be interpreted as an invocation and celebration of the everyday connecting rituals they have longed for. Breakfast in this narrative is a mundane activity that links the partners to other breakfasts, both in the past and in the future. It is a meal that repeats itself, every morning, and invokes meals that they have not eaten together, and promises of meals they will eat together in a united future. This is their first meal together, a wholesome meal of fresh fruit that they describe as a “honeymoon breakfast” on their “honeymoon before their wedding”. Here the couple playfully hints at how their physical proximity has allowed them to express their togetherness physically through sexual intercourse. Here this carnivalesque expression of togetherness might contribute to their sense of togetherness, and in performing what Frieda describes as the “bridge and meeting in-between”.

As such, both time and space are important to the construction of this narrative and serve to co-create the couple as close. Since both elements play significant roles in the construction of stories, and the stories of heterosexual relationships, it is necessary to explore the role of time in the couples’ narratives. Toolan’s (2001) definition of narrative suggests that events flow sequentially from one to another, and in which there is a progression of activity from crisis to resolution. As such stories might make use of a linear conception of time (Soja & Hooper, 1993). However there are also instances of circular time, and an abstract kind of continuous time. As such, time has been be shown to be an
interpretable aspect of experience, that is represented in particular ways within narratives (Bondi, 1993).

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I describe how physical proximity is fundamental to heteronormative togetherness. The sharing of physical and geographical space, and the embodied, sexual togetherness it implies, allows couples to employ relationship technologies that normalise their togetherness, although some couples resist this performance. This reliance on everyday rituals of connection requires that the couples remain in physical proximity to one another. They must be in the same private or public space in order to perform normative togetherness. Tamara describes the discomfort associated with not being allowed to perform normative togetherness because of distance, and happiness at physical proximity. It must be noted that heterosexual couples are able to take their togetherness for granted, and are allowed access to private and public spaces (Hubbard, 2001; Richardson, 1996). As such, couples may be describing the benefits associated with enacting a normative performance of sexuality. Heteronorms structure and influence a multitude of social organisations and spaces (Jackson, 2006), and thus everyday activities are accessible exclusively to heteronormative couples. Thus couples are able to construct narratives of togetherness by enacting normative togetherness, and they must monitor and survey themselves, one another and their relationship to detect non-normative manifestations.

Within this the narratives I have presented in this chapter the centrality of the home as a space of that allows couples’ togetherness underlines the importance of houses as a space fixed by heteronormative constructions. In a sense it is expected of the heterosexual couple, that they inhabit a single dwelling, possibly because it provides privacy for the heterosexual interactions that are central to constructions of heteronomativity (Potts, 2001). Homes, as a sphere of the domestic, are also related to expressions of gender difference in the couples’ narratives. This is perhaps because the home is sometimes constructed as a space in which women can express their “femininity” through domesticity (Dryden, 1999; Richardson, 1996). Houses could thus be central to the construction of difference between partners that is also central to heteronorms.
While the couples do collude with these heteronormal notions of their space, they also resist. Some of the stories show spaces and places to be actively interpreted and shaped by the couples. In most of their stories, the couples referred to homes and other dwelling spaces as the setting of their relationship. Again the narratives express both heteronormative social constructions alongside and interwoven with stories of momentary resistance: Nombulelo appropriates notions of homes as fixed and stable in order to tell her relationship with Makhaya as similarly stable and fixed; Pam and Kelvin physically and spatially merge domestic and business concerns, and thereby deconstruct heteronormative understandings of what a home is; Indira and Haroun continue to abstain from sexual intercourse, even though they share a bedroom in a digs; Adrianna and Laurent refuse to share a home because they require the freedom implied by separate homes. As such, these couples show space and place to be more flexible than space is often seen to be. Although space is often understood to be permanent and unchanging, these couples active use of space suggests that space can be moulded, shaped and interpreted instead of merely passively inhabited as it stands.
In the chapter seven I describe how elements of everyday life can be linked both to normative and resistant performances of heterosexuality, and how these performances coexist within narratives. In this chapter I shall look at narratives of employment and work as they are situated within narratives of heterosexual togetherness. Work narratives incorporate an understanding of a separation between the domestic and paid employment spaces. This largely artificial separation is implicated in the gender binary, such that “masculinity”, breadwinning and paid employment are associated with the public and “femininity”, domesticity and emotional work are associated with the private. This binary appears in the couples’ narratives, and serves to fix gender performances. Although the binary is not always enacted in this fixed manner, it structures many of the narratives and is a pervasive source of gender inequality between partners. At the same time I suggest that the management of conflict between partners, which arises from the merging of these domains, is sometimes viewed as work by the couples. While the work may be to monitor, survey and normalise the relationship, it may also be to co-construct, negotiate and compromise.

In the following sections I shall suggest that narratives of work intermingle with narratives of romantic relatedness. In reading these stories I shall again emphasise both the normative monologues contained in the narrative, as well as the heteroglossic alteration of these norms. I shall first relate tales of the significance of paid employment within a heterosexual relationship. I shall then describe sources of conflict that arise for heterosexual couples related to paid employment. This shall lead to a discussion of emotional work that female partners are usually expected to undertake within the relationships. Conflict can arise if a woman is not able to undertake this work, or it may be experienced as internal conflict. I shall then discuss the ways that couples manage this conflict, and finally I shall describe how couples view relationships as requiring maintenance through work activity.
Work in relationships

In the following section, I shall explore the significance of employment narratives within two couples’ stories of their togetherness. These couples described their employment as having positive effects on their relationship. Paid employment seems to provide male and some female partners, with a sense of strength. Brian and Tamara and Lungisile and Ayanda both describe these benefits. However such advantages are imparted unevenly. Although working class couples do experience some benefits from employment, they must also cope with more disadvantages and difficulties that some of the middle class couples describe.

Possibly because heterosexual togetherness can be associated with affluence (Hirschl, Altobelli & Rank, 2003), employment seems to impart feelings of satisfaction, contentment and pleasure onto togetherness. Although the couple fell into the working class sample, Lungisile derives a sense of strength from his employment. He works on road maintenance in a small Eastern Cape town, and so he spends most of the week away from Ayanda and their daughter Pumzile. They stay in the township attached to another Eastern Cape town approximately 52 kilometres from where Lungisile works. Because the accommodation where he works is not suitable for them, they do not stay with him. In a sense this couple practises a migrant labour model that I describe in the previous chapter. This can be interpreted as an instance in which many black South African’s have been forced to adopt relationship patterns that go against the one man and one woman living together heteronorm (Borneman, 1999). This couple’s narrative does not describe everyday connecting rituals and mundane-ness in their relationship. Possibly because this couple’s day-to-day existence is a financial, social and economic battle, and because they have less access than other couples to mundane togetherness, they cannot easily take pleasure in eating together, watching television or going to movies. For this couple, these activities that seem to be mundane to the other couples may be special luxuries.

Despite this separation and the negative feelings that could attach to it, the couple both experience his employment as a significantly positive aspect of their lives. Lungisile tells this story of pride in “masculinity”:

It is for my brother. They say he becomes a man. It is for my brother. There is a big ceremony. We must buy the meat, and the things to drink and the tobacco. There are lots of people here to this house. I am so proud of my brother. It is good for him. To become the man and I can do this for him.
In this narrative Lungisile’s pleasure, derived from his relative financial well-being, is associated in the narrative with his masculinity. By being able to buy the things necessary for the ceremony, he shows himself to be a man. This role is extended because in the performance of it he provides an example for his brother, who will be socially recognised as a man through this very occasion. It is possible that he is describing pleasure at enacting a normative performance of gender. Significantly, it may be the presence of people at the ceremony, their function of witnesses of his performance of masculinity that enables the pleasure he experiences. He is observed in his normative role, as an example to his brother and to others, of a successful man, and he is pleased that they recognise him as such.

Here Ayanda may be in a position of apparent disadvantage. Lungisile is employed, is the only contributor to the household income, and seems to derive strength in his sense of masculinity from his employment. The literature I have outlined in chapter three suggests that in this context Ayanda would be without resources to bargain for her own needs (Dryden, 1999; Rutter & Schwartz, 1998), and of vulnerable to domestic violence (Sathiparsad, 2005). However, Ayanda describes how she is also able to benefit from Lungisile’s employment:

I am young. I am to the school. I think. I can’t go with the boys. I don’t want to go with the boys. When I see him at my friends house I say no. it is hard to go with the boys. I must to the school. But then I think. I go away and I think. I am thinking, the boy is not so bad. He is, he looks nice. But I must check. So I ask the people. I ask about him. And they say it is ok. He is fine, he is not a bad man. And so I go to him and say it is alright. I want to see him. He will not hurt me. He does not beat his girlfriends. He is good to them. He will look after me. He can get the work. He does some of the work. He does not do the crime. He does not steal. Yes, he is a good man. He brings the money. Everything I need, I can say to him. I need these things. I can phone and tell him. And he will get the money for me. All the things I need.

In this narrative, Ayanda first “checks” up on Lungisile, and decided that he is suitable because he is “not a bad man”. Her satisfaction with the relationship is described in terms of his not “hurt[ing]” her, not “beat[ing]” her and not “do[ing] the crime”. Ayanda’s criteria for him being a “good man” seem to be based primarily on his not harming her and not
breaking the law. As such, Ayanda draws attention to the always potential dominance and violence that is an aspect of all heterosexual togetherness (Dunne, 2003; Jewkes, 2002). While Ayanda makes it clear that Lungisile does not beat her and is a good provider, it is not clear to what extent she influences the things they do for the community and their daughter. It is not clear to what extent she is able to exercise power within the relationship. The ceremony that Lungisile mentions is for his brother, so it is possible that Ayanda is less able to provide for her family in the same way.

Providing for a heteronormative family is also of concern for Brian and Tamara. However, this is not their only concern:

Tamara: I sometimes would like to be with Beth, more. (3) I always wanted a career. I want both. The family and the work. (3) When I got the job in Jo’burg, when I moved. It just felt so good to have the work. It feels good for me, it does like my mind, and my spirit, it does me good. I love Beth. And I love being a mother. (2) I’m also I get so much out, like out of working.

Brian: Beth needs us strong, like as people. We need to show her, she can do anything. She can have a career, like her mommy, and she can have a family. Like us. Also, in Jo’burg, it’s good. To have two salaries. We want, to give her, good schools, university. (3) It was difficult for our parents. They didn’t have so much, and it was hard. So we want to give our girl all those things. (3)

The above narrative is constructed around an explanation for Tamara performing both breadwinning and mothering roles, possibly because many women give up employment when they have children (Allen & Barker, 1992; Ehrenreich & Russel Hoschchild, 2004; Finch & Mason, 1993), and possibly because the role of mother is a heteronormative role for women in relationships to assume (Allen & Barker, 1992; Finch & Mason, 1993). It is possible that her work, because it takes her away from her performance as a mother, could unsettle her sense of “femininity”. She appeals to feminine concerns for her feelings and her “spirit” in order to justify her continuing work. This appeal to her emotional well-being as justification may partially mitigate this challenge because it centres her decision within a feminine concern for emotions.

Tamara is able, in part, to accomplish a non-normative performance of femininity, particularly of mothering, by continuing both parenting and career performances. Although it is increasingly accepted for women to have both a career and a family (Ehrenreich & Russel Hoschchild, 2004), in South Africa women are still paid less and are more often unemployed than men (Statistics South Africa, 2006). Brian supports her continued
employment, even though it is possible that the necessity of her salary could undermine his “masculinity” in so far as it is underpinned by his role as breadwinner (Dryden, 1999). However, since women are usually paid less than men in South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2006), it is possible that he earns a higher salary and this alleviates the threat of her working. Interestingly, Brian’s justification for Tamara’s work also involves an appeal to feminine, interpersonal concerns, by emphasising their role as parents. He believes that their daughter needs them both to be “strong” emotionally as well as financially secure. While he makes use of the adjective “strong”, which has some masculine, physical, connotations, he applies it to the feminine domain of emotions. They want to show her that she can have a career and a family. In this sense, both queer their performances of gender in the context of their employment and their parenting.

It is however arguable to what extent Brian and Tamara can be described as non-normative. Brian’s support for Tamara’s employment appeals to a heteronormative concern for the couple’s daughter. He believes that they can both be role models to their daughter, possibly by exercising monitoring and surveillance techniques over her, and that their combined income will provide better opportunities to Beth. As such, their employment is associated with their performance of being good parents, because he places emphasis on the couple’s progeny, and this may reflect a heteronormative performance (Borneman, 1999). The association between procreation and heteronorms has been associated with the institution of marriage (Borneman, 1999) however this couple is not married and does not wish to marry. As such, Jackson’s (1995) assertion that cohabiting couples may still be subject to many of the constraints of heteronorms is borne out. While they do not wish to marry, it is likely that they have made close and careful observation of their own financial position, of the needs of their daughter and have decided that it will be necessary for both of them to work. As such, the decision probably made after a process of monitoring and surveying their relationship, each other and themselves. In this way they engage in normalising behaviour as I have described in the previous chapter.

Significantly they also seek a particular standard of living. It is this standard that they direct their efforts and the monitoring of their finances toward. They want Beth to go to “good schools, university”. In other narratives the couple also places emphasis on their home, on home improvement, and these concerns reflect the concerns of their middle class way of being as I described in the previous chapter. Their behaviour, both individually and as a
couple, must be directed at obtaining these specific standards for their child and their home. By virtue of their being together in a heterosexual relationship, this couple may be more able to obtain this lifestyle. Marriage, and to a certain extent cohabitation, may support an affluent, middle class lifestyle for couples (Hirschl, Altobelli & Rank, 2003). Benefits for couples are derived from legislation that allows married (or otherwise legally connected couples) to benefit from shared medical aids, insurances, accounts, citizenship (Hirschl, Altobelli & Rank, 2003; Shuit, 2004; Wilkinson & Kritzinger, 2004), the ability to make long term investments with some security (Waite, 1995), but also from a work environment that advantages male employees over female employees (Rutter & Schwartz, 1998). As such, their ability to maintain a normative relationship, through the surveillance I have described, may assist them in obtaining and maintaining this standard of living. Their relationship is intertwined with their economic status because it is through their relationship that they derive benefit from the sanction of heteronorms.

Lungisile and Ayanda describe similar concerns for providing for their daughter. However they are concerned more for providing her food, clothes and for her going to school at all. In an American context the benefits of marriage apply unevenly, advantaging middle class, “Western” men before other categories (Hirschl, Altobelli & Rank, 2003), and it seems that this could apply in these South African contexts. Because they have fewer financial opportunities and resources, this couple expresses concerns that reflect their economic class. While they may receive some benefits from their togetherness, they are not advantaged to the degree that Brian and Tamara are. Despite their differences in terms of class, Ayanda and Lungisile also enact this kind of heteronormative monitoring and surveillance, directed at caring for their child (Borneman, 1999) and their home (Hubbard, 2001). In chapter six I describe in more depth how their activities related to their parenting of their daughter reflect similar monitoring concerns to those I have describe for Brian and Tamara.

The above narratives combine concerns for gender, procreation and economic class within a heteronormative framework. While Brian and Tamara apparently resist gender norms around employment, they collude with heteronormative understandings of class and procreation. Interestingly, their collusion with one aspect of heteronorms is premised on their resistance to another aspect. This narrative does not account for the couple’s privilege in terms of class, and interestingly neither does Lungisile and Ayanda’s narrative.
account for their disadvantage in terms of class. This couple’s narrative shows them performing more normative roles in terms of gender, but they are excluded from the normative, middle class because of their lack of socioeconomic resources.

In the above section Brain and Tamara’s narrative seems to show the couple deriving economic and personal advantage from denying a gendered division of labour that would require Tamara to mother and Brian to be in paid employment. Despite this couple’s successful negotiation of non-normative gender roles, other couples experience conflict around work that both undertake. It is thus possible that Lungisile and Ayanda perform the gender binary of employment despite the economic disadvantage because a non-normative performance might create too much discomfort. While the avoidance of the disease focused on non-normative performances might inform their performance, it is also likely that their educational, financial and social disadvantages play a significant role in Ayanda’s lack of employment.

**Conflict in (shared) work**

In the following section, I shall describe narratives that tell of conflict that arose when the partners of a couple worked together in the same business, or owned a business together. Conflict did also arise from separate work and in the next section I shall describe these kinds of narratives. For couples who shared work, conflict was created by merging the domains of work and relationship. Business matters can become conflated or mixed with matters of the heart, and it seems that the intersection of these two realms can pose a challenge to the togetherness of couples. In some instances, this conflict can be interpreted as arising from gendered positions from which partners perform, and I shall emphasise and explore particularly these positions. Proverbial wisdom advises against mixing business with pleasure, perhaps to maintain the integrity of both business and romantic relationships. By upholding clear boundaries between the office and the home, the biases, stresses and conflicts of both realms can be kept uncomplicated by the influences of the other realm.

The story of Cherel de Villiers and Rajesh Kumar’s romance is indicative of the difficulties that couples’ experience at work. In a sense it can be read as a cautionary tale against blurring the boundaries between work and personal lives. Working at On! TV with Rajesh’s ex-partner Lee Haines is very difficult for the couple. Cherel and Lee have experienced a
long-standing dislike for one another, and their mutual connection to Rajesh adds new fuel to the feud. Past and present romantic involvements add a personal level that complicates their business transactions. The following conversation is reminiscent of several arguments the couples has about their work relationships, and demonstrates how the delineation between work and personal realms may entrench normative gender roles.

One evening over a glass of wine Rajesh says, “Do me a favour. Don’t antagonise Lee. You have the upper hand now. Just let it be. This is hard enough for us all.”

“OK, can I speak now?” asks Cherel. She looks down and sighs. Softly she speaks, “Do you want to walk away Rajesh?”

“That’s not what I said.”

“Answer the question. Is this too hard for you? Do you want to end this?”

“No, that’s not what I meant.” They both fall silent and look into their glasses. “Why?” he asks, “Do you want to walk away?”

“No,” she returns quickly, and then looks away. “Just don’t do anything stupid. If you want me to walk away, just tell me you’re in love, that you want a good little wife, and I’ll run.” She smiles.

He smiles back at her and they look at one another for a while. “Don’t worry,” he says taking a sip of his wine, “that’s not going to happen anytime soon.”

In this conversation, Cherel jumps quickly from the subject of their business lives to their personal lives. For Cherel, business and personal issues intermingle and mix. Her vendettas and plots are based on financial gain and also on her emotional needs. Thus for her Rajesh’s request that she not provoke Lee and make things unpleasant at On! TV is associated with a request that she step away from their relationship. He is asking her to be gracious, to accept her “upper hand” and not abuse it. But Cherel is one of the villains of the soap, and in this exchange she insists on her unusual approach to life by telling him that if he wants “love” and a “good wife” then she will walk away. Rajesh is less able to deal with mixing business and personal issues, and tries to demarcate the two issues by insisting that this is not what he said, and not what he meant. At this stage of the relationship, Rajesh is still taken with her openly alternative lifestyle, and does not want to end the relationship. In this case, Cherel is able to avoid committing herself to an average, regular career or romance, and subverts Rajesh’s attempt to control her relationships at work or indeed their romantic relationship.

Eventually, Rajesh is unable to stomach Cherel’s different way of engaging with love, emotions and work. He feels she lacks integrity, and breaks up with her. In the previous chapter, I suggest that the scene that enacts their break up presents both as more
monolithic in terms of their gender, and that the scene acts as punishment for Cherel’s continual, unapologetic transgressions of gender and sexuality. This ending of the relationship, and Cherel’s general positioning in the soap as a nasty piece of work, demonstrate that her approach will not ultimately be rewarded. She is not a woman who will submit to the commonly accepted patterns of interaction between husband and wife, and she is not a woman who will back off from a business associate who stands in her way. In this sense she can be perceived as a resistive character, who acts towards her goals regardless of others’ support for her ambitions. However, she usually falls short of her mark, and is shown to be a sad and tormented woman. She is not presented as a role model, and Cherel and Rajesh’s affair is a cautionary tale against the diffusion of boundaries between what is public at work, and private between partners.

Significantly, feminist literature has drawn attention to the manner in which this division, between public and private, serves a patriarchal agenda (Richardson, 1996). Constructions of “femininity” have been tied to motherhood, to nurturing and to caring, and these predominantly domestic activities confine the performance of “femininity” to the home (Van Every, 1995a, 1995b). Contrarily, hegemonic forms of “masculinity” may be associated with activity, protection and strength, which can be linked to work, employment and breadwinning (Connell, 2001). Predominantly the work that women undertake in the home is not perceived as work, perhaps because it is not paid work, and if it is seen as work is not understood as valuable work. Often women’s income is perceived to provide a family with luxuries that are not essential. Women may work a “double-shift”, doing domestic chores when they return home from their jobs (Allan & Crow, 2001, p. 25). Cherel’s approach suggests that she resists confining herself to the domestic realm by making her employment a personal as well as public matter. As such, the metaphor of space and of fixing and defining the meaning of that space recurs, and in the preceding chapter I describe how couples’ gender space.

In the sense that Cherel blurs the boundaries between public work and private emotions, Cherel is a queer character (Stein & Plummer, 1994). To the extent that this blurring inverts the usual social constructions of public and private living, she is also a character of the carnival (Bakhtin, 1994). She is motivated, in large part, by her sinful desires and she pursues them mercilessly. She sets herself apart from others, persisting in what is constructed as illicit, licentious and immoral behaviour, and this distance from the norms of
others allows her a certain freedom. In this excerpt she asserts both her emotional concern for her relationship with Rajesh, by telling him she does not want to end it with him, and her anti-normativity, by saying she will not stay to be a “good wife”. Her pairing with Rajesh, who is characterised by moral rectitude, is noteworthy because it juxtaposes a monologue of masculinity, normality and goodness with a heteroglossia of femininity, the unusual and evil. Because Rajesh is a more monolithically heteronormative character, their narrative may represent a story in which one partner attempts to queer a relationship while the other resists. Their narrative suggests that this negotiation is a problematic one, and may end the relationship. These kinds of inter-subjective negotiations are notably absent from the current research, in part because the focus of the research was on the already-constructed positions that a couple performs and on the couple as the unit of analysis. In this way, the manner in which partners negotiate their performances for and against normative constructions has been lost, and further research is required to explore these kinds of narratives.

Echoes of these evocative performances of normative gender roles in the workplace are visible in the narrative told by couples. Two of the interviewed couples worked together: Dara and Michael worked at the same English school in the final years of their stay in Taiwan, and owned a pub together on their return to South Africa; Pam and Kelvin own and manage a clothing business together. Both couples have found the responsibility of co-owning a business to be challenging to their relationship.

Dara and Michael tell the following story of their work in Taiwan:

Michael: We did work together. At the same school. Yeah.
Dara: Well he was kind of my boss. You were kind of my boss. Sort of...(2) frustrating in the beginning, I think. Because I had issues with Maggie, and I always thought I wish he would stand up for me. But it was like, I think if you had I also would have hated that. You were screwed either way. That was what made those first few months at TLC very difficult I think.
Michael: Yeah, nothing was really going on between the two of us. We just said fuck it.
Dara: Ja. I think in the end what, what basically happened is that you and I, either unconsciously or consciously decided that work would be work.
Michael: It worried you a lot more than it worried me.
Dara: I took it personally. I took everything that Maggie did to us personally.

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Michael: Yeah, because I knew, I know we wouldn’t stay there for ever. Basically they would say, ah, Dara is fired and I’d say no big deal, let’s go. I mean I had a lot of ties there. All in all, I would say our stay at TLC was pleasant.

Dara: I loved it. We had a good life there.

In this story Dara is open to control, because of her romantic involvement with Michael. He is in a position of seniority, of advantage, although Dara tries to mitigate his position by qualifying his position as “kind of” senior to her. Attempts are made by the owners of the school to use this to create conflict within the couple, by for example, asking Michael to help Dara with her teaching even though she is an experienced teacher herself. In this case, he could be in a position of power within the relationship as well, since his higher pay and seniority advantage him in the work place (Rutter & Schwartz, 1998). However, Michael subverts the attempt by making it clear to the school that he values his relationship with Dara over the job. In this sense he gives up the power he could have had over Dara and opts for a resistance to gendered power.

At the same time, he insists that he did not let Maggie’s attempts to control them worry him, while Dara did. Dara took Maggie’s behaviour “personally”, unable to assume a distant position of non-involvement in the owner’s machinations. Michael’s power in this case is that he does not “worry” and maintains an objective, position of detachment while Dara does not. In this sense he makes use of “masculine” distancing techniques spoken of by Dryden (1999) to ensure a position of power. The largely artificial separation between public and private work is perhaps more difficult for women to enact, because “femininity” to a degree depends on their enmeshment within the social realm. It is significant that in the previous chapter, I describe how Dara performs domesticity by cleaning and “feminising” the flat the couple share. As such she may associate herself with a private and not public performance of gender. Dara enacts this difficulty through ambivalence about Michael’s help in this situation. He does not “stand up for her” although she says that she would not have appreciated his attempts to help anyway. It is significant however that Michael’s power is in his distance from the situation, and he maintains this stance throughout this narrative. Although she believes that they learnt to separate work from their life as a couple, it seems that some of Michael’s working power spills over into the context of their relationship.
Kelvin manages a similar kind of distancing act that he describes in the following extract:

Kelvin: Well, we do. Work together. I tend to be accused of being a control freak.

Pam: What is difficult is work is such a dominant part of our lives, the conversations are dominated by work. Instead of how are you? How was your day? But its sort of work comes first. And I do that because there are just so many things that have to be sorted out.

Kelvin: But I think a big part of being lovers (3) Being a couple and then having to work together - is boundaries. That is if you have a business decision, I mean you will always have a difference of opinion. I mean, initially it was hectic. I would say something and Pamela would assume, it's a personal attack. But it was I don't like the way that was done, why don't we do it this way. That tends to be my way. (3) So boundaries. We've gotten a lot better.

Pam and Kelvin’s narrative also expresses a belief in performing a clear separation between work and their relationship. They explain the difficulty they have experienced as a matter of boundaries, of recognising when a partner is speaking as a romantic partner, and when they are speaking as a business partner. It is interesting that Kelvin humorously refers to being “accused of being a control freak”, while insisting on the need for clear demarcation between love and work. He says that he asks for things to done in a certain way, “that tends to be [his] way” and that Pam would take this kind of communication as a “personal attack”. It is possible that his assertion of his way of doing things could be seen as an attack on Pam’s way of doing things, and to that extent could be understood as an attack regardless of the context in which it was made. As such, his belief in clear boundaries may serve to obscure the ways that his business approach is also an approach in their relationship. His insistence on boundaries could also be read as an insistence on distance. He is thereby enabled to assume a position of power, as Michael did. It is possible that his determination to work on boundaries prevents him from working on his tendency to control work and Pam.

It is possible that Kelvin’s insistence on boundaries could be read as maintenance of the normative boundaries between the public and domestic domains (Dunne, 2003; Richardson, 1996). It is likely that the couple must monitor their performances in order to maintain this separation, possibly through the conversations over coffee that I refer to in chapter seven. This may be a reflection of the axiom against mixing business with pleasure, and he is suggesting that they need to keep, at least in their minds, their work relationship separate from their romantic relationship. In so far as the domestic realm can still be understood to be the place that defines “femininity” and the public area can still be
understood to be the place that defines “masculinity” (Richardson, 1996), Kelvin’s distancing techniques could contribute to or reflect a desire for a normative performance of their relationship. Michael’s attempt to distance himself from the school’s attempts to control Dara could possibly be read as a similar move.

Oakley (2005) describes how homes in pre-industrial English society were sites of manufacturing labour. They did not display the same separation between private, domestic work and public breadwinning work that appears in some of the couples’ narratives. The industrial revolution shifted work to outside of the home, and new power relations and gendered understandings of work could emerge. In this way “housework” became constructed as not-work and the private became the domain of “femininity” with the home the stage for heteronormal performances. Within the public, work domain relations may have become premised on “masculinised” understandings. As such it seems possible that the axiom against mixing business with pleasure serves to ensure that performances that sustain and strengthen masculinity are not threatened by private and feminine performances. The public domain of employment would according to this axiom remain the exclusive privilege of masculine performers.

The problem Pam describes in the above narrative, that work dominates their time together, was also a problem for Dara and Michael in their experience of owning the bar. They found that they could not separate work from their relationship, as the pub took up every hour of their day, and was all they talked about. They explain:

Dara: It was running the business that took up every waking moment. Because it was basically open almost twenty four hours a day.

Michael: Yeah I mean, it’s also dealing with people, you also get the feeling like they can’t do it so fuck I have to be there twenty four hours a day. It has to get done. And that also put friction at work. And also when we got home, we would talk about the pub.

Dara: We didn’t talk about anything else. So it was that you would feel like I wasn’t pulling my weight, and I would feel you were blaming me. And that would set the tone for it. We started assigning blame to one another. And that’s when things go pear shaped. But we went through patches, and then the blame started.

Michael: I don’t think it was just the pub. I think it was any business we would have owned together.

Similarly to the interactions Kelvin describes, Dara and Michael found they blamed one another for handling things in ways one or the other did not agree with. It is possible that this process of blaming that the couple describes could be read as a performance of
observing one another, themselves and the relationship, and “assigning blame”. This may be a reference to monitoring and surveying activity that both take part in.

Literature suggests that it is often male partners who assume the role of breadwinner and financial provider (Dryden, 1999), while women assume care of the home and of the relationship (Van Every, 1995a). This difference in gender roles can be a source of inequality between partners in a relationship (Rutter & Schwartz, 1998). Interestingly Pam and Kelvin and Dara and Michael are or were, equal partners in business. At least in abstract terms neither was in a position of financial or career advantage over the other. In this case, both partners are involved in work to provide financially for the relationship. Since these traditional roles are unsettled it is not clear who, in these kinds of cases, undertakes the emotional work for the relationship. It may be possible that both partners felt willing and able to express their opinion, their desire to have things their way, and this potential for equality may have provided the context in which the conflicts they describe occurred. As unpleasant and difficult as these arguments may have been, it is possible that they are evidence of the equality of power between partners. In the second section of this chapter I discuss this notion further, by exploring what meanings the couples constructed around the difficulties they experienced.

**Conflict in (separate) work**

Although the preceding narratives deal with conflict that arises from sharing work, conflict also occurs when partners work separately. An inability to devote time to a partner and a relationship can be viewed as suspicious. In Isidingo, Letti Moletsane is given more responsibility at work, and begins to spend more time at work. Nan and Parson’s are convinced that she is having an affair, and feel they must confront her about it. After dinner one night, Parsons follows her into the lounge to speak to her.

“You know what, it’s like a duty to say something.”

“Ja a duty,” she agrees distractedly flipping through a magazine.

“To point things out,” he insists.

“To point what things out?” she asks looking up from her magazine.

“Your duty to your husband,” he spits.

“My duty to my husband?” she asks sceptically. “And what is my duty to my husband?”

“To be faithful to your husband.”

“Hey! What are you saying?” she asks shocked.
“For days now Nandipha and I have been seeing this obvious thing. That you are having an affair,” he says vehemently.
“I’m having an affair?”
“Ja, new clothes, new underwear, new perfume. If Vusi finds out, he is going to kill you. And who would blame him?”
“I am not having an affair!” she cries.
“You are lying!”
“Okay then, tell me who am I having this wonderful affair with, with who?”
After a pause, he says “I don’t know. But what is important now is that you stop it.”
“You have got the wrong end of the stick. I love my husband. I would never betray him. I am not having an affair with anyone.”
He walks round the couch toward her saying, “Letti, listen.” He sits down.
“And what proof do you have?”
Counting off on his fingers he says, “What about the meetings, the underwear, the perfume. What was that?”
“That meeting was just once.”
“What about your trip to Cape Town?”
“Please, that was business. Anyway, you can check with Frank, or do you want to see my diary. My life is an open book.”
She is laughing as Vusi walks in from work. “You will never believe, my love, what Parsons just said.”
“What did Parsons say? Something funny?” he asks.
“No leave it,” Parsons stands, looks at his feet and scratches his nose.
“Something very funny. Apparently he thinks I am having an affair. Me! An affair! Can you believe it!”
She laughs.
“Parsons?” says Vusi, shocked.
Parsons looks uncomfortably at his feet. “Can we just leave it?” he says and turns to walk quickly from the room.
“Can you believe it?” says Letti incredulously again. “I think it is my duty to tell you you’ve lost it,” she says to his retreating back.

In this narrative, Nan and Parsons interpret the increase in time Letti spends away from her husband as a sign that she is being unfaithful to him, that she is having an affair. Letti’s new work responsibilities prevent her from enacting this kind of normative togetherness as frequently as she did in the past, and this is seen as evidence of infidelity. She has “meetings” and “business” “in Cape Town”. They seem to associate the rise in activities she is involved in away from Vusi as suspicious, and this suggests that it is a characteristic of normative relationships that the couple spend time together. This time together is perhaps related to the necessity of performing everyday connecting rituals I describe in the previous chapter.
Significantly, Parsons accuses Letti of dereliction in her “duty to her husband”, and this suggests the gendered-ness of connecting rituals. It is significant that it is Vusi who is having an affair, but his affair goes largely unnoticed. While Letti is spending more time at work, and feels more confident and satisfied by this increase in responsibility, Vusi has become involved with Siyanda under cover of their work relationship. The scene functions in a more extensive narrative strand, to place Vusi in a position where he feels guilt about the affair, and is in a position where he should tell Letti of the affair and chooses not to. It is possible that this narrative implies that women should be more available for their partners in terms of time, and that women who work long hours are less acceptable than men who work late. Perhaps because women are constructed in some contexts as required to undertake emotional work to maintain their relationship (Wilbraham, 1996), women may experience more pressure to be with their partners rather than at work. Significantly, this duty to make time available to her husband is also expressed in terms of space: Letti’s behaviour is suspicious because she spends so much time away from the home, even travelling as far as Cape Town. As such a female partner may be constrained in terms of her time usage and her freedom of movement, and these limitations are premised on the fundamental requirement of physical proximity that I have described in chapter eight..

It is also Letti’s increased confidence that draws Nan and Parson’s attention. Letti feels proud of the increased responsibility she has at work, and buys herself perfume, underwear and clothes that reflect her new sense of self. These are viewed as accessories to a romance (Evans, 2003; Illouz, 1998), and it is assumed that she buys these things to impress her lover. It is noteworthy that Letti’s pride in herself and in her work is interpreted as transgressive behaviour. In a sense she reaches a “glass ceiling” that may be difficult for her to get past, but the ceiling is in place because of her relationship and not the conditions of her workplace. It is possible that the more work responsibilities she takes on the more her family will insist that she do her “duty to her husband”. Although Vusi actually goes out of his way to support her in her work, and tells her family that he is proud of her work, it is he who is having the affair. In this sense, Letti is punished for her increased time spent at work, and for being less able to engage in everyday connecting rituals with him.
In the above sections I have described narratives that locate work and employment as significant within the context of a romantic, heterosexual relationship. As an everyday event, paid employment was a theme in many of the couples’ narratives of togetherness. It seems that work provides positive feelings for the couple even if, as in the case of Lungisile and Ayanda, it is not both partners who work. These positive feelings are probably associated with the privileging of heterosexual relationships through institutional sanctions that allow heterosexual couples to experience a greater degree of affluence and socio-economic well-being (Hirschl, Altobelli & Rank, 2003).

I have also described narratives in which the couples experience conflict that arises from sharing a workplace, and I have suggested the some gendered implications that follow from these conflicts. It seems that couples believe in a separation between work and private lives, and that this separation maintains “masculine” and “feminine” roles. Some conflict may also arise from women entering into work at all, because it is possible that they will be understood to be neglecting their “duty to their husband”. Women have increasingly been given access to paid employment and may even be expected to draw a salary, but it is possible that this work should not impinge on her domestic and emotional work. In the next sections I shall explore domestic and emotional work in the couples’ narratives, as well as the ways that couples deal with such confrontations. I suggest that many couple construct managing conflict as a specific kind of work that needs to be undertaken with their relationship.

I have described narratives that show that working together as a couple has the potential to insert conflict and challenge into the togetherness of the couple. Possibly because heteronorms rely on the construction of gender as binary and oppositional, heterosexual relationships rely in part on a division between the realm of the public (where predominantly masculine subjects may undertake paid employment) and the realm of the domestic (where predominantly feminine subjects care for the emotional and physical well being of the couple and their progeny) (Dryden, 1999; Richardson, 1996; Van Every, 1995b). When couples both undertake work together, this may provide a challenge to these normative constructions of togetherness. As such, the oppositional gender binary required for a heteronormative relationship may insert confrontation into a couple’s togetherness. In the following section I shall explore narratives that follow from the
challenge that some couples described as associated particularly with working together. These narratives focus on the female partner as emotional worker.

**Emotional work**

In the following section I shall explore narratives that describe emotional work between partners. This is the kind of activity that is directed at managing, monitoring and maintaining the emotional well-being of a couple, and may be understood as a “feminine” enterprise particularly as it is presented in woman’s magazine advice columns (Wilbraham, 1996). The affair between Siyanda Mazibuko and Vusi Moletsane also offers a portrayal of the gendered-ness of emotional work. Vusi asks his friend Paul for advice about what to do about the affair. He is not able to speak openly about himself, and instead asks on behalf of fictitious friend who is cheating on his wife.

“Just let it lie,” says Paul. “I mean if it was like a one off thing, like a mistake. Something he didn’t intend on happening again. I mean what is your buddy’s take on this, planning a repeat performance?”

“He certainly won’t do it again.”

“Well if that’s for real, that’s what I’d do, just sit on it. You know, recommit myself to my wife.”

“You don’t think that man would be a coward?”

“No. I mean why does someone confess to their wife that they cheated? They need their wife’s forgiveness to feel better about themselves?” he asks derisively. “I mean that’s the cowardly thing. Keep shtum (quiet), dealing with your guilt, that’s way harder.”

Interestingly Paul places the burden of emotional work on the man who has had the affair, but this emotional work is internal and personal. His advice is that it is “cowardly” to seek forgiveness from a partner who will only be hurt by the betrayal of the affair. Rather he should keep quiet about what he has done and deal with the guilt and pain himself. In this way Paul invokes a sense of “masculinity” that is independent, autonomous and imbued with power by virtue of his ability to deal with things on his own (Puwar, 2004). This can be read as an invocation of a hegemonic form of masculinity (Connell, 2001). However, his advice changes under the direction of two female friends. When Paul speaks to Nan and Lolly the next day, they provide another perspective on the matter. They tell him that the strength of the relationship is a factor. He finds Vusi at the Rec that evening and pulls him aside. They order two beers and sit at the bar.

“Listen, I’ve been thinking about your friend’s little issue, which we were talking about yesterday,” he says quickly, “and it seems things are not as cut and dried as I thought.”

There is a look of concern on Vusi’s face as he asks, “You think now he should tell his wife?”
“Well it’s not as simple as that. Basically it comes down to the strength of the relationship. If it is a strong and healthy relationship, then telling her could actually make the relationship stronger.”

Vusi seems unconvinced. “You think?”

“It makes sense doesn’t it?”

“What about his wife, what if she says it’s a breaking point?”


“What if their relationship is fragile?” Vusi is still unconvinced.

“Well then telling her could mean the end of the marriage.”

“My sense is that they have a strong, healthy marriage,” admits Vusi without much conviction.

“Well good, good,” says Paul, more sure of himself, “then he should just deal with it, come out in the open and move on.”

“Just like that?” asks Vusi incredulously.

Here Paul shifts the burden of emotional work from the one masculine partner, to both partners. Instead of viewing the affair as a weight to be carried by one partner, it is an indicator of the “strength of the relationship”. By dealing with the issues that arise from an infidelity, a couple may actually be able to improve their relationship and make it stronger. While this advice is offered by two women, it seems less an invocation of a feminine solution to the problem than Paul’s advice is a masculine solution. Rather Lolly and Nan’s advice implies that both partners need to undertake emotional work together. They counsel a more dialogic approach, in that the problem should viewed as residing in the couple’s relatedness, rather than in one partner (Gardiner, 2000). Infidelity is posed as a test for the relationship that a “strong, healthy” relationship will survive, but that will end a “fragile” one.

This dialogic and potentially resistive interpretation notwithstanding, the problem is posed as a medical one. In this way the advice implicates disciplinary monitoring, of health and wellness into the context of heterosexual relationships (J. Harding, 1998). Couples are perhaps required to observe their relationship for signs of ill health and to consult a professional in the case of illness. This requirement that couples internalise and submit to disciplinary scrutiny may be gendered though. Wilbraham (1996) suggests that South African women are targeted, at least in the context of magazine advice columns, to undertake the burden of psychological work within relationships. Interestingly, the solution proposed in the case of Vusi’s infidelity involves telling the other partner of the affair and actively confronting the issues that arise. These means toward relationship health can be read as similar to the “talking cure” of the discipline of psychology. However, Vusi does not
do this. Vusi does not “come clean” to Letti, perhaps because he sees their relationship as
delicate, unable to withstand this test, and perhaps because it is a “feminine” role to
undertake emotional and psychological work. Instead he opts for Paul’s more “masculine”,
and thereby normative, opinion.

Adrianna and Laurent’s narrative emphasises emotional work because they believe that a
couple must grow and develop as part of the process of being together in a relationship. It
is also a task that they associate with their careers as artists. For these two artists life is
art and art is life, so they also see little or no separation between their relationship and
their careers. For them, to be an artist one must confront insecurities and develop
emotionally and personally, and this is also necessary in relationships. As such, it would
seem that both should involve themselves in emotional work to maintain the well-being of
their relationships, as well as their own emotional well-being. However, because she is
younger than Laurent and has just started her career, Adrianna has less experience at this
work than him. She also has less financial security. Therefore, Adrianna’s work is
concerned, in part, with giving up her expectations for a certain kind of relationship:

Adrianna: And I guess Laurent does get frustrated with me. Because I see, like normal couples,
walking hand in hand along the beach. And I think ooh, I want that. In fact, it’s just a dream, because
I wouldn’t choose that anyway. I can’t date an artist and then have a banker, stockbroker one
moment, and then have whatever the next moment. But I think we are very similar in our natures, in
our drive in our enthusiasm. When my work is not going well, I think I am a nightmare for everyone
around me. Because I’m frustrated. Then I’m a bitch. Ja, and I don’t know where to turn all that
energy, so I probably dump it all on him.

Laurent: And the dustbin (laughs).

Adrianna: Ja, Laurent has been an artist a lot longer than me, so I’m still learning.

Laurent: There is more security.

Adrianna: And I think the first year I met him, I had a really good income. And I drove back and forth.

And that was good for me, because I had a lot of money coming in.

Laurent: And that is gone.

Adrianna: And then suddenly. I moved here. And I had to struggle incredibly. And I think it did put a
lot of pressure on our relationship. I wasn’t really happy. It’s a lot better this year. But in terms of
struggling, with my character. I was insecure, I was terrified. You just have to keep working and, kind
of hope that it will work out. Ja, I think I gave Laurent hell when he was having fun and partying. I just
couldn’t do it. Just relax and have fun. But ja. I’ve made some money this year. And I feel better
about myself. That’s all about balance.
In this narrative Adrianna describes some of the struggles she has experienced both as an artist starting her career and in her relationship with Laurent. She associates the two struggles in the first section of the narrative: although she may sometimes want a “normal” relationship she cannot because she is an artist, and because she is an artist she must “struggle” with her “character” and her work. In this way the couple blurs the boundaries between their work and their lives. Part of Adrianna’s struggle arises because her career is not established, she is “still learning” to be an artist, and has little financial “security”. Adrianna, as a young artist just starting out, struggles financially and artistically, and as a young woman she also struggles with her expectations of the relationship. In contrast Laurent is able to relax and have fun, presumably taking advantage of the fruits of his many years of artistic labour. It is Adrianna who struggles with her career and with her emotions, and in this sense the couple enacts a heteronormative performance in so far as it is the female partner of this relationship who undertakes the mass of the maintenance work (J. Harding, 1998). Adrianna is tasked with observation, of herself, in order to reach the standard he has set. As she attempts to reach these standards, he “gets frustrated” with her.

Laurent is described in this narrative as receiving benefits from the many years of experience he has in the art world. Unlike Dara and Michael, and Pam and Kelvin, Adrianna and Laurent do not share equally in a career, and elsewhere the couple describes how they guard and value their independence from one another, even though they take pleasure in sharing a profession. While Laurent does have advantages in terms of his age and experience, it is possible to read some of the couple's narratives as implying attempts to share more equally this power. Laurent has supported and encouraged Adrianna’s art career, and in this way tries to share with her the advantages he has gained over the years.

Adrianna: (2) In those dinner parties. They talk and I drink (laughs) No really. It was difficult. But we have been together over two years. Off and on sometimes (laughs 2) Ja, I feel a lot more secure. In the beginning I feel like, everyone was looking at me, at some strange young girl not doing what a normal girl my age should be doing. So I think I had a lot of insecurities. But I think meeting Europeans are a lot more open minded, they are a lot more used to cross-culture or cross age group relationships there. So I’m really comfortable. It was difficult for a while at the beginning. Ja. It’s fine. It’s just sometimes it’s just too many nights in a row (laughs 2).

Laurent: (laughs)
Adrianna finds these parties difficult and it is thus possible that this narrative reflects Laurent’s paternalistic concerns for Adrianna and her work. Laurent may assume a position of knowledgeable, powerful art patriarch to Adrianna’s position of less experienced, less knowing other (Puwar, 2004). It is not stated how Laurent might share his knowledge of how to deal with work relationships and emotions and so it is difficult to say to what extent he enacts this position. However, Adrianna explicitly states a source of her insecurity as located in the difference in age between her and Laurent. She feels herself to be monitored by external others, and also by herself. She feels that others see her as a “strange young girl”, because she is “not doing what a normal girl [her] age should be doing”. She does to a certain extent see other’s perceptions as a source of conflict, and she refers to herself in a reflexive, and therefore self defining manner, as young, inexperienced and in need of protection. In this way she positions herself within the narrative as without power and as under the protection of a patron, by reproducing the association between women and children both of whom require paternal control. While she recognises that it is other’s perceptions that contribute to her feelings, she places herself at the centre of the problematic. She is in possession of psychological deficits in the form of insecurities, and she has tried hard to overcome these.

In this sense, Adrianna and Laurent have been less able to unsettle gender power relations within their relationship. They are not equal partners in a business concern, and so have not had the same sort of access to a narrative that locates both partners on an equal footing. Instead the narrative is one that places Adrianna at a disadvantage that can be reduced to age and is thus inescapable for her. She has less experience, less financial security, cannot speak French and only a little Flemish. While I shall argue that Pam and Kelvin and Dara and Michael may be momentarily able to make use of narratives dealing with the work of relationships to alter their performances from heteronorms, Adrianna and Laurent do not accomplish this alteration.

**Working with conflict**
In the preceding sections I have described how work narratives involve the theme of the gender binary that creates a gendered division of labour. When couples work together, or when a female partner devotes too much time to employment, this gendered division of labour is undermined and conflict may arise between the couple. I have suggested that conceptions of the necessity of female partners undertaking emotional work, possibly to manage just such conflict, underlies the difficulties couples experience. In the final sections of the chapter I shall argue that this emphasis on managing conflict can also allow couples to resist heteronorms. In the above section the managing of conflict entrenches the gendered division of labour, but this is not necessarily so. While these narratives are linked to employment, they also incorporate situations outside of the workplace to describe romantic relationships as requiring “work”. In this sense, “work” is a metaphor that some couples used to describe their relationships as something to be laboured over, effort expended on, performed and controlled.

Dara and Michael and Pam and Kelvin find being financial as well as romantic partners difficult, but both couples derive a sense of strength in their relationship because of this other association. The experience of working together could be read as an ambiguous experience for these couples. In this reading of the narrative there is a blurring of boundaries, between work and the relationship, and between Pam and Kelvin:

> When I say it’s difficult I don’t say it’s negative, because there are a lot of great things about it. Its not like he’ll come home, and I’m consumed with this and he’s consumed with that, and there’s no meeting point like I think some couples might have. We are working towards the same dreams. We want the same things. So our lives are very enmeshed. So if for example we go out somewhere and, we buy coffee and a meal and it comes to say R80 and I pull out R100. And a twenty comes back. Whether he takes the twenty or I take the twenty it’s immaterial. You know, his is mine. I quite enjoy that. And I know it’s not the case with some couples.

Here Pam appeals directly to the lack of financial or career advantaging between them, as a positive aspect about their relationship. Because they both do the same work, and are equal business partners, it could be difficult for a male partner to derive increased benefit within the relationship by virtue of his employment. In so far as it is normative for a male partner to derive greater advantage by virtue of his employment (Rutter & Schwartz, 1998), the manner in which the couple has constructed their financial and career contexts is resistant to normative power dynamics. In this sense, it is the lack of clear boundaries that works for them, and not their ability to separate work from love. While this kind of
performance that ignores, or deconstructs, boundaries can be associated with the project of queer activism (Stein & Plummer, 1994), a similar lack of boundaries may in another context reinforce heteronormative togetherness. To the extent that that the couple takes active pleasure in this unbounded togetherness, they can be said to have queered their relationships.

This sharing of interest can be read as an expression of the couples’ difference from a normative social order, in which the work realm is clearly delineated from the personal realm. I have discussed how the implications of these realms on gender performance: the public sphere, the domain in which employment is enacted, provides space for “masculinity”, while the domestic, personal, private sphere provides space for “femininity” (Dryden, 1999; Richardson, 1996). As such, the merging of personal and business domains could be read as a resistive practise. While aspects of the couples’ narrative seem to conform to normative understandings of separating business and relationships, it is possible that there are instances in which they resist conforming to these norms. Within the couples’ narrative there are several instances in which their work and romance intertwine, and that they take pleasure in. They see their relationship as work:

I think the brutal honestly that comes with the work environment. If there is a real stress you’ve got deal with it. We’ve had to confront, and address certain aspects of our relationship. And I think I’ve always been. (3) Supremely confident about our relationship.

I see relationships as a working, ongoing workshop. And there have been times that I’ve been pissed of with Pamela. And I’ll say babe I’m pissed off with you. And she’ll say, why. And ok. My thoughts weren’t good at the time. And, a bit of introspection has been done, and I’ll come back and say I’m sorry about being insensitive yesterday, even though I felt I was right. Depending on how you’re seeing it, I, we think that’s positive about working together.

Here Kelvin describes the work of relationships as involving “introspection” through which both partners should examine their behaviours. He describes being able to tell Pam why he is “pissed off” at her, and also being able to reflect on his behaviour to see how he might have been wrong himself. He views their ability to perform in this way as related to the “brutal honesty that comes with the work environment”. The process of “confront[ing]” and “address[ing]” aspects of their relationship seems to personalise the work domain, and may be an instance of queering the relationship. The couple seems to be suggesting
that they require “brutal honesty” between each other in the romantic and work relationships, and that they expect the behaviours in both realms to be the same.

However, it is unlikely that the couple actually engages in these arguments in a public work space. They probably also speak privately, possibly over a cup of coffee. Although the actual staging of the confrontation may not be important, it may be an indication of a surveillance activity. The process is also described as an ongoing procedure whereby the couple must monitor each other or the relationship and perhaps be “pissed off”. They then monitor themselves in order to say “maybe my thoughts weren't good at the time” and “sorry about being insensitive”. This process provides Kelvin with “supreme confidence about [their] relationship”. While the couple seems to be engaging in surveillance of their relationship in this process, Kelvin does not give a clear indication as to whether they direct their observation towards normalising their relationship. It is possible, considering the couples equitable work relationship, that they could at times employ the same process to queer their togetherness.

Dara and Michael also use the difficult experience of owning the pub together to build their relationship. Both speak of the past, the business, as a difficult time, which they have had the resolve and the strength to win through:

Dara: […] I mean the low times we went though them were about as low as you possibly could get. I mean the way we felt about each other at some times was.
Michael: Yeah, the silent treatment.
Dara: Ah, oh. (2) We were awful to each other sometimes. I mean really awful
Michael: (laughs 2)
Dara: (laughs 2) The fact that we got through it is very good though. (laughs 2)
Michael: I’m sure there will be much worse ahead.
Dara: Absolutely. But hopefully we’ll feel like if we got through, we will also be able to laugh about that a couple of years down the line as well.
Michael: No relationship is perfect.
Dara: I mean, God knows what is going to happen after the baby.
Michael: (3) Ag.
Dara: Who knows. I mean, that’s the next hurdle. The next. (3) Interesting chapter.

It is interesting that in this narrative they refer to “the silent treatment” that they used on one another during the difficult period in which they worked together. Many of the couples make use of conversation to enact surveillance of their relationship, but here Dara and
Michael describe an absence of conversation that is the result of their monitoring behaviour. During this difficult time, they “assign blame” to one another, and I have suggested that this blame may be the result of monitoring behaviours. It seems that the silence they describe arises from an inability to deal with the blame, and enacts a position of impasse. They both describe blaming each other, and perhaps because they co-owned the business they found themselves pitted equally against one another so that only silence was left to them in some cases.

While they seem to undertake this normative form of monitoring and surveillance, of “assign[ing] blame”, they describe this behaviour as in the past. It is unlikely that they have entirely left this behaviour to the past, but they are now able to laugh about the difficulties they experienced. They are quite literally, able to laugh at themselves, laugh about the difficulty they experienced then and how happy they are now. In the moment of this performance, they undermine the constraints they did experience and move forward into the “next interesting chapter” in their lives: the birth of their child. This expression of pleasure could be interpreted as a performance of connection to carnival (Bakhtin, 1994). Through laughter it is possible that the couple invert the normative surveillance of the past, make light of those things that were hard for them, and thereby renew their connection and togetherness (Gardiner, 2000). This is a performance seems to have been accomplished from the vantage point of the present, and did not assist the couple at the time. However, it does seem to have the function of transforming the past in retrospect, and the couple believes that they may make use of this performance again in the future when they have gotten through obstacles. While this performance does not imply that they have permanently left behind the observing and monitoring of their relationship, it does suggest a manner in which this couple is able to momentarily and fleetingly unsettle the normative strictures in retrospect.

**The work of relationships**

For the couples in this chapter, the line between work and their romantic relationships becomes blurred. They see work as precipitating conflict which can help them to grow and develop as a couple. In this way, togetherness is conceived of as developmental and as an activity. Another way of conceiving the work of relationships, is as a “struggle”, or a “fight”. Fernando describes being married in these terms in the third chapter of their story:
I don't know if I can say a lot about being wed. It is a nice struggle. Although not against, but for, each other. And oneself. (3) There's nothing natural about it. It is somehow a violence. To ourselves and each other. That we prefer, or see as good, as making more. (3) It doesn't have to be complicated because it doesn't have to be anything.

Fernando's quite poetic conception of the work of relationships draws attention to the deconstructive potential of relationships. By struggling and committing “violence” upon one another, two people can do something “good” for each other, “mak[e] more” of each other. Although it is a kind of a battle, it is one that is in the interests and to the benefit of both partners. He sees this as unnatural, while many of the other couples described the desire to be in relationships in natural, almost biological terms.

Similarly, Dara and Michael speak also of fighting to stay together:

Michael: (3) As I said earlier I think they break up because they haven't found the right person and they don't think it's a big deal to break up. I mean we've all been in relationships. Broken up. Gotten back together. Broken up.
Dara: But to have that feeling like this is someone, I never ever want to lose. This is someone I never want to be without.
Michael: And to feel, just to say ag.
Dara: To fight for it. You’re not just going to give it up. (2)
Michael: I mean couples break up. They have to learn
Dara: Balancing things.
Michael: I mean learn the person. Learn the person’s personality. What they like. What they don’t. And I mean if you’re willing to go through all that and keep going and love this person, just because of a little hiccups along the way, for something bigger and better.
Dara: They don’t see the bigger picture.
Michael: They don’t feel it’s worth it.

This narrative is an extension of the narrative that describes the lessons they have learnt from working together. They have learnt that they must persevere, that they must strive through hardship, to stay together and to be happy. Because they have experienced hardship, given one another the “silent treatment” and blamed one another for problems at the bar, they know that they must work to keep their relationship going. As such the normative potential of the work of relationships, performed through the monitoring and surveillance I have described that occurs around conflict and the workplace. They situate this striving within a “bigger picture”, that of a happy relationship. While these other relationships may exert a normalising influence on the couple, it also has resistive
potential. It also suggests that the work of relationships requires in part maintenance of other relationships, most notably with family and friends.

The setting of the narratives, within the domain of a business or a career, connects their romance to a site of labour, of effort, of striving. Such an insistence, on dynamic, co-creation of the relationship may be read as a constructive narrative trope that emphasises the developmental and innovative potential of a relationship. In the insistence that a relationship must be worked on, struggled with, that something must be made with it, it is possible to read that relationships have the potential to become what they are not yet (Holzman, 1991). It seems that it is only by actively constructing or opening the space of carnival, that resistive practices may be performed by couples. In this way, the couples open up, within their relationships and within their work, a space in which it may be possible for them to act differently from heteronorms.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I have described narratives that associate romantic relationships with work and employment. Some of the narratives described the benefits that the couple might derive from working and earning a salary. For Brian and Tamara, two salaries ensure that they shall be able to live a particular, affluent, middle class lifestyle and for Lungisile and Ayanda his employment provides them with some benefits, although it seems that the advantages of togetherness do not necessarily better their standard of living. In both these narratives there are implications associated with work and the “masculine” role of breadwinner. Both couples associate their work with affording opportunities for their children. As such, narratives of work and heterosexual togetherness link constructions of gender, procreation and economic class, and I suggest that the couples make use of surveillance to monitor their performances of these aspects of heteronorms.

It is significant that the workplace has been characterised as a male dominated domain. In part, masculinity can be understood to rely on a successful career, earning money to provide for a family, the active striving for achievement (Connell, 1995; Lindegger & Durheim, 2000). The separation between the public arena of paid employment and the private realm of the home in part defines gender roles. In so far as “femininity” is
associated with domesticity and “masculinity” is associated with employment, normative performances of gender would enact this kind of distinction in work. From the soap opera excerpts a cautionary tale, against lovers working together, of blurring the boundaries between these realms, arose through the example of Rajesh and Cherel. The couples that experience working together, must to an extent experience the conflict involved with merging domestic and employment realms. Kelvin also advised against blurring boundaries, based on his experiences of working with Pam. Both he and Michael seem to enact distancing techniques in order to try to preserve the integrity of the separation between the workplace and the context of their romantic togetherness with their partners.

Many of the female partners enacted performances that showed their responsibility for emotional work within the relationship. Letti is accused of infidelity because of her increased work responsibility and her pleasure in these responsibilities, but it is her husband who is unfaithful to her. Adrianna describes how it is her work as an artist and as a person to “deal with insecurities”, some of which are related to the non-normative togetherness she has with Laurent. While the couple shares these understandings of work, love and life with the other two couples, Laurent has the advantages of age and experience within the art world. In another instance in which a feminine partner is disadvantaged as emotional worker, Dara is positioned as allowing her boss’ machinations “worry” her. As such, the separation between work and the private domain fix gender roles and imply the oppression of “femininity”. In this way work is associated with surveillance, by others such as Letti’s brother and sister-in-law, and also by the couple themselves. Part of the work of relationships is to perform in socially sanctioned ways, in terms of gender and sexuality.

The use of the metaphor of work to describe togetherness between men and women also implies that relationships must be actively performed. Although it is likely that the couples often perform normative roles that are repeated over and over without much deviation or thought, the metaphor suggests that sometimes couples can choose to resist. In the second chapter I provide a theoretical stance that sees performances of gender as subject to slow alteration through repetition. This alteration may not be a choice, but rather a moment of apathy, indifference or lack of vigilance (Butler, 1993). The metaphor also suggests that they view the active construction of relationships as an ideal, even if it is not an act they can always maintain. While the metaphor does not give any indication of what
the activity of relationships should be directed at, it at least suggest potential for resistance to heteronorms. Couples may actively perform monitoring and surveillance activities to observe non-normative behaviour and replace it with heteronormal behaviour, and they may also actively create a “bridge, and a meeting in between” in which they co-construct in dialogue their performances as a couple (Shotter, 1993; Shotter & Billig, 1998). As such the metaphor of work holds both centrifugal forces (that pull towards unity) and centripetal potential (that tends to diversity), and the meaning of the trope is inconclusive.
Heterosexualities

The stories told by couples in photo elicitation interviews and those presented in Isidingo on television told a diversity of narratives about heterosexual togetherness. There are many unifying features, similarities in experiences, common storylines and narrative strands, and there are moments of diversity and difference. While heterosexuality is sometimes presented as a monolithic, unchanging and necessary performance (Jackson, 1995; 2003; 2006; Richardson, 1997), these stories suggest that it is rather a performance that is dependent on multiple and multifaceted influences. The narratives collected for this research are varied, context-bound and contingent. This diversity of performance was emphasised by the couples themselves in the insistence that all couples are the same because they are different. Couples claimed the specificity of their own narratives, and their own performance of togetherness as unique, “off the normal path”, different from other relationships. “There is no book written on how to have a good relationship”, and every couple asserted their ability to “compromise”, “struggle” and “fight” for what “works for them”.

In the following sections, I shall draw several conclusions from this central storyline that defines the performance of heterosexual togetherness as specific to every couple, and also common to all couples. On one hand, heterosexual togetherness is seen as a common experience to all couples. While the participants did not define their sexuality and this lack of definition is significant because it reflects the manner in which heterosexuality appears as a taken-for-granted norm that applies to all humans (Richardson, 1996). On the other hand relationships are particular to the partners involved and can be co-constructed such that an inter-subjective, “knowing of the third kind” (Shotter, 1993) can occur between partners. In the following sections I shall first describe these oppositional interpretations of heterosexuality in order to infer particular meanings.
Heteronormativity: the same differences

In the following section I shall describe storylines that reflected heteronormative way of being together. These include: the romantic uniqueness of the relationship; a concern for children associated with employment and finances; the requirement of physical proximity of partners involving reluctance to centre the importance of penetration and an association between citizenship and sexuality. I shall suggest that these storylines reflect two central subtexts contained within heterosexual relationship stories: the duality of gender and opposition to homosexuality. In describing my theoretical stance I have outlined how the binary of gender roles could be viewed as providing the impetus behind heterosexual attraction (Chodorow, 1994) because constructions of heterosexuality significantly requires two different and opposite types of human beings, men and women. Butler (1993) suggests that sex and gender are associated through the heterosexual matrix, such that a physical sex imparts a gender performance and requires sexual attraction to the opposite sex-gendered individual. Within this binary, “femininity” is disadvantaged because “masculinity” assumes the gaze of authority (Haraway, 1997). I shall draw attention to the gendered implications of each of the narrative strands that I describe in the following sections.

Interestingly, the heterosexual/homosexual binary that I describe in chapter two remained unspoken in the couples’ narratives. Most likely, as heterosexual couples who receive social sanction for an at least partially normative performance, the participants were not confronted with this binary (Jackson, 2006). Where the binary is silent I have attempted to show where it is implicit throughout the research. I suggest that couples are able to received specific benefits by giving a heteronormative performance, such that it is in the couples’ interest to continue to perform in a normative manner. These subtexts can be understood to arise from the function of bio-power that constructs sexuality at the intersection of social and individual concerns.

Romance, choice and the heterosexual couple
Romance can theoretically been associated with consumption. In the context of love, the rise of individualism associated with industrial culture can be understood to have provided an increasing proliferation of consumer products, and introduced the notion of choice as a
get-aways, music, flowers) are also a means of creating the necessary romantic ideal and
provide cues to personal identity that signal compatibility with another (Illouz, 1998; Evans,
2003). Dara and Michael, and Adrianna and Laurent seem to address these romantic
concerns through their travels overseas. Dara and Michael worked together in Taiwan,
and the enjoyment of this time has given them strength through the course of their
relationship. Adrianna and Laurent also take pleasure in travelling, and they construct a
sense of togetherness through the planning and the trip itself. Through the signals of
consumer products individuals are enabled to try out different partners with the aim of
finding that special person who complements and completes the self. This completion is
often viewed as possible only from a partner of the opposite sex/gender (Beck & Beck-
Gernsheim, 1995).

In contrast to special trips overseas, most of the couples seemed to rely on a more
ordinary form of togetherness to define their relationship. Couples described themselves
as unique in terms of their shared experiences, worldviews and behaviour. The couples’
construction of uniqueness relied on the opportunity to enact their closeness through
everyday connecting rituals. This allowed them to construct their relationship as composed
of unique compatibility in terms of shared experiences, behaviours or worldviews, through
cooking together, drinking tea and coffee together, watching television, listening to music,
eating meals, going to parties. These constructions insist on the specific characteristics of
each couple, and also align heterosexual togetherness with particularly modern
conceptions of romance, the individual and of couples (Evans, 2003; Illouz, 1998).
Because commodities are part of the everyday, and connecting rituals rely to a certain
extent on everyday consumer goods such as coffee, movies, television, pizza, parties,
these are implicated in a “mundane” togetherness as well. In this way everyday,
“mundane” activities and settings can be associated with constructions of romance, and in
the normalisation of heterosexual togetherness.

Such a construction of togetherness would seem to suggest that relationships are equal
partnerships similar to Giddens’ (1992) “pure relationship”. Both partners may seem able
to pursue their own lives, make their own choices while also supporting the other in their
needs (Illouz, 1998). Feelings of love may be understood as possessions of the individual
(Evans, 2003), and romance is conceived of as a necessarily personal experience that
relies on the idiosyncratic personalities and preferences of two partners (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995).

As such the narratives in the current research suggest that couples are constructed in much the same way as modern conceptions of the individual. Foucault (1984) argues that disciplinary knowledges and technologies of the self construct the individual as a distinct being, and I have argued that similar surveillance and normalising behaviours happen within a couple. In this way individuals and couples are constituted through the internalisation of the disciplinary gaze and normalising behaviours, such that the romantic status of a relationship is the concern not only of the couple but also society as a whole. In the couples’ narratives, other characters dispatch, help and instruct the couples on heteronormative togetherness: Nombulelo’s daughters approve of her relationship with Makhaya and tell her when she has been away from him too long; Ayanda’s father tells her to keep her child when she falls pregnant; Dara and Michael describe how family and friends will assist them through difficult times; Zureida and Saleem have an arranged marriage such that their togetherness is actively shaped according to the requirements of the families and religion.

Here concern for the psychological “health” of relationships is important, and media such as the advice columns that Wilbraham (1996) describes also reflect the intersection of individual and societal focus on heteronormative togetherness. This requires that the couples make use of surveillance and also compromise, so that they can agree on a performance of togetherness that is at least partially acceptable to society. In this way the couple is rewarded with what I have termed the heterosexual dividend that is the set of advantages and benefits that a heterosexual couple can expect for a normative performance.

Further, there is an underlying gender inequality contained within these understandings of romance. Firestone (1998) argues that constructions of romance as irrational prevent women from interrogating the terms of their relationships in such a way that an equality of roles can be achieved. Women in South Africa are less often employed than men (Statistics South Africa, 2006), and may thus have fewer economic resources to obtain
consumer goods and to bargain with in a relationship (Rutter & Schwartz, 1998). Adrianna experiences a certain degree of this kind of disadvantaging in terms of romance: Adrianna has less financial stability and may thus have fewer resources on the couple’s overseas trips. Also violence against women in South Africa is rife, and women often experience abuse at the hands of men that they are in a heterosexual relationship with. This may reflect the violence that it can be argued is inherent in heterosexual relationships because of the dominance implied by gender roles that oppress women (Dunne, 2003; Wilkinson & Kritzinger, 1992).

**Work: boundaries, divisions and advantages**

For two couples, the concern for children required a concern for employment. Tamara and Brian and Lungisile and Ayanda tell of their concern to provide opportunities for their daughters. Both couples are attempting to provide better possibilities than they themselves experienced, and this requires a degree of financial monitoring and surveillance. Brian and Tamara decided that two salaries are required to give their daughter Beth the best prospects and an example of how a relationship could be. Lungisile finds employment soon after Ayanda became pregnant in order to provide for their daughter Pumzile. When she found she was pregnant she was angry because she thought she would be unable to keep the child, however, her father supported the decision to keep the child. Lungisile then decided to “pick [him]self up” and find more permanent employment, and this employment now provides him with a strong sense of his “masculinity”, and Ayanda with a sense of security possibly associated with “femininity”.

Borneman (1999) suggests that heterosexual togetherness in its ideal, matrimonial form can be closely liked to procreation. The need to ensure the paternity of offspring might have required that relationships between men and women be formally recognised. This interpretation was supported in the narratives by Dara and Michael and Pam and Kelvin, who viewed children as a reason to marry. Leland and Veronica describe surveillance performed over a cup of tea as partially directed towards the well-being of their children and the family’s needs. As such, it is likely that concerns for children and procreation define heterosexual togetherness in some ways. In order to provide for the reproductive generation of their togetherness, one or both partners must be employed, earning a salary to educate, clothe, feed and shelter the family. Heteronorms thus require that couples be
employed, and have a degree of financial stability. At the same time, research in an American context suggests that matrimony, and to an extent cohabitation, is linked to affluence (Hirschl, Altobelli & Rank, 2003; Pela, 2007). As such, the dividend that heterosexual couples might expect as reward for their normative performance may include financial and economic well-being. Married and perhaps cohabiting couples are able to take greater advantage of shared resources.

However, it is important to note that these benefits apply unevenly, advantaging middle class white men above all other categories (Rutter & Schwartz, 1998). Since they experience the advantages of the middle class already, it is likely that Brian and Tamara derive more benefit from their togetherness. That is their greater financial resources are only increased by their togetherness. In the South African context where a large proportion of the population live in poverty, this association between marriage and affluence implies that this sector of society is disadvantaged further by not being able to marry. Lungisile and Ayanda describe how they would marry, except that they do not have enough money. The association between heteronorms and the middle class suggests that the economically disadvantaged sectors of the South African population is unable to access the full sanction of a normative performance, because they do not have the economic power to access middle class benefits.

In the context of work, many couples described the need to keep work and romance separate. When their boss, at the school where Dara and Michael taught in Taiwan tries to control the couple, Michael distanced himself, while Dara let it “worry” her. Kelvin also believes that he and Pam benefit from maintaining clear boundaries, between when they are speaking as a business and when as a romantic partner. When they are not clear about these boundaries then they risk reacting in the wrong manner and an argument may occur. By maintaining a separation between the domestic domain of emotions and the public domain of employment partners may be enforcing a division of labour that assigns “feminine” partners emotional work and the “masculine” partners paid employment.

Feminine partners seem to undertake more emotional work than masculine partners. Although it is possible that Laurent’s age and experience as an artist had more to do with his advantaging, Adrianna assumes that she must work on her “character” in order to make her relationship with Laurent work. This requires that she deal with her “frustrations”
and “insecurities”, while Laurent has dealt with his earlier in life. Some masculine partners make use of distancing techniques, in the way that I describe Michael and Kelvin as doing, in order to position feminine partners as the emotional worker in the relationship. In one narrative, a feminine partner, Letti Moletsane, is viewed as suspicious because she does not devote enough time to being available to their partner. She devotes more time to her work than to her relationship, so that her brother and sister-in-law accuse her of having an affair. In so far as emotional work can be associated with femininity and masculinity can be associated with paid employment and breadwinning Letti’s story shows that female partners may be expected to devote themselves to emotions and their relationship, and not to work.

**Physical proximity: observing togetherness**

It is an over-arching concern, associated with many of the themes that arose from the couples’ narratives, that togetherness requires physical proximity. The requirement of physical togetherness implies that heterosexuality become spatially inscribed in order to provide the physical stage, or setting for the relationship to take place. This stage reflects the intersection of societal and individual concerns for the production and reproduction of heteronormative performances. Some of the couples referred to their homes as this setting, most notably Leland and Veronica who refer to their first home as “another step along the road” and as an arrival point. Others refer to the bed or bedroom as the stage that defines their togetherness. While reference to the bed emphasises the sexual activity associated with heterosexual togetherness, references to homes may serve to emphasise procreation. In so far as houses are designed to shelter a nuclear family, with rooms devoted to familial and individual activities (Hubbard, 2001), the couples’ emphasis on their homes may reflect their concern for this heteronormative imperative.

By being together in the same place, couples are able to make use of everyday connecting rituals to construct their uniqueness, manage the children and finances, and express their similarity and romantic connection. Through everyday connecting rituals, I have suggested that some of the couples assume the position of metaphorical panopticon, monitoring and surveying their relationship, themselves and each other. Conversation, over coffee or tea, are rituals most often cited in the narratives as instances in which this kind of monitoring takes place, however, it is possible that this observation may also take place non-verbally. The narrative of Len and his “Secret Admirer” suggests that couple
may be able to monitor each other, themselves and the relationship through physical performances. In this narrative, a kiss can tell a partner everything they need to know about the other. It is thus possible that couples rely also on physical togetherness to monitor their relationship. As such, physical proximity may be constructed as fundamental to relationships because it allows for partners to observe themselves, each other and the relationship.

The benefits of a normal performance, and the need to survey a relationship for non-normal performances may account for the importance of physical proximity in the couple’s narratives. The couples describe feelings of displeasure, discomfort and even depression at being away from a romantic partner. Couples who experienced long distance relationships felt the lack of physical closeness to be an intolerable hindrance. Based on her experiences, Tamara went so far as to say that a relationship “is not real” if partners are not together in the same place. These feelings of discomfort may signal a non-normative performance, and may also provide the impetus for couples to avoid non-normative behaviour. In order to receive the benefits that are the dividend of a heteronormative performance, couples may have to direct their observation at detecting such moments of non-normative discomfort and towards altering behaviour towards more comfortable, sanctioned performances. In a sense, physical distance between partners prevents the couple from performing as a heterosexual partner in a relationship, as a docile sexual subject. As such, distance may prevent the couples from receiving the benefits associated with performing as a normal subject.

Couples told of physical proximity, sometimes hinting at sexual intimacy, as essential for their togetherness. A particular kind of physical togetherness is required though. Indira and Haroun who eschew sexual intercourse in their togetherness, rely on descriptions of penetration as central to togetherness. Although the research did not focus on the sexual activity of couples’, the narratives remain silent regarding alternative versions of sexual intercourse that do not focus on penetration. Thus the centrality of heteronormative forms of sexual intercourse remains unchallenged and unquestioned. In this way, the violence that is inherent to heterosexual togetherness, because of gender roles that imply the oppression of women, becomes inescapable and this is reflected in Nombulelo’s narrative of her togetherness with Makhaya that is defined as different from her violent marriage. By
referring to the violence of her past, this violence is made an integral part of the narrative of togetherness with Makhaya.

**Bio-power and heterosexual dividends**

In the above sections I have described how norms centre on descriptions of couples as romantically connected, concerned for employment and economic well-being and requiring embodied togetherness and closeness. Performances of these aspects of togetherness may function to make visible a couple’s heteronormativity, and through these performances show themselves to belong to the category of relationships that can accrue the benefits of such a performance. In this way, heterosexuality becomes a concern not only of society as a whole, but also of couples who wish to benefit from a normative performance. Research associates heterosexual togetherness with a variety of institutionally enshrined benefits. In contemporary society, a couple that is legally joined together is more easily able to make use of mutual economic and social resources. Insurance policies, medical aids, bank accounts, citizenship are all more easily shared for a married couple (Hirschl, Altobelli & Rank, 2003; Shuit, 2004; Wilkinson & Kritzinger, 2004). Waite (1995) shows that European couples benefit not only from pooled resources, but also from economies of scale, by the connections of meaning and obligation that an extended family entails, and by being able to (with reasonable security and certainty) make long term decisions that will bring rewards at a future date. Marriage is thus associated with better health (Pienta, Hayward & Jenkins, 2000; Wright, 2005), longer life (Pienta, Hayward & Jenkins, 2000), more sexual satisfaction (Rutter & Schwartz, 1998), more financial wealth and higher earnings (Hirschl, Altobelli & Rank, 2003; Pela, 2007).

Apart from these economic and/or legislative advantages, heterosexual couples are not required to account for their sexuality in the same way that same-sex couples are. Jackson (1995) contends that same-sex women and men are sometimes required to provide an explanation or justification for their sexuality. Heterosexuality may be taken-for-granted as a “natural” and normal way of being for all men and women, and so same-sex attraction requires justification that accounts for difference from this norm. In this sense,
same-sex attraction is silenced. Hubbard (2001) contends that public spaces, malls, clubs and private homes can be read as structured in terms of heteronormative concerns, and that this excludes same-sex performances from public or private spaces. Only non-heteronormative performances must be justified in a similar fashion by the couples in the current research, such as Indira and Haroun must do to explain their sharing a bedroom without engaging in heterosex, and couples seem to attempt to avoid the discomfort associated with this kind of explanation.

The gender binary is also implicated at the intersection between social and individual concern, revealed in the manner in which couple’s manage space: Tamara and Brian redecorate and improve the home he bought on his own when she moves to be with him; Dara transforms the apartment she shares with Michael in Taiwan by cleaning “more frequently” and throwing out “beer cans”. In both cases a home, that was inhabited by a male partner become shared with a female partner. The space becomes transformed into a heterosexual domain through the “feminine”, domestic work of “cleaning” (Dryden, 1999). In this manner, heterosexuality is inserted into a “male dominated space” through “feminine” labour. This work however, is seldom understood as work. Research with European and American couples shows that domestic work is not viewed as work because there is no salary for it (Allen & Crow, 2001; Waite, 1995) and female partner may do a “double shift”, undertaking paid employment and doing domestic chores when home (Allen & Crow, 2001). As such the couple’s narrative suggest that women may be required to undertake three kinds of work within a relationship (domestic work, paid employment and emotional work), while men may be required only to undertake paid employment.

Surveillance is directed at the couple from outside of the couple. The couples’ position in relation to others may define the couple as near to or far from a normative performance of heterosexuality. Characters included in the narrative sometimes play a witnessing and supporting role in various ways: Leland and Veronica describe the celebration of their tenth anniversary as requiring others to witness the achievement of staying together; Dara and Michael include friends and family in their wedding because they require others to support them in their togetherness; Zureida and Saleem are thankful that their more knowledgeable family helped them to make the choice of a suitable life partner. In these
narratives, other characters may demonstrate to the couples how norms are performed, by being “examples” to the couples. They may also help the couple to detect non-heteronormative performances, or in finding acceptable forms of behaviour.

As such, the narratives reveal the intersection of both social concerns and the concerns of the individual partners. Partners are invested in rendering themselves acceptable through a heteronormative performance and worthy of the dividends associated with heterosexuality. Frieda and Fernando’s tale of overcoming the suspicion of Portuguese and South African governments emphasises the manner in which relationships concern both individuals and society. Their relationship is viewed as suspicious and official sanction is withheld until they are able to represent themselves as acceptable in various ways. In so far as the heterosexual couple is viewed as the means of reproducing citizens through procreation, governments have an interest in defining who is allowed to procreate. In so far as it provides the space to give a normal performance and receive the benefits thereof, physical proximity and sexual interactions are fundamental to heterosexual togetherness. At the same time, it is possible that both public and private spaces fix the performances that are possible in and around them, as heteronormative.

**Heterosexualities: different same-ness**

The stories I have described above inscribe the limits of heteronorms as they appear in the narratives South African couples and the soap opera Isidingo tell. The current research suggests that resistant meanings coexist with and are intertwined with meanings that collude with heteronorms, and in this section I shall present readings of the couples’ narratives that highlight alteration from heteronorms. These may be understood as instances of “queering” of heterosexual relationships (Thomas, 2000), that is the incorporation of non-normative performances alongside normative performances. This may involve the concerns Stein and Plummer (1994, pp. 181 - 182) mention as central to queer projects:

“1) conceptualisations of sexuality which sees sexual power as embodied in different levels of social life, expressed discursively and enforced through boundaries and binary divides; 2) the problematisation of sexual and gender categories, and of identities in general […] ; 3) a rejection of civil rights strategies in favour of a politics of carnival, transgression and parody which leads to deconstruction, decentering, revisionist readings and an anti-assimilationist politics; 4) a willingness
to interrogate areas which normally would not be seen as the terrain of sexuality, and to conduct “queer” readings of ostensibly heterosexual and nonsexualised texts.”

**Carnival togetherness**

Some stories of resistance involved blurring boundaries between work and love. In the previous section I described how maintaining a separation between employment and domestic realms enforces a separation between public and private domains. In so far as the public domain of employment can be associated with “masculinity”, and the domestic domain of emotions can be associated with “femininity”, this division reproduces a gender binary. The division may also perpetuate the advantaging of masculine partners within the relationship. A partner who is employed and provides financial benefits to a relationship, sometimes has more control over shared resources (Rutter & Schwartz, 1998). Because men are still more frequently employed than women in South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2006), it is likely that feminine partners in South Africa experience this disadvantage, and the blurring of these boundaries may serve the “queer” project as described by Stein and Plummer (1994).

Pam and Kelvin describe how their finances are inseparable because they share the ownership of a business. She describes how there is no difference in who pays a bill at a restaurant and in who collects the change. As such, their business lives and personal lives are intertwined, and Pam takes pleasure in this interconnection. It is significant that Pam tells this story, while Kelvin speaks of the need to maintain boundaries. Boundaries probably assist Kelvin in continuing to derive the benefits of a normative masculine performance, while the lack of boundaries probably assists Pam in equalising the advantages they both derive. As such, it is possibly a narrative that assists in deconstructing the position of power one partner might assume by virtue of gender. In this sense, it may be a narrative which uses the blurring of boundaries to manage the power imbalance that might arise in a normative performance of togetherness.

Len and Maggie also blur boundaries between gender roles and in this way “queer” their togetherness. After they get drunk and play strip poker, Len tries to goad Maggie by saying that they had sex together. Rather than reacting from the position she usual acts from, that could be read as a Have-Hold discourse position as described by Hollway (1984), Maggie is pleased. Len is not pleased by this reaction, especially because she
tells people that he was “sweet” and “clumsy” during their one-night-stand. This description threatens his performance from the Male Sex-Drive discourse. They negotiate a new story that allows both access to the Permissive discourse, so that both are constructed as proficient and assertive sexual actors. In this manner both relinquish their usual gender roles and co-construct a means for both to have access to the Permissive discourse positioning (Hollway, 1984). In this momentary alteration of gender roles, the characters “queer” their relationship by moving beyond the binary division between “masculine” and “feminine” performers.

While Len and Maggie attempt to both perform from a similar position, Nombulelo inverts gender roles in a narrative about sharing a home with Makhaya. She speaks of “ownership” and the security she derives from performing this ownership. She is comforted by living with Makhaya in his house. She can switch on a light and see him sleeping next to her, and this reassures her. In this way she asserts her dominance over the space, and thereby over Makhaya. She is able to interpret the space and her relationship in a way that turns around taken-for-granted assumptions about masculinity and femininity. I suggest that this inversion can be read as an instance of the carnivalesque in their togetherness. The couple are isolated in Makhaya’s house on a distant farm, separated from others and possibly from the norms of relationships as well. Spatial distance may translate into distance from taken-for-granted norms of behaviour, in much the way that Bakhtin (1981) suggests that carnival was separated through time and space and inverted social norms and relationships. Carnival occurred in spaces outside of towns, around the time of religious festivals, and allowed people to purge themselves of sinful desires by engaging in an excess of pleasure: drinking, eating, having sex. Nombulelo’s story may interpret her spatial surroundings as assisting her to invert gender roles in this manner.

These two stories alter the performances of gender that a couple assumes. Both alter or undermine the gender binary that advantages masculine partners over feminine partners: Len and Maggie tell a story that constructs them as both acting from the same, equal sexual position; Nombulelo inverts gender roles such that she makes use of “masculine” performances. In a sense, these narratives serve a degendering (Lorber, 2000) or post gender (Hester, 2004) project. This progression would do justice to the multiplicity of gender as well as sex, and should not ignore the exercise of power that constrains subjective sex and/or gender positions. Instead it should attempt to reconcile the un-
dimorphic manifestation of physical sex, as well as the un-binary potential of gender (Hester, 2004). Len and Maggie accomplish a momentary performance of degendering, in that they attempt to act from a sexual position that does not position them according to their gender and does not privilege either of them. In this sense, gender categories have been removed from this negotiation of performances (Lorber, 2000). Nombulelo can perhaps be interpreted as having enacted a postgender position, by moving beyond social constructions of gender (Hester, 2004). Nombulelo includes in her performances elements of “masculinity” and thus undermines her categorisation as “feminine”. Her performance may still be viewed as making use of the divisive and value-laden categories of gender dualism, since she describes ownership that might imply power over Makhaya. It is debateable to what extend she has assumed a postgender performance, although this implication may follow from the continued use of the gender binary. A post gender position may still make use of a binary although in a new form. It may only be possible to avoid a gender hierarchy by moving beyond the binary division.

**Activity and dialogue**

Len and Maggie’s story required a negotiation between two partners in order to find a common, acceptable position, and some other narratives require that the couple actively interpret or shape their performances together. Through interpreting and shaping the spaces they inhabit in particular ways, the couples are able to reconfigure the ways that they can be together. Many couples speak of the need to “struggle”, “fight” or “compromise” in order to stay together. Fernando describes this as a “violence” that partners do to one another, a deconstruction that allows the construction of inter-subjectivity. Couples describe this as the work of relationships, the process of learning a partner’s likes and dislikes, of building on similarities and differences, and finding what “works” for both partners. This activity can be likened to the dialogic construction of meaning, and thus the activity of co-constructing a “third” position can thus be a means of towards resistance.

This position is accomplished explicitly by one couple. Frieda and Fernando describe their relationship as “a bridge and meeting in-between”. When they were apart, in separate countries, the couples met only in words in emails or through telephones. These media for communication allowed the couple to play and to co-create an imaginary form of togetherness, even creating fictional taxi drivers and waiters to construct a “mundane”
togetherness. They long to be together, to move beyond the discomfort of enacting a non-normal, distance togetherness. Because they cannot inhabit the same geographical space, they create a virtual space in which to be together. In this way, everyday togetherness can also be implicated in resistance to heteronorms.

Through their correspondence and phone conversations they form a dialogic togetherness in which they create an inter-subjective togetherness from their separate, subjective positions (Gardiner, 2000). This “third” position (Shotter, 1993), expressed in spatial terms as a “bridge”, could enable the couple to construct alterations to heteronorms. In the performance of their wedding, they do seem to enact this “third” positioning. They must locate themselves separate to their friends, family and to governmental authorities. In order to continue their relationship without geographical distance, they must get married. Friends and family want the couple to have traditional “white wedding”, but the bureaucracies are suspicious of their desire to be wedded. They manage the tension between these two positions by having a civil wedding that satisfies the authorities and their families to a certain extent. They perform the ceremony with “irony” but it brings governmental and social sanction to their togetherness.

While Frieda and Fernando are the only couple to explicitly achieve a dialogic togetherness, other couples dialogue with norms in order to construct and rhetorical position. Billig (1991) suggests that everyday philosophers construct arguments to support their own beliefs and opinions, and that these may go against normative constructions. Adrianna argues that the trips overseas that she and Laurent plan have the same function as children in “normal” relationships. These trips provide a mutual point of connection that the couple co-constructs and are central to their togetherness. Brian and Tamara argues that their relationship does not require a formal, matrimonial commitment, because “things” like rings, dresses, cakes and flowers cannot reflect their feelings of love for one another.

Some couples interpret time and space in such a way that it may help the couple to perform in a carnivalesque manner. Adrianna and Laurent do not share a home, because both need separate spaces to work in. They are potentially able to use their homes in non-heteronormative ways, because their homes are defined by their work rather than their relationship with a person of the opposite gender. There are more normative
interpretations of the couple’s approach to work: Adrianna seems to undertake much of the emotional work associated with maintaining a relationship as I have described above. However, the couple defines their homes as space for work, even though houses may be structured according to heteronormative concerns (Hubbard, 2001). They also construct a shared project of trips overseas, rather than through parenting children. By travelling they distance themselves from those who disapprove of the age difference in their relationship, because they South Africans as “conservative” and Europeans as “open-minded” in this regard.

In this way, the couple defines their relationship in terms of their related-ness to other people, and to space. They feel themselves to be closer to the “open-minded” Europeans than to the “conservative” South Africans. The manner in which a couple positions themselves in relationship to other characters can be a source of resistance, although others may also monitor and witness a relationship, thereby exerting a normalising influence over the partners as I have described above. Indira and Haroun define themselves as different from their peers, because they do not have sex or drink. In explaining this distancing, they position themselves as close to their parents, whose religious beliefs have instilled these values in Indira and to a lesser extent Haroun as well. Their closeness in terms of ideology, as well as their closeness in emotional and spatial terms to one another, assists the couple in performing this alteration of heteronormative standards as is embodied by their peers. These relationships with others create the Zone of Proximal Development that Holzman (1991) suggests leads the development of others. In this manner, the manner in which a couple relates to others may assist the partners is altering their relationship.

Some couples achieve alteration from normative constructions through repetition. Indira and Haroun are required to repeatedly explain their choice to live together, sleep in the same bed but not have sex together. This choice is inexplicable to some of their friends, and though the recurrent need to justify themselves is frustrating to them it does provide opportunities for the couple to construct an inter-subjective resistance to normative togetherness. Dara and Michael return to a care-free time of togetherness in their memories. When they lived in Taiwan the couple had an enjoyable existence together and the memories of this time assist the couple to get through difficult moments in their togetherness. Thus the repeated return to good memories fortifies the couple against
discomfort in the present. Frieda and Fernando relate the story of their first breakfast together after a lengthy time apart. This tale refers to the repetition of this meal, and an imaginary connection through this repetition, that allows the couple to construct their connection as continuous and unbroken across time and space.

**Narrative wholeness and partiality**

In the above sections I have described the ways in which relationships can be constructed as normal and monologic, or as non-normative and heteroglossic. Couples can make use of everyday togetherness to monitor and survey their relationship, or to reshape and interpret it. In order to describe these two aspects of heterosexual togetherness, I have made use of Bakhtin’s (1994) conception of opposite and coexistent forces inherent in utterances: centripetal forces pull meaning toward unity, and centrifugal forces disperse meaning. Thus, the research was directed at exploring both normative and resistant instances of heterosexuality, and in describing these elements of the tales as separate I have in part, rendered them as flat, lacking complexity and dimension. The categorisation, definition and delineation required to present research findings requires a degree of simplification (Chase, 2005), particularly narrative research that tends to present data as contained wholes (Newman, 2000).

The experience of interviewing each couple highlighted not only the diversity but also the tendency of narratives toward unity. Each couple was distinctive and inimitable. Reading and re-reading the transcripts of the interviews, I was struck by the ways that the words on the pages both captured the interview, and the couple’s uniqueness, and also did not. The transcripts contained traces of the couples’ inimitable style: Dara and Michael’s care-free easy laughter, Pam and Kelvin’s relaxed intensity, Frieda and Fernando’s poetry-like speech, Indira and Haroun’s uneasy contentment, Leland and Veronica’s efficient subtlety. While I have attempted to let the participant’s words speak for themselves, by editing the transcripts minimally to highlight their narratives, and by including long quotations within the chapters (Chase, 2005), the performance of a narrative is illusive to capture. In the interview context, the tone of voice, gesture, cadence, pitch and facial expression all contributed to the performance of the narrative, and to my understanding of the couple’s togetherness. However, these elements are difficult to capture in words, and the
performatory elements of the stories are in part lost, and this loss in part informed my decision to use pseudonyms to identify the couples even when they had permitted me to use their identities.

The decision to guard the couples’ anonymity through the use of pseudonyms also distanced the couples from the less complex representations of themselves and acknowledged the narratival, fictional representation I have given of them in the context of this research. This is of less concern in the soap opera tales, partially because I did not have an ethical commitment to these fictional couples, and partially because the scripted dialogue was more perfected and denser than everyday speech as it appeared in the interviews, and thereby more effective at capturing the tone of a relationship. However, the data reduction necessary to present the narratives moves the interviews from heteroglossia toward a more monologic construction.

**Wholeness**

The couples’ narratival descriptions of constraint may in part arise from the tendency of narratives toward wholeness. A narrative appears to create a unified structure of meaning from a complex set of possibly contradictory and confusing events. In this sense, narratives may simplify and amalgamate disparate elements, such that the narrative appears to be a singular representation of characters and events (de Peuter, 1998; Newman, 2000). Narratives thus have the potential to provide a means of making a coherent whole from a set of events, and there is a danger that this whole could function to obscure the ways in which narrators and narratives are active and contingent social products (Newman, 2000). This property of narrative has been utilised by narrative therapy to assist clients in restructuring aspects of their lives that cause emotional pain. While the narrative is viewed as pliable to this extent, it is still viewed as a possession of the client, whether painful or renewed (Besley, 2002). The narrative approach to research is quite closely allied with narrative therapy, and has thus derived a tendency towards essentialist, interpretive inquiry (Besley, 2002; Newman, 2000).

This wholeness is reflected in structuralist conceptions of narrative such as those of Propp (1968) and Todorov (1967, in Wigston, 2001). More simple definitions, such as Toolan’s (2001) definition of narrative as an ordered, sequence of events that proceed from some
sort of crisis to resolution, still highlight the chronological fixedness of narratives. The interview was not structured to elicit a chronological description of the relationship as a whole, but the stories couples told regarding the photographs tended to follow a chronological sequence of events. Most narratives told in the interview, and on Isidingo structured according to a linear conception of time (Bondi, 1993). This linear conception invokes time as a progression of events, such that past events lead to present events that lead to future events (Soja & Hopper, 1993). In this way, time becomes an infinite line, with the past stretching backwards and the future stretching forward. The present is a limited, finite moment during which an event occurs. Because the past and the future are unlimited, the present is an infinitesimally small instant that does not separate past from future. In a sense, the past and the future are continuous with one another and time is an undifferentiated whole (Deleuze, 2001).

The linear conception of time can be associated with the possibility of change. Several narrators featured in the research told stories that linked them to their pasts, by citing a problematic past relationship in order to show how their present relationship is different: Adrianna enjoys the freedom of her relationship to Laurent in contrast to the difficult year she has had; Lungisile chooses Ayanda as a partner because his previous girlfriend spoke badly of him to others, and he believes that Ayanda will not do this; Nombulelo was abused and nearly killed by her ex-husband and her relationship with Makhaya is characterised by peace, tranquillity and a better future. These narratives all invoke the past in order to show how the present and the future are, or could be, different. However, they rely on the past they claim to have left behind. A linear use of narrative time must represent the past in order to show the change that has occurred in the present and that will occur in the future. As such, the past cannot be escaped. The narrator is unavoidably attached to the past events, and in this way, the narrator is constrained.

In this way narrative time seems to ensnare characters within their past or to render the past interchangeable with the future, may be a function of narratives and narration in general. Narrative therapy aims at helping clients to recast or reframe the stories of their past such that the client can transform their present (Doan, 1994; Freedman & Coombs, 1996). However, the client simply comes to possess a new narrative, and the stories above suggest that this story is likely to still incorporate the past. In this way a person may remain attached to that past such that alteration is not entirely possible (Newman, 2000).
This may be related to the tendency of narratives, to construct events as a completed whole (Chase, 2005) and as a psychological possession of an individual (Newman, 2000). In the project of creating a unified whole from a narrative, these stories may become tied to normative, “Western” notions of time as linear, fixed, and static (Soja & Hooper, 1993). As such, it may be the method of analysis that constructs the participant’s narratives as caught in the past, although this quality of narratives has to some extent been avoided in the analysis, by concentrating on the tendency of narratives towards both monologue and heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1981; 1994).

In much the same way as narratives sometimes seem to rely on a linear, fixed sense of time, psychological frameworks that make use of stage-wise understandings of development remain tied to the past. Theories of development may only be made in the past tense, because the subjects under examination inevitably change and this change is necessarily predicated on prior phases of development. Statements should thus be viewed as contingent and context-bound rather than universal (Morss, 1996). Rather than view development and learning as generalisable, linear and stage-like, change may be viewed as relative, unpredictable and irregular, as “revolutionary rather than evolutionary” (Newman & Holzman, 1997). This conception of alteration could assist in understanding how heteronorms might become queered, at least in a narrative sense. A queer narrative might be one that does not view the present as related to or constructed from the past. It may be a story that does not view the events as progressing sequentially through time, and thus undoes the boundaries between events, or stages in development. Such a narrative may be likened to post modern fictions that resist the use of a modern, linear understanding of time. Heise (2000) calls such stories “chronoschisms”, and these may take many forms: the narrative might tell of historical events in a fictional manner; it might represent the individual’s idiosyncratic sense of chronological time; it may tell events out of sequence, possibly travelling both forward and backward; it may construct an alternate sense of the future. These possibilities for “chronoschism” have in common the potential to blur the boundaries between historical fact and fiction, between individual and social experience, and for the “publicisation of alternative realities” (Heise, 2000, p. 3). This understanding of “chronoschism” thus fit well with the queer project of incorporating “the politics of carnival, transgression and parody” (Stein & Plummer, 1994, p. 181).

**Monologue and heteroglossia**
This tendency, of research techniques to abridge narratives was in part mitigated by reading stories for both heteroglossia and for monologue. In the analysis chapters I have tried to show how stories sometimes contain both elements of resistance and collusion, by juxtaposing an interpretation that focuses on normative elements in the performance with an interpretation that highlights resistant elements of the performance. In this way, the oppositional forces that Bakhtin (1981; 1994) suggests are inherent in, and shape all utterances become apparent. Centripetal forces pull the meaning of an utterance towards unity and normativity, while centrifugal forces disperse meaning, and possibly opening space for queer performances. These forces pull utterances in oppositional directions, and render any communication inconclusive. The meaning of an utterance slides unpredictably between competing forces, resulting in a complexity and density of meaning.

In this way, the stories are shown to contain uneven, unpredictable intersecting moments of resistance and collusion, heteroglossia and monologue. Because meaning is never fixed by monologic or heteroglossic positions, it implies that resistance to heteronorms is a fleeting performance. While couples do seem to accomplish instances of resistance, these are not lasting or definitive. Rather they interweave with elements of heteronormativity into a larger narrative that continues largely, to assume the rightness and normativity of heterosexuality. While elements of the performance are questioned and resisted, it seemed that the couples altered performances as a matter of expediency within a particular context: Indira and Haroun share a bed but do not have sex; Adrianna and Laurent have separate houses, require independence for their work, but Adrianna undertakes much of the “feminine” emotional work of the relationship; Dara and Michael emphasise their physical closeness, their sexual togetherness, the importance of procreation, and they retrospectively undermine the normative constraint that caused them discomfort; Maggie and Len tell a story that is untrue but serves both of their needs, and then return to their usual sexually gendered performances. While a performance might undermine an aspect of heteronorms – physical togetherness, the imperative toward sexual activity, the need for matrimony, procreation, gender roles – this did not imply the wholesale undermining and complete alteration of their performance as heterosexual men and women. As a multifaceted norm, incorporating many taken-for-granted constructions, heteronormativity may not be dismantled by a single instance of alteration.
In their volume on heterosexuality Wilkinson and Kritzinger (1992) express dismay over the lack of critical questioning of heterosexuality by feminist theorists. The norms of heterosexuality rely in large part on a gender binary that disadvantages female partners, and thus the position of heterosexual feminist is a problematic one. Many theorists in the volume (M. Gergen, 1992) claim that single performances between specific men and women could resist the norm, and that heterosexuality is not as singular and unalterable as it sometimes seems. While the current research suggests that this description does hold, the research also suggests that the normative performance is more difficult to undermine than these theorists suggest. Perhaps because heteronorms define not just sexuality but can be seen as an organising principle of society in general (Jackson, 2006), it is difficult to perform entirely against the norm. While specific narratives or performances in specific instances, may be interpreted as undermining heteronormative togetherness, these performances are fleeting and momentary.

In light of the dividends that heterosexual couples accrue because of their normative togetherness, it is unclear why couples would want to queer the performance of their togetherness. By performing in normalising ways, a heterosexual couple gains certain benefits, and in contrast by queering their relationship they may experience difficulty and discomfort. It is possible that the gender division that I have argued is fundamental to heterosexuality is simultaneously the necessary foundation and its undoing. While gender dualism underpins heterosexuality, it also creates the grounds for the experience of oppression and discomfort for both masculine and feminine partners. However, women are more likely to experience the obstacle of gender dominance.

The transitory resistance that some couples perform is in contrast to the continuity of the norms expected of them. The experience of discomfort associated with non-heteronormal performances was for some couples a continuous, long-term problem. Indira and Haroun’s friends frequently ask for explanations of why they live together but do not have sex together; Adrianna must repeatedly remind herself that she does not want a “normal” relationship. As such, the narratives suggest that some couples experience constraint because of the normative performances that are expected of them conflict with what “works” for them. When a normative performance does not “work” for a couple, it is likely that this couple shall continually be required to confront this discomfort, and that they shall struggle over and over with normative constraints. This continued requirement for
explanation and reassurance is perhaps similar to the experience of lesbian women and gay men, who are expected to justify their position (Jaskson, 2006; Whisman, 1996). While these couples will continue to experience some of the benefits and advantages of giving a largely heteronormative performance, constraint is sometimes a frequent, recurrent and common experience for heterosexual couples. It is probably easier for heterosexual couples to manage the unpleasant experience of these confrontations, because of the benefits and advantages they will in part receive. However the current research also suggest that it is not always easy to cope with normative constraint.

Further exploration into these moments of discomfort and the means couples make use of to cope with them is required to understand their significance to normal and resistive performances, and to heterosexual togetherness. A similar study to the current research and one that explores the experience and management of discomfort is also required of “queer” couples, in order to understand how non-normative couples experience their performance against normative social constructions of togetherness.
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Soap Opera Storylines

Len and Maggie: The story battle
Maggie has recently began to miss the companionship, emotional and physical closeness of having a man in her life. These yearnings lead her to a brief unhappy entanglement between an Irish man named Flan and later with Vleis Coetzee, the local butcher. Now Maggie is reading a self-help book, and it is helping her to see how she has given her male partners power over her. Len finds the book ridiculous and teases her mercilessly, even though Lolly tells him repeatedly that she has been hurt and should be left alone.

The book suggests that she throw a party, in which the guests dress as a historical figure they admire. Her housemates all join in: Lolly dresses as Elizabeth I, Len as Che Guevara, Paul as Einstein, Maggie as Scheherazade. They get very drunk, and everyone goes to sleep, except Maggie and Len. Len suggests that they play strip poker. At first she refuses.

“Where’s that strong, all woman spirit you were talking about earlier?” he taunts her.
“Still here,” she laughs, putting her wine glass down so that she can make an expansive gesture, moving both hands from her breasts outwards.
“Then prove it,” he says. “Or are you afraid?”

She resists awhile longer and then consents.

In the morning, Lolly and Paul wake up to find them both naked, entwined with one another on the couch in the lounge. Maggie insists she remembers nothing. Len tells them that Maggie was winning and then hit a losing streak in which she lost all her clothing. She then had a comeback that left him naked. At this point, he says, it is Maggie that seduced him, and that they both lost all inhibitions, “like two tigers released from a cage”.

Over the next few days, Len continues to say that they had sex and gradually embroiders on the story. He describes them both as being released from their inhibitions, and from all responsibility for what happened, by the tequila that they drank. He says they had a passionate, enjoyable, albeit it drunken, one-night-stand that allowed them to satisfy their entirely natural curiosity and understandably ardent desire for one another.

Eventually he admits to Lolly and Paul that they were both to drunk and simply passed. He couldn’t resist the opportunity to play with “the power of suggestion in Maggie’s mind”. However, Lolly feels that “She is trying to turn her life around and [he’s] just turning it into a joke.” She and Paul are concerned for Maggie. Mostly, they are concerned that she will fall in love with Len and that he will hurt her. They try to persuade Len to tell her that he lied, but he refuses. He feels that with all her “self-help sensibility, she should be able to handle anything that life throws at her.”

At the same time, Maggie is acting differently. She calls Len “hot pants”, pats his bum, makes everyone breakfast and responds to his mocking with insults of her own. She tells Lolly that although she can’t remember anything and has no feelings for Len, it feels good to have had “a night of passion” and “get another notch on the bedpost” with a “little bit of uncomplicated fun”. She believes that since she cannot remember much, it couldn’t have been very good. Slowly her story become clear, and she tells people that Len is “not very skilful but sweet”, “cute” and “rather clumsy”.

Eventually this story reaches the other On! TV employees. Nan hears the story from Maggie and tells it to Letti. Soon the entire television station has heard the story of Len’s less than exceptional performance with Maggie Webster. He is outraged that his reputation of proficiency and expertise in all sexual matters is in question, and tells everyone that he lied, that he and Maggie never had sex.

When he realises that his reputation is suffering, he apologises for lying to her and suggests that they put it all behind them. Maggie tells him that it is impolite to deny having sex with someone because you are embarrassed, and that she could have been very hurt by his denial. She tells him she is fortunate to be in a “better head space”, to have regained her “spirit wind”. She says she has learnt to “accept herself”, and that she knows she is “everything a man could ever want”. She tries to placate his damaged ego by saying that it is understandable that he
she did not give a very skilful performance because the tequila would have made him clumsy. She tells him that he should learn to accept all aspects of himself, as she has learned to do. She recommends the self-help book she has been reading and suggests they read the chapters on feelings of inadequacy together. She is conciliatory, saying that although his “mojo was a little under-whelming”, she “still enjoyed it”.

Things get worse at the television studios, and a sign goes up advertising a reward for Len’s lost mojo. But there is also now a rumour that Len and Maggie did not in fact have sex. Tim overhears Maggie telling Lolly that she knows they didn’t have sex. She is actively taking back her spirit from Len “by turning the tables on him”. She views him as a “spirit stealer”, a term taken from the book she is reading: “He uses his negativity to reduce other people’s spirits, too make them feel less valuable…” When this rumour reaches him Len takes advantage of it by telling Nan that he couldn’t say anything to anyone about Maggie’s lies. He tells her that Maggie has a serious psychological illness. He says that she recently began refusing to take her pills and is having psychotic outbreaks. When Maggie hears this she is adamant that she is not psychologically ill.

Tim eventually tells Len that Maggie has been lying, and Len confronts her. After everyone has left on morning, they talk over the breakfast table.

“I know that you know that nothing happened here the other night Maggie,” says Len, his index finger physically indicating the abstract point he is making. “Do you know what they are saying down at the office? They are saying Maggie suffers from delusions. They know nothing happened.” He licks his fingers as though with satisfaction for people’s opinions of her.

“Well that’s just because of what you’re telling them Len. I know what you’re trying to do, you’re trying to humiliate me. You’re trying to steal my spirit.”

Making emphatic, staccato hand gestures he says, “Well if you continue to insist that we went all the way up the Khyber then you are going to look like an idiot, in anyone’s books. You know what they’re going to say? They’re going to say Sad Mad Maggie.” He commences buttering his toast.

“I’ve learnt a lot about from my book about people wanting to steal my spirit,” she says quietly.

“Poor, sad, mad Maggie,” he sings.

“A month ago I would have been a gibbering wreck,” she says, an edge rising in her voice.

Without looking at her he responds. “Well all you have to do to fix it Mags is tell them we didn’t have a thrashing on the sofa. It’s as simple as that.”

“Well I have learnt how to fight,” she says speaking faster and faster. “And if you continue to spread those rumours about me, I’m going to do that. I’m going to move right into Phase Two.”

“Phase two!” He spits. “What the hell is that?”

She gets up and walks away. “You can take me on Len. I’m not giving up.”

He rises and follows her. There is a note of desperation in his voice. “Whoa. Whoa. What are you talking about? What’s this Phase Two?”

“That’s for me to know and you to find out,” she says, pointing at him. “But rest assured that when a woman is fighting to have her spirit restored, she takes no enemies.”

“Prisoners,” he corrects.

“What?”

“Give me a hint.”

“There is going to be blood on the walls. That’s a hint. You know I’ve just gotten to the chapter in my book about the Amazons. They were these warrior women who cut off their right breast,” she snarls, making a cutting motion with her hand across her amply bosom. “So they could be more accurate with their bows. I have a quiver full of arrows to fire at you Len. And I am warning you, I am not going to be shy about using them.”

He looks away from her and then slowly turns back. A look of weariness is on his face. “Maggie Webster, I have to say that you have balls.”

“And breasts,” she spits back, her hands placed solidly on her hips. “If it’s going to be all out war, I am going to win.”

“I don’t want to fight you Mags, I don’t like that,” he pleads. “You know this about me.”
“Of course there is another way,” she relents.
“Yeah.”
“So that we both keep our spirits in tact.”
“Yeah.”
She pulls closer to him, and whispers in his ear.

When Lolly and Nan confront him later that day at the television station, their plan is revealed. They have both agreed to say that they did have sex, and that it was world-changing for both of them. In fact “it was amazing, out of the park”. They experienced “a full on connection that felt like hours and hours” to him. He thinks “Maggie is one hell of a woman”, and he thinks she will say he is “one hell of a guy”. They will not begin a relationship because out of bed they “do not get on” and that was “why it was difficult to admit how spectacular the fireworks were”.

Sandi and Len: What the past teaches
Sandi is a young and beautiful intern that is assigned to work with Len on LiveTime at On! TV. As soon as she arrives he begins to pursue her, and they both flirt with one another. On a coffee break, he asks her to pick a philosophical topic of conversation and she replies that she can’t be philosophical while sober. He asks her is she wants to have drinks with him at Papa G’s that night, and she agrees on condition that he takes her home at “an unsavoury hour”. After many drinks and more flirting, lingering touches of the hand, smouldering glances, Len asks if she is ready for philosophy. Sandi says she is too drunk for philosophy and refuses to bear her soul to Len, who she doesn’t know very well. He asks if she would bear anything else, and she admits she might. He suggests his place, and she asks if he has music. When he replies in the affirmative she remarks that she “needs a little music”. She stands, throws her handbag over her shoulder and looks back at him. He downs the last of his drink, smiles and gets up to leave.

The next morning, Lolly finds Sandi in the lounge. She offers her a lift to work, but Sandi insists that she wants to get a taxi. She seems upset and rushes out. Len is surprised that she left in such a hurry.

“I told you, she gave the distinct impression that she wanted to get as far away from here as possible. As fast as possible. So now I want to know what did you do to her?” asks Lolly.
“I don’t know. I told you gave her the kind of loving she’s never had before it seems,” says Len sipping on his orange juice.
“And never wants again it seems,” replies Lolly. “If you are such an irresistible Prince Charming, why are your girls running away?”

Len throws back his head and yells in frustration, “I don’t know.” And more quietly says, “Maybe she had a breakfast date with her mom.”
They walk to the sofas and Lolly says, “It’s just that, I don’t know. She wasn’t a happy bunny. I offered her a ride and then she was gone.”
“Well she was fine at 2 am, so however she was this morning had nothing to do with last night ok.” He wipes a hand across a hungover forehead.

At work, Len realises how unhappy she is. She tells him that if he comes near her she will scream. She ignores him and Lolly and Paul tease him that his “exhibition performance” was a “pathetic display” and things did not “go according to plan”.
“She may not have been the best I ever had, but from her P of V she should have been deeply thankful.”
“Just when I think you have hit rock bottom, you sink to new depths,” says Lolly shaking her head.
“What have I done?” he says, exasperated. “I’m a hedonist. I admit it. I like to seduce agreeable women. Is there something intrinsically wrong with that?”
“Dude,” says Paul, gesturing toward the direction Sandi left in, “she doesn’t look very agreeable.”

Later that day she goes to Frank and tells him she can’t stay at On! TV and hands him an affidavit saying that she has been sexually harassed and raped by Len Cooper. Frank calls Len into his office and tells him of Sandi’s accusation. Len is shocked and tells Paul later that he is not the kind of man who would rape a woman. “I like to seduce women, I’ve slept with my fair share of them, but I want them to want me. I don’t want a woman saying ‘No!’ What’s the point in that?”
He believes that he would simply give up on a woman who resisted him. He says that he only enjoys only mutual pleasure between partners. Paul advises him to get a lawyer, since rape charges are serious and complex. "I don't know if this is all going to blow over. Mud sticks, and if it happens rape is a serious charge."

Over the next few weeks the On! TV executive committee must decide how to act on Sandi's accusation. A disciplinary hearing is held. It is decided that there is insufficient evidence to suspend him. He is warned, and Lee tells him that should they find more evidence she will be "the first to call for his blood". Then Sandi lays charges and Len is arrested. The television station in faced with having to take action, and is pressurised to do so by Sandi's mother. Both Frank and Lee find it difficult to take sides.

"Call it instinct," says Lee, "I don't think Len Cooper would resort to violence. I think that after the initial shock of being rejected he would just walk away. You know, to save face."

"And that's what you think?" asks Frank carefully.

"Yes," says Lee adamantly.

"But you don't know."

"No," she admits.

"The truth is Lee that neither of us know what happened behind those doors. Except, one of those people is lying."

Both Len's lawyer and the executive committee ask Len about his sexual preferences and past. His lawyer believes it will help her defend him, and asks if he is "gentleman in bed". The executive committee wants to know what evidence will be used against him and how they could defend their decision to keep him at On! TV. They call him in when he is released on bail.

"Okay," says Frank, "this might be a bit personal, but do you have any skeletons hiding in your closet that might come out?"

"And I suggest you tell us everything," says Lee quietly.

"Okay, I mean it's no big secret I swing both ways," starts Len.

"You're bisexual?" asks Lee.

"It's no one's business but my own," says Len, matter of fact.

"Oh, the gutter press will make it their business," counters Lee.

"Anything else?" asks Frank, "Drugs?"

"No, no more than anyone else," Lean says, shifting in his chair, "A little dope of course, some coke now and then."

"Nothing official?" asks Frank.

"No."

"Okay, think back a bit."

"I did once belong to a group," he begins reluctantly, "who would celebrate Dionysus up in the Drakensberg every couple of months. He was the Greek god of wine and sex," he snaps at Lee's shocked face.

"I know who he is," she says carefully, "I just didn't think anyone still worshipped him."

"It was hippy jol. We had some wild times. The key was some magic mushrooms," he says shaking his head and resting his forehead in his hand. He is realising how bad this sounds to Frank and Lee.

"I know who he is," she says carefully, "I just didn't think anyone still worshipped him."

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"So what did you do at these sessions?"

"The Dionysian thing," he says looking up. "General outrageousness. We'd all get together, consume vast quantities of magic mushrooms and just see what happens. I had this English girlfriend, she was...You'd have to understand mushrooms. She was even more hectic than me."

"Okay, what happened?" asks Lee.

"I guess the best way to describe it would be fairly uninhibited group sex," he says sitting back in his chair and looking directly at Lee.

"You mean like orgies?" asks Frank.

"Well that was what Dionysus was into, so yeah."

"Okay," says Lee, "so were you ever charged, is there something official out there?"

"No," he says sitting up again and leaning forward, "but there were quite a lot of us."
“How many?” asks Lee.

“Forty, fifty people at the biggest one,” he says, as Frank and Lee exhale deeply and shift uneasily in their chairs. “I mean it wasn’t a big secret.”

“Well, okay,” says Lee removing a shocked hand from her mouth, her voice rising, “we just have to hope that media doesn’t find one of your, “fellow worshippers, because they are going to think they have hit the jackpot.”

“Mrs Haines what I do in the privacy of my own,” he says and thinks better of it, “what I do anywhere is my own business.”

“Not anymore,” remarks Frank.

“You better pray to whatever gods you hold sacred right now, that this little treasure trove of Dionysian festivities doesn’t see the light of day,” says Lee bitingly, “because otherwise we are going to have a damn hard time telling everybody why we haven’t kicked you out ages ago.”

This ambivalence and uncertainty regarding Len’s character is widespread, among his friends, co-workers and colleagues.

“Let’s just assume that he is innocent until proven guilty. We owe him that,” says Nandipha.

“We owe him nothing,” spits Lolly. “I mean where does that leave us?”

“What do you men?” asks Nan.

“He is our friend. We have been working with him for the past few years. And he has the capacity to rape. That is unacceptable.”

He is frustrated because he feels they should believe him rather than Sandi because they know him and not her. He understands that a judge, similarly must choose between their stories. He tells Paul “if a judge believes Sandi and not me, then I am done man, my life is over.” He becomes angry with Sandi, saying she is “young”, “naive”, “a little tart” and “psychotic”. He also decides that “all women are trouble”, and that he will become “a monk” or marry Paul to avoid women. At first he cannot remember anything about that night, except that he thought both of them enjoyed having sex together. Asks himself: “I like it rough, but would I make her do something she didn’t want to do? Am I that kind of person?” He is in turmoil of uncertainty because his memories of the night are so incomplete and he can’t help second guessing himself.

He thinks it is possible he could have misread the situation. He is convinced that there has been some misunderstanding, and is obsessed with the idea that he should speak with her, “reason with her”. He calls her twice asking to meet, until she gets a protection order against him harassing her.

In the mean time, Lolly goes out of her way to support Sandi. She was gang raped as a teenager, and this experience leads her to encourage Sandi to sustain the charges against Len. However, she begins to see Sandi’s mother as over protective and over reactive, and she begins to investigate Sandi’s past. Initially Sandi refuses to speak about the rape, but after Lolly’s prompting she describes what happened that night. Lolly discovers some inconsistencies and this makes her certain that Len is innocent. She discovers that Sandi was raped repeatedly by her uncle as a child. When Sandi found the courage to lay charges against him, her mother forced her to have the charges dropped. Lolly confronts Sandi, and she agrees to drop the charges.

Len is relieved that he has been exonerated, but still feels he needs to speak with Sandi. He now wants an explanation and an apology. Lolly tries to dissuade him, and after a while, tells him the story about her uncle in the hopes that he will understand and leave Sandi alone. Instead he becomes more adamant, until Lolly arranges a meeting with her a facilitator.

They meet in a conference room at On! TV and Sandi starts. She is looking at the floor, away from Len. “I just thought I should say, that I’m sorry for what happened. Because of everything that has happened with me, I realised that I made, a really bad mistake. I’m sorry.”

Len frowns, shakes his head and looks incredulous. “Yeah Sandi, that’s cool and I appreciate that. But those people out there, they still look at me like I’m a rapist. What do we do about them?”

She frowns. “I don’t understand.”

Len leans forward across the table. “There are a whole bunch of people in the building who look at me like I could I do this, because you accused me of something I didn’t do.” He
pauses, and is more angry and adamant when he begins again. “You accused me. You had me arrested. Do you have any idea how that feels? To be arrested in front of the people you work with?”

She looks at him, with tears in her eyes and says, “I’m sorry.”

He puts his head in his hands. When he looks up he says softly, “Look Sandi, I know what happened with your uncle, and what went down.”

“Len!” Lolly is shocked that he would mention this piece of confidential and sensitive information. He continues more certain of himself. “And I am sorry you had to go through that. But what he did has nothing to do with me. And it was not my fault.”

Sandi is angry now. “All you care about Len is getting your rocks off.”

He speaks quickly. “That’s where I was confused Sandi, I thought you wanted it as much as I did.”

She stands and shouts at him, “How could you not realise that the person you were with was hating every minute of it?”

He stands and puts both hands up in front of himself as though warding off his accusation. “Sandi if you had given me one sign, just one sign that didn’t want me, I would have stopped immediately.”

Lolly interrupts. She is the only one still seated. “Okay, let’s be calm, alright.”

“You chose me, on purpose,” spits Sandi.

“I picked you,” he yells, incredulous.

“Yes,” she says, firmly. “You chose me because you knew I was damaged. So you can do whatever you want with me. Because that is all I’m good for,” she says as she dissolves into her tears.

“Sandi,” says Lolly loudly, to stop her.

“No. That’s all I’m good for. And that’s something you taught me,” she shouts toward Len.

“It doesn’t work that way,” he says leaning toward her too.

She continues, her tears unabated. “You taught me, that I will never have a normal relationship with a man. You taught me what I am Len. Just rubbish. Something to be used up and then thrown away with the garbage. Left lying in the gutter somewhere. Something they can do whatever they like with.” She cannot continue because she is crying so hard.

Len is shocked to silence. He stares at the floor, wide-eyed and doesn’t know where to look. Sandi falls onto Lolly’s shoulder, and Lolly and Len exchange glances of disbelief at her pain. They sit again, and Lolly gets Sandi a glass of water.

“You’re going to be ok Sandi,” she says firmly.

“No, it’s true, I’m just a waste of time,” she says crying again.

Putting her hands on her shoulders and leaning close to her Lolly says, “People taught you that. It’s not true. It’s a lie.”

Len is standing in a corner, his back turned on the two women. He turns slowly, a look of pain twisting his features. He walks toward the table, saying “Sandi, listen to me. I’m really sorry.”

He leans across the table toward her. “I thought you wanted me as much as I wanted you.”

“Len, okay,” says Lolly to stop him. She puts up her palm facing toward him, as though to protect Sandi from his words.

“Lolly, I need. Okay.” His look of anguish stops her. He looks away again, and then back at Sandi slowly. “I thought, I still think, you’re beautiful. You’re gorgeous. I wanted you for you. And I honestly believed you wanted me too.”

She is seated facing him but dissolves into tears again as she says, “I’m not beautiful.”

“Yes you are Sandi. You are incredibly beautiful,” he says resolutely. Lolly agrees with him.

“Not inside,” she says making her hand into a claw and gesturing outward. Bringing the claw toward her body she says, “Inside, I’m, I’m just rotten.” She is crying again.

Lolly physically pulls Sandi toward herself. “Okay, you can not believe that. But I know why you believe that. Because of what happened to you. You are blaming yourself, I blamed myself too. But it’s not true.” She pulls Sandi’s hand away from her mouth. “You are worth more. You have to start believing in yourself.”
Len sits down quickly, as though he would have fallen otherwise. He puts his head behind his hands.

“Look Len, I’m sorry. I accused you of something you didn’t do.”

“I’m sorry too Sandi. I didn’t mean to hurt you. I didn’t want to…you could fight back, you know. I would.”

She sits back abruptly. “Ah, how?” she says shaking her head.

“Go and nail the bastard. This is about your uncle. He’s the reason you feel this way.”

“Ah, Len, it’s too late for that.”

“No, no, like Len said. You can lay charges. I know someone who laid charges after twenty years. She won the case, after twenty years,” Lolly is decisive, speaking to Sandi’s unmoving silhouette.

With feeling in his voice Len pleads, “You could turn your whole life around. I mean nothing is so broken that it can’t be fixed. Even if it has to be glued together.”

Sandi decides to press charges. Len is pleased that he helped her take this action, and he tells his friends that he will think twice before having another one-night-stand. “Once bitten”, he tells them wryly.

**Vusi and Letti (and Siyanda): Work-life, love-life**

Vusi and Letti are in their first year of marriage together. They have known one another and been in love for many more years than that though. Letti left Vusi for another man soon after Vusi received the calling to train as a sangoma. She had a child with and was abused by this man, and she left him. Vusi moved back to Horizon Deep so that he could become the manager of the mine, and they pick up their relationship again. Soon after that they were married.

They live now in the mine manager’s house with Letti’s parents Agnes and Zeb, brother Parsons and his wife Nandipha. Her family moved into the mine manager’s house soon after the couple were married. The Moletsane family is very close knit. They have been through many trials and difficulties, and they pride themselves on supporting one another and rising above obstacles. The closure of the mine is a significant economic problem to the family. The family was in serious debt because Zeb had recently lost his job on the mine after sustaining injuries in a mine collapse.

Then Siyanda suggests that they take responsibility for the low cost housing to built on the proposed development on Horizon Deep. They are excited by the opportunity, and band together to come up with a concept, a budget, a design and a proposal.

However, this life line is taken from them when On! TV finds out about their bid. They cover the Moletsane’s involvement with the development as an example of nepotism. Since Vusi is the mine manager, it is viewed as favouritism that his wife’s family be the sole tenderers for the low cost housing development. Vusi publicly responds by saying that the Moletsane’s are able, capable, creative and strong bidders for the work. However, he makes it clear that they will not be favoured. He announces that he is open to other bids, and invites others to submit proposals. He invites transparent competition.

When a new bidder places a tender for the low cost housing, Agnes is upset with Vusi. She feels that he should have trusted them to come in at the lowest bid. She drops hints at the breakfast table about how there needs to be more trust in the world. Vusi doesn’t understand what she is implying and asks Zeb to explain after Agnes has left for the Rec. He tells him how Agnes feels. He is apologetic, and tells Vusi that he understands how these business deals must work.

When Letti is offered the opportunity to travel to Cape Town to cover a conference for On! TV she begins to feel more confident in herself and in her work. The conference is on the weekend that the mine management will make a decision regarding the future of the mine. She is not with Vusi when he hears that his and Siyanda’s bid has been successful. Ma Agnes tells Vusi that she “is young” and that “her place is with her husband”, but Vusi insists that it is important for her to take the opportunity to improve her career. Letti is excited by the increased responsibility of the task and begins to feel good about herself. When she comes back she starts buying more flattering
clothes, perfumes, beauty products and sexy lingerie for Valentines Day. She tells Lolly and Nan that they are for the new her.

“And who is the new you?” asks Nan sceptically.

“I don’t know. I just feel like I need a change. I’ve definitely been feeling more sexy, and the clothes I’m wearing just aren’t right anymore.”

She gets more assignments at the station, and begins to spend more time at work. Nan and Parson’s are convinced that she is having an affair, and feel they owe it to her to confront her about it. After dinner Parsons follows her into the lounge. Standing very straight and tense above her sitting on the couch he begins.

“(You know what), it’s like a duty to say something.

“Ja a duty,” she agrees distractedly looking at a magazine.

“To point things out,” he insists.

“To point what things out?” she asks looking up from her magazine.

“Your duty to your husband,” he spits.

“My duty to my husband?” she asks sceptically. “And what is my duty to my husband?”

“To be faithful to your husband.”

“Hey! (What are you saying?),” she asks shocked.

“For days now Nandipha and I have been seeing this obvious thing. That you are having an affair,” he says vehemently.

“I’m having an affair?”

“Ja, (new clothes, new underwear, new perfume). If Vusi finds out, he is going to kill you. And who would blame him?”

“I am not having an affair!” she cries.

“(You are lying!)”

“Okay then, tell me who am I having this wonderful affair with, (with who)?”

After a pause, “I don’t know. But what is important now is that you stop it.”

“You have got the wrong end of the stick. I love my husband. I would never betray him. I am not having an affair with anyone.”

He walks round the couch toward her saying, “Letti, listen.” He sits down.

“And what proof do you have?”

Counting off on his fingers he says, “(What about the meetings, the underwear, the perfume). What was that?”

“That meeting was just once.”

“(What about your trip to Cape Town?)”

“Please, that was business. Anyway, (you can check with Frank), or do you want to see my diary. My life is an open book.”

She is laughing as Vusi walks in from work. “You will never believe, my love, what Parsons just said.”

“What did Parsons say? Something funny?” he asks.

“(No leave it),” Parsons stands, looks at his feet and scratches his nose.

“Something very funny. Apparently he thinks I am having an affair. Me! An affair! Can you believe it!” She laughs.

“Parsons?” says Vusi, shocked.

Parsons looks uncomfortably at his feet. “Can we just leave it?” he says and turns to walk quickly from the room.

“Can you believe it?” says Letti incredulously again. “I think it is my duty to tell you you’ve lost it,” she says to his retreating back.

However it is Vusi who is having an affair, with Siyanda. Vusi and Siyanda have a shaky start to their business partnership. Letti does not trust Siyanda and so Vusi is wary of her too. Later he embraces the opportunity of her business ideas to save Horizon Deep, and works hard to make their ideas work.

They begin the affair while Letti is away, after they have dinner to celebrate the Mine Boards decision to approve their Horizon Deep golf course and housing development for the mine land, rather than Barker Haines waste management facility. Over dinner they talk about their
childhood. When Siyanda pours Vusi champagne takes a sip and begins laughing. He does not like champagne. She also laughs and calls the waiter to order him a lager.

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry,” he says as he laughs into his hand.

“What can I say, you’re a township boy,” she replies.

“It’s in my blood. And you, (you’re from Orlando aren’t you?). But it doesn’t really show.”

“Well (I do visit, but)… she says and looks down.

“It can’t be that bad,” he says softly.

“It’s not the place. It’s the memories. My father was one of those old fashioned men who believe women should serve me while they sit around and achieve great things.”

“How did you get here then?”

“I was determined to prove to my father that I was clever.”

“And did you?”

“(I still don’t know). He still sits around, talks big with my brothers,” she said, picking up her champagne flute and shaking her head.

“And when you are out here in the world doing great things,” he says softly, smiling at her.

“So do you,” she whispers. Tilting her glass towards him she says, “Thank you for your vision.”

“I just knew that I wanted it to work, Siyanda.”

“And it will. Because of you,” she says looking at him sideways past her glass.

“And you.”

“Oh, please,” she laughs, “don’t be so modest.”

“I’m not Siyanda. (How could I have gotten here without you?)”

His lager arrives and the toast one another. “To the great Siyanda Mazibuko!” he says.

“To the great Vusi Moletsane!” They are smiling at one another is the soft light.

They drink and talk about business. Then she asks him, “Do you want dessert?”

“No,” he replies, “I’m actually full.”

“Good. Because I had something else in mind.”

“Well?”

“I was just thinking we could go for coffee somewhere else.”

“Coffee? I think they make pretty good chocolate mousse here.”

“I’m sure they do,” she says sipping her champagne and looking into his eyes.

He calls a waiter to order a dessert. They discuss his calling, and how he was lead to be a sangoma. He speaks about the dreams he has and she insists that she is sceptical. The only dreams she has are those she works hard to achieve.

“Then what is the difference?” he asks. He looks at her, and smiles. “Siyanda, I should go,” he says softly.

She slides her hand over his, looks up into his eyes and says, “We both should.”

“Siyanda this isn’t right.”

She lifts his hand and kisses it gently. “Does that feel wrong?” she asks. She pauses to look deeply into his eyes again and the then says, “I’m going to the ladies. If you are here when I get back, perhaps we should go to my place.” She stands and walks away, and Vusi shakes his head and looks slowly away.

Vusi feels guilty. He stays at the Rec drinking with Paul some nights because he does not want to go home, and lies to Letti about where he is. Letti tries to be more attentive and loving to him, asking why he is not eating, offering him massages and telling him he is working too hard when he comes home late and drunk. Also he starts to be more attentive to his wife. Vusi is wracked by guilt, but is uncertain what to do. He and Zeb even discuss polygamy.

“(I mean one wife is enough for me),” admits Vusi.

“Maybe it is because you don’t know what it is like to have two wives.”

“Bra Zeb,” he says more emphatically, “I’m happy with my woman.”

“You might change your mind later.”

“What are you saying, Bra Zeb? That you wouldn’t mind if I took another wife.”

“I didn’t say that,” he says with a smile.
“Either you are for polygamy or you are against it. Finished and klaar.”
“In other cases Vusi,” says Zeb knowingly, “it could be a good solution.”
“But not in your daughters case,” laughs Vusi.
“Letti wouldn’t like you having another wife.”
“Of course Bra Zeb.” He is still laughing. “(If I even mention this idea I will be in big trouble).”
“As stubborn as her mother,” says Zeb shaking his head, but smiling faintly.
“It would have been nice, it would have been nice,” says Vusi quietly under his breath.
“But it is hard enough to keep together one marriage,” he says with feeling.
“And today,” says Zeb sagely nodding his head, “it is the most important thing you can do.”
“Ja,” agrees Vusi softly.
He also speaks to Paul about how to proceed. He tells him that a friend of his has cheated on his wife after about two years of marriage do doesn’t know what to do.
“Just let it lie,” says Paul. “I mean if it was like a one off thing, like a mistake. Something he didn’t intend on happening again. I mean what is your buddies take on this, planning a repeat performance?”
“He certainly won’t do it again.”
Well if that’s for real. That’s what I’d do, just sit on it. You know, recommit myself to my wife.
“You don’t think that man would be a coward?”
“No. I mean why does someone confess to their wife that they cheated? They need their wife’s forgiveness to feel better about themselves?” he asks derisively. “I mean that’s the cowardly thing. Keep shtum, dealing with your guilt, that’s way harder.”
However, when Paul speaks to Nan and Lolly the next day, they tell him that the strength of the relationship is a factor. He finds Vusi at the Rec that evening and pulls him aside. They order two beers and sit at the bar.
“Listen, I’ve been thinking about your friends little issue, which we were talking about yesterday,” he says quickly, “and it seems things are not as cut and dried as I thought.”
There is a look of concern on Vusi’s face as he asks, “You think now he should tell his wife?”
“Well it’s not as simple as that. Basically it comes down to the strength of the relationship. If it is a strong and healthy relationship, then telling her could actually make the relationship stronger.”
Vusi seems unconvinced. “You think?”
“It makes sense doesn’t it?”
“What about his wife, what if she says it’s a breaking point?”
“What if their relationship is fragile?” Vusi is still unconvinced.
“Well then telling her could mean the end of the marriage.”
“My sense is that they have a strong, healthy marriage,” admits Vusi without much conviction.
“Well good, good,” says Paul, more sure of himself, “then he should just deal with it, come out in the open and move on.”
“Just like that?” asks Vusi incredulously.
Vusi eventually asks Paul if he knows who the mysterious friend is, and Paul tells him he thinks he has an idea. Vusi asks if Paul is judging him and he admits that he has done similar things in relationships and feels he cannot judge Vusi.
“Paul, do you mind if I off load?” asks Vusi self-consciously. When Paul nods Vusi asks, “You won’t say anything?”
“What?” ask Paul with a smile, an invitation for him to speak.
“You don’t know how much I hate myself right now,” he says angrily. “When I got married I took those vows and I believed it then, honestly, faithfully. Now that I have done this thing I want to be honest again, tell my wife, but if I tell her then.” He stops short and looks into his beer glass.
“You kill the one thing you want to keep alive,” Paul finishes for him.
“I don’t know what to do man, I don’t want to kill what we have.”

“Look man, I had some good things in my life,” he says shaking his head, “and I just ended up shooting them all to flames. So I am not the guy to ask relationship advice from, by any means. And now that I know who is involved, I’m probably too cowardly to try. I don’t want to be held responsible if everything goes down wrong, you know,” he says with a sad laugh.

“What use are you?” asks Vusi wryly.

Letti has a long standing history of jealousy, especially provoked by Siyanda Mazibuko. When she becomes involved in the development at the mine, Letti feels that Vusi is spending too much time at work. She asks repeatedly that he spend more time with her, and he tells her he cannot take time off work. Her dislike of Siyanda continues to be openly expressed. She asks if he could work without Siyanda and he tells her that she is his business partner and that it is not possible. One night he reminds her that he will not be able to attend a family supper because of a business meeting.

“Where is this meeting?” she asks, wearily.

“It’s at the Cinnamon, (which means it will be quite late). It’s a crucial networking opportunity for us. You know for the development on Horizon Deep?”

“Who’s us?” she asks, tilting her head backward and looking at him sideways.

“Us. Us. Me. And uSiyanda.”

“Fine,” she says, turning away. She turns back and smiles slowly, “So long as you’re back in my bed before I fall asleep.”

“Sure,” he says softly, and smiles back. He leans closer to her and says softly, “I love you.”

Letti controls her jealousy, but when Vusi tells her at the last minute that he and Siyanda are going to Cape Town for a conference, she is upset. Vusi feels bad, guilty because of his infidelity and worried that he and Siyanda will be alone together again. When he tells Stella, his secretary, he will miss his wife over the weekend, she suggests that Letti go with him to Cape Town. They have a romantic weekend, but Siyanda is confused. She felt that the weekend in Cape Town would cement their relationship.

Siyanda feels that he is perfect for her, but that he has become distant. She complains to Lee that just as they got closest he backed off. She asks him what their affair means and believes that they should keep seeing each other. When he tells her that he is a married man and devoted to his wife, she tells him she does not want to replace Letti. She feels that they have something outside of his relationship with his wife, and that it is also special.

In order to spend time with him, she arranges a business dinner meeting. The woman who they are to meet is suspiciously held up. Vusi is angry that the woman is so unprofessional and Siyanda asks “if it is such a trial having dinner with [her]”. Although Vusi is angry, Siyanda keeps telling him that they need her. She calls and suggests that they meet at her house in order to shorten her travelling time. They leave the restaurant and go to her house. When they are sitting drinking coffee on her couch, Vusi asks with a smile “Was she ever going to come?”

“Yes, of course, (you heard me speaking to her).”

“Actually I didn’t.”

“What,” she says looking upward and smiling, “so you think I brought you here just to have my way with you?”

“Ja. Maybe.”

She leans forward and puts her mug on the table. “Although the thought of having you here. Alone with me. That doesn’t hurt. But seriously I didn’t plan it. But now that you are here, I think we must just make the most of it.”

They stare into each other’s eyes and Vusi leans forward to kiss her. He sits back and she leans over to him. They kiss a while longer until Vusi says, “Siyanda”, softly and pushes her gently away.

“Do you want me to beg you for this?” she asks, frustrated. They are sitting up right, and her hands still hold his face.

He shakes his head. “No. I don’t want this.” He tries to turn away from her, but she holds him.
“I think you do.” She leans in to kiss him again, but he pushes her away, and stands up. Walking away from her he says, “It’s not going to work.”

“It’s working just fine,” she says turning toward him, “now you’ve just killed the moment.”

She puts an arm behind her head and leans back on the couch. He turns away from her and starts buttoning his shirt. “I’m sorry,” he says.

“For what,” she asks, upset, “For loving your wife?”

Turning to her he asks, “Are you ok with this?”

Shrugging her shoulders she says, “With rejection? Who is? But I guess it builds character.”

“So I guess we move on.”

“If that’s what you want.”

“That’s what I want Siyanda. I love my wife.”

“Fine,” she says and sighs, “Why do you have to be so damn good?”

“I don’t think I qualify for good anymore Siyanda.”

She stands and says firmly, “A little tip from me. Don’t go confessing this to Letti. It won’t make you feel any better.”

“So we move on.”

“If that’s what you want. Business. From now on it’s business.” She plays with the buttons on his shirt, looks at the floor and then looks into his eyes. He smiles at her and she smiles back.

Nan and Parsons: “We’ve never slept apart”

Nandipha and Parsons Matabane have been together and married for many years. They have lived all these years with Parson’s parents, Zeb and Agnes. Nan is a presenter for On! TV’s LiveTime and is HIV positive. She was raped many years ago, and contracted the disease then. Parsons is an entrepreneur. He most recently owned a jewellery store where he manufactured gold jewellery. Since the closure of the mine, his store has been threatened with closure. Without a direct source of gold, he will be unable to offer his customers competitive prices any longer. He has therefore decided to help his parents with their proposal to work with Siyanda Mazibuko on the low cost housing within the Horizon Deep development.

Nan does not feel that he should be devoting his energy to the housing development bid. She feels that he should invest in his own business, the business he has already started. Soon after she discusses this with him, he begins to avoid her. He stays out drinking at the Rec without telling her he will be home, he refuses to have breakfast with her and he leaves when she asks to speak to him.

She is upset that he refuses to discuss his anger with her, and keeps asking him to talk to her. He repeatedly refuses. He is angry that she did not support him, and she is unsure how she could have expressed her opinion without upsetting him.

“You’ve got to be really clever how you handle them,” Letti advises her.

“I just want to be honest.”

“If you want your own way,” Letti says laughing, “you’ve got to just play with them.”

“What do you mean?” asks Lolly, also laughing.

“Well you have to think of what you really want and make them think its their idea.”

“That’s all very good in theory,” says Lolly, “but how does it really work?”

“I can’t do that. I don’t want to do that,” sings Nan swaying impatiently from side to side.

“Okay, the just be open and honest with him. Talk to him. Find out how he feels.”

“I am open and I am honest,” says Nan with frustration.

“Are you sure you’re not just being supportive?” Lolly says, as though it were obvious.

She continues with feeling, leaning in closer to Nan, “You know, maybe he is so wrapped up in his own problems that he doesn’t even read you properly. Sometimes you have to be really obvious with men, to make them see the light.”

“You’re absolutely right,” says Nan with an adamant shake of the head, “and I’m going to do whatever it takes to sort this thing out.”

The next morning Parsons asks her to meet at Papa G’s bar to talk. She comes in and she says she cannot stay long. He hands her a glass of orange juice he ordered for her.

“Why are we here?” she asks, sitting back on her stool.
“We can’t go on like this. We have to sort this out.” He shakes his head slowly, leaning in toward her over the high table.

“I wish you had told me this last night. I stayed up, tossing and turning thinking you were going to tap me and say you wanted to talk.”

“No, I didn’t want to deal with this last night,” he says softly.

“It was horrible. I thought you were going to sleep on the couch.”

“I’d be lying if I said it didn’t cross my mind.” He bites his lip and looks down.

“What stopped you?”

He looks up slowly and directly into her eyes, “We’ve never slept apart baby.”

She returns his look then sighs, “Just tell me something. What should I have done if I thought you were making the wrong decision? Just tula?”

Speaking quickly and with a frown he says, “No, of course not. I just thought that telling me now was just off my baby.”

Also frowning she responds, “But it was to stick to your career. I mean you were thinking of dropping Deep Gold in favour of something was just written down on a piece of paper.”

“It’s not just that, I mean (what are you accusing me of)? Of not taking charge of my life and depending on someone else.”

“I didn’t mean that my love. I just think that Deep Gold can make you work for yourself.”

No he speaks slowly and angrily “I mean, what you are implying? That you’re sick of living with my family? That you’re sick of them supporting you?”

“Well we do need our own space,” she says slowly, looking directly at him.

“No we need money,” he says adamantly. Shaking his head he continues, “Lots of money. Medical aid only lasts so long (and ARVs are expensive). And that development project was going to give us chunks of money. A nice cushion.”

“You live in fear all the time. Living with me causes you pain,” she whispers.

He looks down and away from her, then quickly back. “Nandipha I am terrified of losing you. I’m terrified that one day I won’t be able to look after you.”

They look into each other’s eyes. “I’m sorry I hurt your feelings,” Nandipha whispers.

They both smile and keep gazing at one another until Georgie interrupts them.

Len and the “Secret Admirer”: Lips only

Len receives and email from a woman who tells him she wants to meet him. Lolly warns him that she could be a freak, but he says he has a good feeling about her. She tells him that she wants to kiss him “before they say a word”. Lolly says that she must be a “woman who knows what she wants” and that she agrees. She says she can understand why she would want to kiss him before speaking with him because women can tell everything they need to know about a man from the way he kisses. She says the most erotic thing a man can do when kissing is to close his eyes. This makes him “vulnerable and romantic” that he is “surrendering himself to the moment”.

“Sounds like woos-city to me,” remarked Len.

“You say woos, I say sensitive,” sighed Lolly.

“Sensitive is a good thing, sensitive can open all kinds of doors. Maybe that’s not such a bad thing. Okay, eyes closed, lips warm, wet”

At the time designated by his “Secret Admirer” Len is waiting in Papa G’s bar. Lolly and Paul arrive. Len throws up his hands, saying, “It’s nearly one o’clock. Where is she? I’m starting to think this is all a hoax.”

“Just one look is all you might need, Len,” encourages Lolly.

“Come on you’re the master, man.” says Paul massaging his shoulders as though he were a boxer about to take the ring.

Lolly spars with him until he smiles and says: “Yes I am. Don’t I look good?” He runs his hand through his well gelled hair.

“You’re taking this a little seriously man,” laughs Paul.

“What do you mean?” laughs Len back. “I have a good feeling about this girl. She’s prepared to take what she wants. That’s exciting.”

Lolly does more punching at him, a deep grin across her face.
A beautiful blonde woman in a glittering black outfit walks into the bar, looks at her watch and then around the bar. Len turns around, turns back to Lolly and Paul exhaling a sigh. “Okay, get out of here.”

Paul grabs Lolly’s arm and they run to another table, just as Len raises his arm to catch the woman’s attention. She smiles and walks toward him. He stands to greet her.

“Hi,” he says extending his hand for her to shake, “Len Cooper.”

“Like I said” she breathes, “lips only.”

He turns to Paul and Lolly standing behind him, then turns to his drink on the table. He grabs his whiskey glass and slowly raises it to his lips. He un hurriedly lowers his glass to the table again while his “Secret Admirer” turns to her left and smiles. As Len closes his eyes, wipes a fist across his mouth to dry his lips and turns around, the blonde woman is replaced by Slu standing in her place. With his eyes still closed he leans forward and gentle searches for the lips of the person in front of him. Slu stands very still and straight as Len kisses him longly and softly. When he gradually opens his eyes a look of horror and disgust appear on his face.

“Hello sexy,” says Slu without a smile on his face or in his voice.

It takes a moment for Len to react. He pulls abruptly away from Slu, hastily wiping a hand across his mouth. “Slu!” he yelled. “What are you doing?”

Slu watches his disgust with distain and irritation. “I’m just doing my job, man,” he said, striding away from Len who is furiously wiping his mouth again. Lolly and Paul give high-fives to each other behind Len’s back. They laugh and hug one another as they walk away. Len grabs his drink and sips it, turning to Paul, Lolly and blonde haired woman.

“Brilliant, man. Excellent!” yells Paul, while Lolly laughs.

Len walks over to the bar with his empty glass. “Slu,” he shouts. “I want a tequila. Now.” He paces back and forth between the bar and his friends, a look of repugnance and anger on his face as they laugh more and more.

“I don’t want to know who you are,” he cries, pointing at the blonde “Secret Admirer.”

Later Lolly and Paul tease him. They get him to say that he had no idea he was kissing Slu until he opened his eyes. He admits that it was a fair trade for having made Lolly think she had a man stalking her. Paul tells Lolly she got him good, and hands her the camera they used to photograph the kiss. Len asks who the emails were from, and takes the camera from Lolly to look at the picture. Paul says he wrote the emails to get back at Len for writing about him, and Len deletes the photograph.

“The beauty of digital baby,” he smirks.

Len turns his laptop around, showing Len the email he has sent to the entire staff of On! TV. He says he sent it just in time, and that Len and almost erased all photographic evidence.

“The beauty of digital baby,” smirks Lolly back at Len. “Smile,” she says as she takes a photograph of the pained expression on Len’s face.

Cherel and Rajesh: When the Prince falls in love with the witch

Cherel and Rajesh are flung together under violent circumstances. When Cherel treats a man who allegedly murdered his wife harshly on her show, he takes her hostage. Graham Davis keeps her locked in the flat where she is staying, forces her to cook for him, and beats her when the food or her behaviour does not meet his requirements. When she tries to escape, he shoots her in the shoulder. He tells her it is her fault that he had to hurt her.

Rajesh arrives at the flat because he is concerned that she disappeared. He has recently began to feel a romantic attraction for Cherel and is despondent at her distance. Farnk counsels him to give her “the space she needs”, telling him that “that’s what a leopard does, it stalks”. Rajesh has tried calling, but she keeps telling him to stay away, or she is unavailable. When he refuses to leave until he sees her, Graham pulls him into the flat, and holds him hostage as well. Eventually Rajesh bargains with him, offering him a million rand and an airplane ticket to wherever he wants to go. Graham has to turn on his cell phone to get a bank account number, and the police are able to trace where he is. Cherel and Rajesh are saved.

Rajesh insists that Cherel stay with him the first night after their ordeal. He is concerned for her sense of well-being and safety. The morning after this first night together she tells him,
“You know actually I woke up last night, and I didn’t know where I was. And then I felt the warmth of your body.”

“You should have woken me,” he tells her.

“No, it wasn’t necessary. It was actually enough to know you were there.” When she says she is ready to leave his house, he says she can stay and invites her to have glass of wine. She stays and asks, “What is it? What is it Rajesh? You save my life, you pay a million rand and then.”

“What?” he asks.

“And then you walk away from me. I don’t know what’s going on in your head. I don’t know what kind of game you’re playing here.”

“Cherel,” he says softly taking her glass and putting it on the table, “you have just been through a terrible ordeal. And you don’t owe me anything.”

She stares at him, and then begins nodding. “I do,” she whispers.

“No you don’t. And I’m not playing any games. I did what I did because I care. That’s all.”

She stands, sighs and turns away, but he catches her hand and pulls her back onto the couch with him. “Rajesh,” she whispers as he puts a hand into her hair and gently guides her lips towards his. They kiss, and their relationship begins.

Their relationship provokes a variety of responses. The On! TV employees are surprised that the good, upstanding Rajesh Kumar would become romantically involved with the conniving and deceitful Cherel de Villiers. Lee is outraged. She feels that Rajesh is reacting to their tumultuous break-up. She wants “to know what [she] has done wrong, so that [she] can make it right.” Lee lied to Rajesh about her involvement in the San Fernando coup de tat organised by her father Barker Haines. She also had an affair with Alec Matthews. He felt that he could not continue a relationship with a woman without ethical integrity, and so broke off their involvement. When Lee tries to speak to him about their painful past and its influence on his present affair with Cherel, he avoids the subject and focuses on work telling her he does not “have time for her paranoia”. Eventually they argue and he tells Lee she forced him to “cross a moral line” and “that Cherel is [his] antidote to [her]”. Lee’s deceit hurt him so deeply that he has sought solace with a woman he knows to be morally questionable. Lee and Rajesh have had difficulty in “redefining their professional relationship” because they keep “bumping into” each other. Rajesh “wishes that he didn’t have to see [Lee]”, believes that they can “never be friends”. She “promises to leave him alone”, “to [his] own business” tells him that she “did not deserve [him]”.

Lee is certain that Cherel is manipulating Rajesh, that she will destroy him. Cherel asks Lee to leave Rajesh alone. She claims that “this isn’t about [her] political manoeuvring, it’s about Rajesh finding happiness.” This battle is conducted behind closed doors, but also at the boardroom table. Cherel and Lee clash continuously at executive committee meetings. Lee, determined to protect Rajesh and speaks with Cherel about the relationship. It is clear to Lee that Cherel has feelings for Rajesh and so she uses this against her. She tells that Cherel that she thinks “once two people have been lovers there is a connection that never goes away” and threatens to rekindle the romance between Rajesh and her, should Cherel refuse to be more submissive at meetings. She also tells her that Rajesh’s family will not approve of her, and that they are still close to Lee. At the next meeting, as they argue about the time slot for one of Cherel’s shows, and Lee puts a hand on Rajesh’s arm. Cherel immediately capitulates.

Rajesh is caught in the middle. He attempts to remain impartial to either Lee or Cherel’s attempts to have him on their side. He argues with both, and his and Cherel’s relationship suffers. He counsel’s Cherel to remain professional and tells her that “if [he] thinks [she] is right he will back her, he [he] is not interested in a low end catfight.” When she surrenders to Lee, he is pleased that she has learnt to negotiate and compromise more. However, Cherel continues to react in extreme ways to Rajesh, getting angry at him for not defending her at committee meetings, shouting at him and running away. Cherel apologises, but their relationship is never smooth.

Over a glass of wine one evening Rajesh says, “Do me a favour. Don’t antagonise Lee. You have the upper hand now. Just let it be. This is hard enough for us all.”

“OK, can I speak now?” asks Cherel. She looks down and sighs. Softly she speaks, “Do you want to walk away Rajesh?”
“That’s not what I said.”
“Answer the question. Is this too hard for you? Do want to end this?”
“No, that’s not what I meant.” They both fall silent and look into their glasses. “Why?” he asks, “Do you want to walk away?”
“No,” she returns quickly, and then quickly looks away. “Just don’t do anything stupid. If you want me to walk away, just tell me you’re in love, that you want a good little wife, and I’ll run.” She smiles.
He smiles back at her and they look at one another for a while. “Don’t worry,” he says taking a sip of his wine, “that’s not going to happen anytime soon.”
Cherel’s face softens as she smiles at him. They continue drinking their wine.
Then Anton Borneman reappears on the Deep. He is the son of Slang Borneman, a man Cherel says she skilled in self defence many years ago. Cherel is angry that On! TV shows a programme about the Borneman children. She accuses him of not supporting him, and of keeping his distance from her. Later she apologises for her outburst. At the bar she finds Rajesh having a drink on his own. “This seat taken?” she asks.
“Sit wherever you damn well please Cherel.”
“Would it help to say I’m sorry?” she asks as she sits down on a couch next to him.
He looks up at her, and then away, shaking his head.
“I’m sorry okay. I’m under a lot of pressure lately, and it seems that no matter what I do, my past seems to catch up with me.”
“I can understand that.”
“Can you?” she asks softly.
He turns to look directly at her. “Earlier in my office you asked if I know you. I do. Better than you think.” He looks away and picks up his drink. “Which in part explains why you exploded the way you did.”
“Oh course Rajesh,” she says, looking at him sideways, “always trying to do the right thing with everyone.” She smiles and looks down at her hands. “It can’t be easy always doing the right thing. At least that isn’t something I have ever been brave enough to try.”
“And I know it can’t be easy to be you. To take a step forward only to have your past pulling you back again.”
She sighs and turns her head away from him. “Why does it have to be so hard. Everything I own. Everything I’ve achieved. I’ve fought for.” She frowns and looks down, almost in tears, “One battle after another.”
“Ja, well. You’re a strong woman.”
“I don’t want to be a strong woman anymore Rajesh,” she returns quickly. “I’m tired of being a strong woman. The truth is, I’ve lived like that so long, I don’t know what else to do. Between me and you its exhausting.” She laughs a small laugh. “But look where you are now. You’re a popular talk show host. A self made woman,” he says getting up to sit beside her on a couch.
“You have no idea, do you?” she asks.
“Well tell me,” he asks firmly.
“I want to be happy,” she whispers wistfully. And then angrily, “I want to be peacefully happy. No damn interference. Just left alone like a normal person.”
“Well, maybe you need a heart if quartz.”
“Rajesh, I’m sorry. I went over the top.”
“Well things will get better. They have to.”
“I wish I could believe that. But this is Cherel we’re talking about. To some a villain, to some a curiosity. But never the innocent victim.”
After the On! TV piece on the Borneman children, Rajesh is unsure of how to act toward her. He thinks Anton’s anger is understandable, “after all [she] did take his father away from him”. He admits that he does not know what he would do in a similar situation, and feels that she has been acquitted in a court of law and that he cannot disagree with a judge. However, he is not sure that she should be engaging with Borneman again, for the sake of the television show. She feels that soon after their hostage ordeal, she is “pushing this too far”. Cherel invites Anton onto her show so that they can discuss his feels about her killing his father. She feels it will make good TV
and improve her ratings. On the show she taunts and provokes him until he lunges at her and tries to strangle her.

After the show, he goes to see her in the hospital. She cannot speak, so she has to write him messages on paper. As he walks through the door, she is sitting cross-legged on the bed. She smiles broadly and happily, and pulls him gently closer to her. She begins writing.

“I believe you saved my life?” she writes.

“Lolly had a lot to do with it as well,” he shrugs her compliment off.

She smiles at him and mouths, “Thank you.” She begins writing again, “I thought that little bastard was going to kill me.”

“You went too far Cherel,” he says to the top of her head, bent over as she writes again. She looks up, surprised as he continues. “You pushed and you pushed that boy, until he snapped.” He pauses, and then goes on slowly, “Yeah, you’ll get your ratings. But right now, that boy, is sitting in a holding cell, charged with attempted murder, because you wanted to sell advertising.”

There are tears in her eyes as she shakes her head, and gulps a ragged “No” from her wounded throat.

“I always knew you were ruthless. But I never really knew what that meant. Now I have seen you in action, and I really don’t like what I saw.” His eyes are cold. They do not acknowledge that she is still shaking her head and there are tears in her eyes. “I think what he said is right,” he says, driving his point home, “you really do seem to shoot a lot of people in self defence. People who get near you, do always seem to get hurt.” His cold, steady gaze is directed straight into her tear-filled eyes. “And all I know is I need to get the hell away from you.” His jaw is set as he says, “Consider what we had over.” He turns abruptly without waiting for her to respond and leaves the room.

As the door closes her lips quiver with repressed emotion. She throws her writing pad on the bed, revealing the words “I love you” and turns to look at the door. She lies down, crying silently.

When Cherel returns to work from the hospital her behaviour is increasingly aggressive, erratic and unpredictable. She has more and more violent outbursts, she is confronted by members of the public who feel she treated Anton Borneman unfairly. She begins to see the “restless dead”, the spirits of the people she has killed who are seeking their vengeance. Vusi Moletsane dreams of her, and tells her that his ancestors say she needs cleaning of the evil she has brought into the world. She is committed to a mental institution after she tries to cut out with a craft knife, the place on the top of her head where these spirits are touching her. Rajesh continues to visit her and listen to her in the mental hospital, until she shouts at him, telling him to leave her alone. He feels that he owes her his support, but keeps his distance and remains in contact with her doctor.

**Agnes and Zeb: The birthday gift**

Before Agnes’ birthday, Zebedee decides that he wants to get her the perfect gift. He wants to thank her for supporting him through his recovery and through their financial difficulties. He was injured in a mining accident, and couldn’t walk for several months. He lost his job, and the family is in serious financial difficulty because of it.

He enlists the help of Maggie Webster, who works for Agnes at the Rec. Maggie fishes to find out what Agnes’ favourite things are.

“If you could have anything, what would you ask for?”

“Some help for Mavis I suppose,” she answers distractedly.

“Ah, that’s nice,” says Maggie. “Anything else.”

“Happiness for my family.”

“I mean for yourself. Your favourite things for you.”

She looks confused. “Seeing Neo asleep.” She looks up and smiles. “Yes like the angel he is.” And she adds, waving a hand upwards, “And of course, singing praises to the Lord.”

“Oh that’s nice. But something you can pick up. Like a thing.”

“No,” she says dreamily. “It’s too expensive.”
“Yes, but if expense wasn’t a problem.” She smiles and rolls her eyes playfully.
“Since when is expense not a problem?”
“Like now, like when we’re dreaming.” She says lightly and laughs.
“Silk,” sighs Maggie happily.
“You know real silk.” She puts on an imaginary dress on and her eyes close in the pleasure of the dream. “They say, when you wear it, it just, it makes you feel like a princess.”
When Zeb arrives after they have been talking she says to Maggie, “This is my gift. See that he is walking. What more do I need.”
Zeb is also on the look-out, and notices that Agnes’ gown is old and uncomfortable. She tells him that maybe, when they are “back on their feet” she will be able to get herself something better. He decides that Agnes needs a silk gown, and he checks with Maggie that this is an appropriate present. Maggie is very excited, and offers to help Zeb buy the gift. He assures her that he knows where to go and what he is looking for. When he shows her what he has bought, Maggie tells him that he has not bought real silk. He has spent R500 on an synthetic fibre gown. He has spent R500 on an synthetic fibre gown. Maggie tells him to get his money back, and promises to find him a real silk gown. However, she searches everywhere and cannot find a gown in Zeb’s price range.
He decides that he will ask Slu to help him find a real silk gown in his price range. Over the next few weeks he must dodge Agnes disapproval of phone calls from a gangster looking for her husband, and he must reassure her that he is not getting himself embroiled in Georgie Zambdelas’s new casino scheme.
When the family surprise her on her birthday she is very happy with all her gifts. She opens the gifts from her children and blows the candles out from her cake before Zeb presents her with his gift. Taking it from the box she says, “I always wanted real Chinese silk. How did you know?” She looks at him and wags her finger playfully, “Maggie and Slu. That’s what you were up to.”
“You thought I was gambling again,” he says laughing.
“I’ll just have to phone and apologise,” she says laughing and tying the gown around herself. “This is so beautiful,” she exclaims.
“Mama you look beautiful,” says Nandipha.
“I didn’t know your husband had such good taste,” laughs Letti
Adrianna and Laurent

Tiffany: Okay, so can you tell me what is happening in that photograph? The story of the photograph?
Adrianna: You first (she smiles at Laurent).
Laurent: This is party we had here at the mariner. With friends from Belgium. With Robert Winkler. And Rieke. No it wasn’t. Eric.
Adrianna: Claret.
Laurent: Eric Claret. (inaudible 2) And it was here. It was here at the mariner. We invited thirty forty people. And it was quite at the beginning, that we knew each other, I think.
Adrianna: Ja, it was that first summer. I was still innocent.
Tiffany: (laughs 2)
Laurent: And it was (2) and it was here at the mariner.
Adrianna: But he said it was a dress up party. So we were the only people dressed up.
Tiffany: (laughs 2)
Adrianna: Crazy hats on.
Tiffany: What are you dressed as?
Adrianna: (2) Oh, as artists.
Laurent: As artists.
Tiffany: (laughs 2)
Laurent: just a little crazy, crazy vibe. Ha ha.
Tiffany: (2) So this is when you first, first met?
Laurent: No we didn’t meet there no.
Adrianna: Ja.
Laurent: we knew each other, but not so long.
Tiffany: Not so long.
Laurent: We met in, uh, [a coastal town].
Adrianna: We’d probably known each other about a month. Ja about a month. But I don’t think we’d sobered up yet.
Tiffany: (laughs 2)
Both: (wry laughter 2) Ja. That’s right.
Adrianna: It was at that party, that first summer. Then.
Tiffany: Ok. So how did you meet?
Laurent: We met, uh, her brother. I knew her brother already. And there was a little party at (inaudible), a bar.
Adrianna: A bar. A nightclub
Laurent: You know a little disco bar. Up the road to the direction of [a small town]. And I met her brother there. So we were talking. And at a certain moment I saw a girl sitting at a little table there. Ah this is my sister from [a small town]. So we started talking, she said she was an artist, so there was this automatically. You know we, start to communicate about art. We have this common interest.
Adrianna: and we both like to party.
Tiffany: (laughs) So you had those things in common?
Laurent: she came to the house, and I show her my art. And there was the first kiss. And that was it.
Tiffany: Ah, that's lovely.
Adrianna: (laughs 2)
Tiffany: Sorry (and laughs)
Laurent: we don’t want to make you cry now (laughs)
Adrianna: This is supposed to be work now (laughs 2)
Tiffany: I know
All: (laugh 2)
Tiffany: (3) Ok. So. After this, what happened then?
Adrianna: After we met or after the picture?
Tiffany: After you met.
Adrianna: It was summer holidays, and I remember I had just finished quite a hectic year. Been recovering from another break-up, you know, month earlier. You know working hard. Studying a course, in politics, working, just working hard. And I pretty much just wanted to go (woosh), you know, have a really good summer. And I remember. Ja. Because. So we met at the nightclub. And I was staying with my brother over the weekend. And my family wasn’t too impressed with my behaviour. Because I was partying. And they heard Adrianna is with a much older guy. And dah dah dah.
Laurent: Um
Adrianna: So I kind of weren’t too happy with me. So I went, Ok. I definitely know what I’m going to be doing with my summer then. I’m going to be spending it with him (laughs 2).
Laurent: Um.
Adrianna: So that’s what I did. Anyway. I don’t know how it happened. I was driving back and forth quite a bit (3). Oh, I know. Let me go back a bit.
Laurent: Ja, you still went on holiday in [a city].
Adrianna: (3) We met. This is how it went. We met. And the on Monday. He said to me, Oh, there’s an opening of a little art gallery in Bathurst. And I was like cool. I’m going. And it was the first time I’d been asked to exhibit work, outside of university. And we went and we met. And there were our art pieces, exhibited next to each other.
Tiffany: Oh, how awesome.
Adrianna: Ja. Although his was very big. And mine was very small (laughs)
Laurent: (laughs 2)
Adrianna: and I stayed and had dinner with him that night. And then I went to [a city]. And he had a big exhibition. And I missed that, because I was in [a city]. But we just stayed in touch all that time. He gave me lovely phone calls. Charmed me (3). You know. Filled my head with wonderful ideas and dreams (laughs 2).
Tiffany: (laughs)
Adrianna: So then I came back here. And he had friends to stay, so I kind of like, just moved in. (2) That holiday hey?
Laurent: Ja.
Adrianna: And I was driving back and forth a lot. But it was just like, a good summer. We partied a lot. A lot of people around.
Tiffany: So, would you say. The reason you first made that connection, was because you both have those things in common? Like you’re both artists, you enjoy a party?
Laurent: Ja definitely, we had that connection.
Adrianna: Definitely the art, politics, art. We can just sit and talk, for hours. Now, just like he said, when you’ve heard the same story ten times, it’s not so cool anymore. But still.
Tiffany: You don’t forget that you’ve heard it before?
Laurent: (laughs)
Tiffany: Pretend like it’s new. (3) So, what do you like about this photograph?
Laurent: Well, it’s just a vibe photograph, for that moment.
Tiffany: It captures the way you felt at that party.
Adrianna: Ja, just a crazy time.
Tiffany: Ok, so it’s just the fun of the party and (inaudible)
Adrianna: I love Laurent in that photo.
Tiffany: What do you love about him?
Adrianna: He just looks like a naughty monkey.
Laurent: (laughs 2)
Tiffany: Ja he does look naughty.
Laurent: (laughs 2)
Adrianna: Ja, we were just having the time of our lives. And you can see it. Just giggling. Champagne. Crazy hats. Sunset.
Tiffany: Ja, I like the sunset in the background.
Adrianna: So um.
Tiffany: Ok, and is there anything you don’t like about the photograph?
Adrianna: (3) Um
Laurent: (8) No.
Adrianna: No. I do look a little ugh. A little more make-up (laughs) No just joking.
Tiffany: Couldn’t be any better?
Adrianna: Um. No it's a lovely photo.
Tiffany: It's a lovely photo. (3) and in this photograph, how are you like the usual couple? Like. If you can think of what a normal, usual, everyday, couple-next-door kind of couple is like? How are you like them?
Adrianna: So like...
Laurent: Well all artists are a little crazy. So that is the only difference.
Tiffany: Ok.
Adrianna: Are you asking how we see this as normal?
Tiffany: Well, how you see yourself as being the same as other couples.
Adrianna: (4) Um. Well, we’re standing next to each other (laughs 2).
Tiffany: Ok, like that.
Both: (laugh and agree)
Adrianna: Ja. We’re sharing a moment. I suppose. If other people saw us. they’d say, ah, there tow people, together, they’re happy. They’re sharing a moment. Obviously agreeing on a funny moment together.
Tiffany: And is there anyway you are not like the usual couple in this photograph?
Laurent: (3) The same photograph? Ja, it’s good. (4) (laughs)
Adrianna: Well, apart from the grey beard
Laurent: (laughs 2)
Adrianna: And the. Young face.
Both: (laugh 4)
Tiffany: So the age difference?
Adrianna: (laughing) I’d say the age gap is. Unusual, in this part of the world. So that’s all.
Tiffany: Ja, I suppose it is unusual. (2) And how is that for you too?
Laurent: (2) Ja, sometimes it has problems, ja. Because I will meet. I will try to meet a lot of people of my age group. Well, I like to go out with young people, but I meet with a lot of people of my age group. Also because of the art, the business we’re in. because they are the buyers not the young people. And sometimes, for her it is not always so easy. Because we have dinners, sometimes. With a lot of people, older. Mature, whatever. And we’re missing out sometimes on the younger people. Especially when we are going in the business direction.
Adrianna: And they’re all people with multiple homes, kids who’ve grown up, travelled the world. Very different to me.
Tiffany: Yes, a very different experience to you.
Laurent: they have another life. And a lot of them don’t work. They don’t work anymore. They’re retired. They just have money. They spend it. They travel more. So that is a difference. And there is sometimes Lin has a problem, because she doesn’t meet enough of people of her age group. What I like that too, but sometimes with business I have to take priority and first go out with those who will buy, who are interested and that. Before. We take the other part.
Adrianna: But I must say, when he says age group. I think it’s less about his age group and more about the European community. I don’t think it’s necessarily. I think our mutual friends, in [a coastal town], small town, are all age groups. But I think he seeks out more the Europeans. In [a coastal town].
Laurent: Because they are also the buyer, you know.
Adrianna: And they are also, they speak in other languages.
Laurent: And that is hard for her.
Adrianna: And I just feel, a bit, I don't know that world
Laurent: And sometimes the communication, six people sitting around a table. And they are all speaking French, Flemish. And it's annoying. You know. She's missing out. It's boring when everyone else is talking talking. And here and there someone will think to talk in English, so she can understand. Of course three minutes later they forget. They speak again in Dutch or Flemish or whatever. And that is not an easy thing for her. It is understandable.
Adrianna: It's not fun. I mean it can be fun. It's not my kind of fun. Sometimes that is Laurent's idea of a perfect evening. And I'll be like come on, let's go out, let's meet some people, other people, that I can just relax with. I find with European people, that group, I always have to censor myself. Whereas, lovely evenings, I enjoy them. But they are not the kind of evening I can just let go, and show my true colours, be rude, and crass and lower class. Like I am. So I think there is a mixture of culture, class, age group, all that.
Tiffany: Ok.
Adrianna: (2) But I must say, on the other hand. I probably also seek, mature company. To learn, to gain. Like there's pros and cons. I think sometimes, where I lack or Laurent won't lack. I think a lot of the things I need to do, Laurent has already done. And still. Not necessarily doing things. Working through feelings and insecurities and problems I had at my age, he's already been through them. And although he is sympathetic to them, I don't think he necessarily has the patience to endure them with me. (laughs)
Tiffany: Again (laughs)
Adrianna: Again (laughs)
Laurent (laughs)
Adrianna: So that can be where maybe I need to go and seek some younger people to go and bitch and moan to sometimes. Some girlfriends. Orr some poor people at my level who are struggling a bit more. So I think maybe I need to put some more energy into going to them. Instead of expecting Laurent to the only one to have to, deal with it all. And on the other hand I think it's incredibly fortunate that I am getting exposed, that I get to mix with this crowd from Europe. And Laurent is introducing me to all these people from all around the world. And they are obviously the art buyers, bug supporters of art in this country. And ja. Just for education. I've learnt how to really drink expensive wine now.
Tiffany: That's a good lesson to learn.
Laurent: (laughs 2)
Adrianna: And expensive wine (laughs 2). (inaudible 2). So I learn a lot. I think Laurent also. No. I can't keep up with him. It doesn't work the other way around.
All: (laugh)
Adrianna: He's still got too much energy. I would say if he was younger he wouldn't keep with me. But I can't keep up with him.
Tiffany: So you both kind of balance each other out. Sometimes you get to be younger than you are and sometimes you get to be older than you are.
Laurent: ja.
Adrianna: Something like that.
Tiffany: (2) Have you thought about learning French?
Adrianna: I would love to.
All: (laugh)
Laurent: She knows two sentences.
Adrianna: I must say in the Flemish. When I speak Afrikaans, if I try and speak it now I think I will be confusing it with the Flemish. I can understand when they speak slowly. I can get the gist of the conversation pick up quite a bit. Like I say, “Ek spreek Flamsch” (laughs).
Tiffany: I hear they are quite similar languages.
Adrianna: They are similar. (3) But I would love to learn another language and I have had a couple, I had a couple season once. And we are planning one again. And there I am very lucky to get that exposure and the opportunities from his life. So definitely we have so much to gain from each other's lives. But there is in the middle, a gap, or a hard part. I think I am very emotionally needy, where he is not. He doesn't need that. And he does as much as he can. But I think I'm, you know, it's just my nature. I think I put a lot of pressure on myself. Because I still have these
ideal of living in a home together, and marriage and children. Well not maybe children. But I have this romantic dream, you know.

Tiffany: Ja

Adrianna: There is a gap in the middle where there is perhaps. Hay, Laurent?

Laurent: Um.

Adrianna: Ok, nothing (laughs)

Laurent: (laughs)

Tiffany: How do you negotiate that. When it is difficult. When you feel, like you're at a dinner party and you feel you aren't connecting with the people. How do you deal with it?

Adrianna: (2) In those dinner parties. I talk and they drink (laughs)

All: (laughs)

Adrianna: No really. It was difficult. But we have been together over two years. Off and on sometimes (laughs 2) so there is. Ja, I feel a lot more secure. In the beginning I feel like, everyone was looking at me, as some so strange young girl. Not doing what a normal girl my age should be doing. So I think I had a lot of insecurities. I was very nervous around a lot of the people, but. But I think meeting Europeans are a lot more open minded, they are a lot more used to cross-culture or cross age group relationships there. You know, so. I'm fine, you know, I've gotten to know all these people really well. So I'm really comfortable. It was difficult for a while at the beginning. It was difficult at first.

Tiffany: But now you're fine.

Adrianna: Ja. It's fine. It's just sometimes it's just too many nights in a row (laughs 2).

Laurent: (laughs)

Adrianna: Then I start to get a bit frazzled. You know. But it's just that it's not necessarily a night where I'm just relaxing. And letting go of the day at work. It's more like work.

Tiffany: Oh.

Adrianna: And Laurent is does that and I like

Laurent: There is a big relation. So many fun. And so many (inaudible) at the same time. So most of the time when we have those people, then we take them out as well. so ok, they are friends, at the same time. You are doing your art

Tiffany: I see

Adrianna: I mean a lot of Europeans have houses here. So every two weeks someone will come on holiday. Then they leave and someone else arrives. So it's like a holiday and they like want to to. And they connect with Laurent first. And they are all very interested in supporting the arts here.

Laurent: And a lot of them are buyers already. Two of them who come here who have houses here. Like the (inaudible) eve are dealers. And then also the Hollanders who are still here, Helene and Andrea, are our art dealers, in Rotterdam. And they have house here. And we had we had a dinner with them, a lunch with them yesterday. And we have another dinner with them on Friday evening around seven o'clock. So that again is a fun thing, but at the same time it is of course.

Tiffany: It's also work.

Laurent: And of course parties it is not just the same as you just can relax, you know with friends. It is good but it still is bit conservative.

And Laurent is very good at that. And I'm not so good at that. So sit there and try to be polite. And not get too drunk. And embarrass myself.

Tiffany: (laughs)

Adrianna: It's just like work. Work evenings. But it is all lovely people

And do you, have time, when you do just have fun. Obviously you do. Stupid question

Both: (laugh)

Adrianna: We have fun all the time.

We have fun, but of course it is more restricted at things like that.

We often. We don't argue about it,. We often say. Like when he was away. He took me to Jeffrey's Bay for a few days. Just to get away. Just to chill out.

Tiffany: Ah. Nice.
Adrianna: And it was nice just to have some quality time. People. I mean Laurent is very extroverted. And everyone loves him, in this town. So I have to share him with everyone in this town. So sometimes I do wish we could have some more.

Laurent: More private time.

Adrianna: Ja. Private time. Not just private time where we are just exhausted, and we try to recover. But fun time, that is just for us. and we do. I mean this Friday evening, we will probably pop in to friends. Just like, mutual friends, that we just jol with.

Laurent: And now like the last few days. Like the last twelve days. Since last week. Thursday. Yesterday in fact. Everyday. There were lunches and dinners. And all of them. Nearly all of them, were combined with art.

Adrianna: Ja.

Laurent: And all this. In the meantime you do your normal job. You do your art work. And you get exhausted doing that. And the moment you are alone. Like tonight we have nothing. It is true. This week there is not a lot, I think from Thursday on. And of course that first day, you are so tired all you want to do is sit, in front of the television, and be half zombie.

Tiffany: Ja.

Adrianna: We don’t live together. But it is nice. If I need a night, some time. I can hide away in my little hole.

Tiffany: Ja.

Adrianna: And he can hide away in his hole. Ja. I mean, its like, we both, we both have a very hectic lifestyle. So I am always think, I’m always trying to find more of a routine. As artists we always have that. Not all artists. But I think most artists, have this, this quite hectic way. You are quite perfectionist, in your work. You try to do it the way you want to do it. Tiffany: Uhm.

Laurent: And perfect is quite hectic and concentrated. And quite extreme when you work. And we are both working and we come together, you know, and I would say it clashes. But you, you’re tense, you’re tense from what you are doing. It’s not always easy.

Tiffany: Ja, I can see that. And I imagine you are both very passionate people.

Adrianna: And I guess Laurent does get frustrated with me. Because I see, like normal couples, walking hand in hand along the beach. And I thin ooh, I want that. But. In fat, it’s just a dream, because. I wouldn’t choose that anyway. I can’t date an artist and then have a banker, stockbroker one moment, and then have whatever the next moment. But I think we are very similar in our natures, in our drive in our enthusiast. I must say. When my work is not going well, I think I am a night mare for everyone around me. Because I’m frustrated. And then if I leave my studio frustrated, my work is not going well, sometimes for days on end. Then I’m a bitch. Ja, and I don’t know where to turn all that energy, so I probably dump it all on him.
Laurent: And the dustbin. (laughs)
All: (laugh 3)
Adrianna: Ja, Laurent has been an artist a lot longer than me, so I’m still learning. I’m learning how. In a normal job you have. I mean I don’t know if academia is a normal job. (laughs 3)
Laurent: There is more security.
Adrianna: And you have people to do all, the organising, your admin, the finances.
Laurent: And you have more security. You know every month there is certain amount there.
Adrianna: And you can leave work. You have weekends. You can have you weekends. But here you have to learn to, you have to organise every little bit of your life yourself. From your time, to your finances, to your space, to you studio, to bills, to invoices, to banks, to public relations, to marketing. You have to do this all on your own. There is no support.
Laurent: Not a lot of support. In South Africa. There is a lot more support in Europe for artists. For when you start. Here there is no. so it is a very difficult thing to be an artist, to get known, to get that work out. Because some month you will sell for perhaps twenty, thirty thousand rand. And then next month, nothing.
Adrianna: (inaudible, speaking at the same time as Laurent)
Laurent: So it is not that you have a nice sale and you say I’m good for months. You sometimes have to do three months, and you have to split it up. It is a very difficult thing in the beginning.
Adrianna: Ja. I really struggled last year. I was living in an environment that was very difficult. That is only now changing. I was sharing a house with a Pilate’s studio. So, you know. I had. Healthy people, jumping around all day, everyday, all around my house. I mean, I nearly went crazy. And I think the first year I met him, I had a really good income. And I drove back and forth. And that was good for me, because I had a lot of money coming in.
Laurent: And that is gone.
Adrianna: And then suddenly. I moved here. And I had to struggle incredibly. And I think. It did put a lot of pressure on our relationship I was struggling. I wasn’t really happy. It’s a lot better this year. But in terms of struggling, with my character. I was insecure, I was terrified, I was. You just have to keep working and, kind of hope that it will work out. And believing but it is difficult. And I think. Ja, I think I gave Laurent hell when he was having fun and partying. I just couldn’t do it. Just relax and have fun. But ja. I’ve made some money this year. And I feel better about myself
Tiffany: That’s good
Adrianna: That’s all about balance.
Tiffany: It sounds like there was a lot happening all at once. You moved here, you were starting your career as an artist so you had to work harder than before. You were new in the relationship, is that right?
Adrianna: Well, we were living in the same time.
Tiffany: You were living in the same place.
Adrianna: Ja, living in the same place. We had been together maybe a year. I would spend, maybe two or three nights a week. And then we. We definitely had our own lives as well. I had friend there and my own life. And although we don’t live together.
Tiffany: So you moved here, and you got closer and all of these things.
Laurent: Ja she was, suddenly all independent. From a salary job, to self employed. Ja.
Tiffany: It all sounds quite difficult.
Adrianna: It was horrific.
Tiffany: Very difficult.
Adrianna: We had some wonderful times. But I found it a very hard year. Very stressful.
Laurent: Ja, that Pilates thing was very stressful. People running around, and the noise, and the missing privacy.
Adrianna: No privacy.
Laurent: As an artist the one thing you need is privacy.
Tiffany: (inaudible)
Adrianna: And as a woman, I think you need privacy. When you are depressed or hormonal. You need to hide away. You can’t just. Perfect people. But not so perfect. But rich housewives. All they have to do is look after their Pilate body.
Tiffany: (laughs)
Adrianna: And there I am, you know. In pyjamas and paint on my cheeks. I just want to kill them all. But I survived.
Tiffany: Shall we move onto another one of these photographs.
Laurent: This is the same period these ones. They are from our trip to Europe.
Adrianna: I meant to find a more recent one.
Tiffany: Let’s talk about that one
Laurent: It was done on one of those little booths. At a station.
Adrianna: On the Metro.
Tiffany: It is so sweet. I love the little angels in the background.
Laurent: (laughs 3)
Adrianna: In one of those little booths in the metro. (3) We had been. (3) We went on this lovely holiday. It was this rushed, whirlwind tour, of Paris. And Belgium.
Tiffany: Ah, stunning.
Adrianna: It was amazing. But I remember Laurent insisted on getting taxis everywhere. And I really wanted to try the metro so that was the one day that he said ok, today we will catch a train. So we were on the Metro, waiting for a train, and I grabbed him, pulled him into a booth. And we got this lovely photo from it.
Tiffany: That’s gorgeous (3) That’s really nice (4) So again what is it you like about the photograph
Laurent: It’s a moment ion time. We had a very good time. We went to see art of course, and museums. From the Pompidou to the Quay de Seine. It was ah. Every museum you can see (2) in Paris. And ja, we did all those things. And of course the night life of Paris. It was good. And everything. The food the whole thing. The croissants.
Adrianna: That’s, that’s the next conversation, about the nightlife in Paris.
Laurent: The night life.
Adrianna: This one is the day life. (laughs)
All: (laugh 3)
Adrianna: I don't know because (3) I was so happy there. I was so happy.
Laurent: (inaudible)
Tiffany: You do look very happy.
Laurent: It was wild. Very wild there. We did a lot. It was very hectic, because we tried to do the maximum of things in a very short time. What we did. We did France, and Belgium. Antwerp and Gent. And that was it I think.
But mostly, it was mostly just Paris
See the family quickly, around to see more friends, and then we went back to Paris.
But it was a dream of mine. And of course Laurent, he knows the language, he knows the place. I didn’t have to worry about anything. It was just.
Tiffany: Ah, that must be wonderful.
Laurent: (laughs 3)
Adrianna: Ja, (laughs, it was fun. I actually didn’t think about that then, but it was the absolute dream holiday for me. So that there is. It just (2) shows it all. How exciting it was.
Tiffany: What was it like to travel together?
Laurent: It was good hey?
Adrianna: Um
Tiffany: I ask because I have never travelled anywhere with Geoffrey, and I’ve always wanted to.
Laurent: We went places. We partied, we slept for hours we travelled to other places. Always extreme. Just like life really.
Adrianna: Just at the end I was getting frantic, you know. You need to get home, you need to get a break from each other. So I got a bit nervous, that last night. It was more emotional tiredness. You know just, too much. And. Just tired.
Laurent: We did a lot hey
Tiffany: Sounds like a busy trip
Laurent: It was a bust trip
Adrianna: But apart from my emotion that last night, we got on very well I think.
Laurent: We have one plan now I think, for September, October to go (4)
Tiffany: Where will you go?
Laurent: Oh, we go to a little bit more places. (2) I have to go to a studio Brussels, to make some art. So we will arrive in Madrid. Stay a few days in Madrid. Fly to London. Stay a few days with friends. Come (2) with me in Brussels then, and from Brussels then we will go together to Paris. Then we go to Brussels again, we have a wedding. And then from Brussels we fly to an island of Formoterra. It’s near Ibiza. Because my oldest daughter is getting married.
Tiffany: How wonderful.
Then we stay four days. It’s going to be very relaxed. A very beautiful place, that island. So then we go back to Madrid, and from Madrid we’re coming back.
Tiffany: Wow.
Laurent: It is quite a hectic trip again
Adrianna: (inaudible, talking over Laurent)
Tiffany: It sounds amazing. I like the sound of the island.
Adrianna: I’ve never had an island holiday, so.
Laurent: It’s a very good one. Formonterra is a beautiful island.
Adrianna: I keep saying. There will be two people flying there, and only one flying back (laughs 3).
All: (laugh 3)
Laurent: It’s good.
Adrianna: I must say. (5) Ja, I’m going to get deep, but it’s perfect for you. (2) I must say, I think in some normal relationships. People have this. We’re going to move in, we’re going to have kids, we’re going to get married. Then the career. There is kind of like a normal path that you see most of the people around you doing. And we don’t have that, because of the age gap and the difference. So we, I think to have, things like this to look forward to. Is just as exciting. And just as wonderful. These are the moments like. Whereas some couples are planning a family, we’re planning a lovely trip. And. You can’t compare. But for me it’s our special thing. That we work together. Because he travels every year. About three times, he’s left me alone for about six weeks. Which has been difficult. But again it’s given me time to be on my own and make friends, and build myself again. And it kind of stabilises you. It finds you. I put my whole life into Laurent. I wouldn’t lose a lot from Laurent. But time apart. It keeps you balanced. That’s because we love each other. (3) But I think having a trip to look forward to, it’s definitely a wonderful shared goal, a shared excitement.
Tiffany: Um, ja. It’s lovely.(3) and it is also, like you said. It’s. It’s shared moments.
Adrianna: Memories.
Tiffany: Its memories, its things you have together.
Laurent: (singing) Memories, dah dah dah dah dah dah.
All: Hum
Laurent: (laughs 3)
Adrianna: Ja, but I love that photo. And it stays. In the dojo. There’s a tenet downstairs. So it stays on the wall, at the bar. Because we all like it so much.
Tiffany: Is there anything you don’t like about it? (3) I can’t imagine anything you wouldn’t like about it.
Laurent: No, it’s, a little bit red from the alcohol. The red wine I think. (laugh) Too much red wine there.
Adrianna: No it’s a good one.
Tiffany: And again, how are you like any other couple in this photograph?
Adrianna: (5) A little heart, two people together smiling
Tiffany: You’re in Paris, the city of romance, could you be any more like.
Adrianna: I think it’s a romantic picture
Tiffany: What was it like to be in Paris together? Because it is so romantic?
Laurent: Tremendous, interesting. It is always good. for us certainly, because Paris has for the moment the biggest modern art gallery in the world. Bigger than the Tate. So ja, it is a joy. You go and see.
Adrianna: I should have brought the other photos we took in Paris. Because one of the first things we did, we go to the Pompidou, and I. because you know, you have been anticipating this trip for
so long. And I had been working so hard in [an Eastern Cape town]. To pay for this. All sorts of things. Painting the museum and dah dah. And the moment you get there. The epiphany of it all. The moment we arrived there. And we’re sitting at this little café, and there’s the Pompidou. And took a photo of us there. And I actually had tears in my eyes. I thought, this is a dream come true. It was the most wonderful trip.

Tiffany: It’s lovely.
Adrianna: I think we’re both the kind of couple that would prefer to go to, a city, where we would prefer, to go to a city, and see art and people. Than to go to a sit on a beach in Australia. Or something.
Laurent: It is always good to cool off at the end, like we did at Jeffrey’s. Or the island, that we will do now. but the idea is the trip is trip. It has to be worthwhile. You have to bring ideas.
Adrianna: We definitely will agree that we want to see the same things. It will never be that I say I want to go to an art gallery, he says he wants to go to a pub. We definitely. Would love to always see the same things together. We have the same interests. We were dying to go to the Louver, the Seine, the Dolce, Notre Dame. I mean, he has seen a lot of thing, that he saw again, you know for my sake. But I mean definitely. And stopping at a pub for a beer every ten steps or something (laughs)
Laurent: But it is interesting, when you come back from trips like that. Trips the way we are doing it. Automatically you have a lot of imagination, ideas and new concepts. So you always come back richer in you, your state of mind. In your head. When you leave. Everything when you go to Europe you see a lot of things, and automatically you integrate it into your art. Because it’s from all those ideas that you have a light and it’s oh, I should try that, and that will be better.
Adrianna: And I must say, even because we have the. Because we are so intensely passionate about the same things, about art. We are probably the only people who will agree, that art should come before each other. You know (laughs), in away. You know, or with each other.
Tiffany: So you are perfect for each other. Because you understand that, that your art comes first. Adrianna: Well I think if I wasn’t with an artist was, with a person who, they would be pissed off with me, a lot of the time. Because they wouldn’t understand that. They wouldn’t be able to handle me in my art, because, ja. It does come, it does dominant. But what I’m saying is we can go to a museum. And he might have spent years being passionate about Picasso, and I might have spent years being passionate about Eve Klein. He can say ah this and this, and I can say I learnt this and this. So we can definitely enrich each other’s experience of art and museums. And he of course knows all the history of Paris and I have my. We. Our minds are definitely focused towards the same things. Whereas he knows a lot of history and I may have learnt a lot from art history that he may not have, that may be fresh in my memory because I’m fresh from art school.
Tiffany: So it’s like you, you are both on the same track, but you have different things to add. Different perspectives.
Laurent: Definitely. You know, our art is not the same to hah. So ja, automatically you have different views, different perspectives, different ideas. But it is a trust thing
But he can, he can look at things and he will know this will work for Adrianna I her art. And I will see things, and think this is definitely up Laurent’s alley.
Tiffany: So you help one another with your work?
Adrianna: Unh
Tiffany: With your art.
Laurent: Also commercially. With work, with exhibitions. We just prepare for something this morning. And exhibition by Elsa Schwartz. It’s the week after we come back from Europe. So I say we will be ready before we leave. Sorry I just, I talk business now. So I say we take up the stuff, to [a city].
Adrianna: Honestly I would never had the courage to be a full time artist without Laurent. He knows the business. He’s got the experience. He’s a brilliant agent. And knows the art market. So I never would have known. I would never have known how to do it. Yes, and my mom, dad, everyone who had doubts about what am I doing with my life. They all say, Laurent gave Adrianna her art career. I mean, I always thought one day one day one day. But I never knew how to I never believed.
Laurent: It is a big step. She had a tremendous job, she studied. And suddenly you go from job to self employed.
Adrianna: Very difficult
Laurent: Ja
Adrianna: So ja, but I mean. Obviously I don’t think I can sell his work like he can sell my work. He’s good at that ((2) But ja I mean. In so many ways. I also have a network of people here that he will never have, because he’s from Europe. You know, just from living here. It helps him a lot. I make a lot have. I make a lot of contacts as well from the art world, from people I know here. And its materials. I mean his borrowing my sander today. (laughs 2) and I have a nice bakkie that we can carry art to PE or for exhibitions. I’m trying to think of things I give him too.
Tiffany: Well, you go to the dinners. I mean it sounds like you support each other’s in general. With your work.
Adrianna: We have the same practices.
Tiffany: With resources and things. So shall we move on?
Adrianna: I just have to go to the loo.
Laurent: Paris again.
Tiffany: Paris again.
Laurent: Paris by night hey (3). This is a nice one. We went out, just crazy, drunk wine, went out to the Sainte Germaine you know little bit, the artists area in Paris. Well Le Dara and all those, (inaudible) are where the artists meet and the writers meet. And those that write books. That is where they meet. And Le Dara is a place that is know for more than eighty years in Paris, to have had all the people in the film industry and art and books. They were all there (3) And all the artists that go to Paris, they go there because that is where they will meet the director, or the art people or the art dealers. It’s a tremendous artistic area of there. And environment.
Tiffany: OK. And this is on the same trip as.
Laurent: It is on the same trip. But by night.
Tiffany: (3). So tell me about this night. (2) Well. That you went.
Laurent: That night we went first, went to Sainte Germaine. One of the little side streets there.
Adrianna: We started off at the Crazy Horse that night.
Laurent: Think it was that one. Before we went to eat. Because we eat there at the
Adrianna: That was after the crazy horse. That was why we were so vrot that night remember.
Laurent: So we went to eat and after the crazy Horse that thing with the green leaves there.
Adrianna: And I was walking around.
Laurent: And then when, when we left we went to Le Dara.
Tiffany: You both look. Very, very smart.
Laurent: We look pissed. More pissed than smart.
Adrianna: Oh I was wearing my new (4). Oh ja, Laurent is wearing a suit. He never does that. Because we went to the Crazy Horse. Which is this place it’s like the Moulin Rouge. Oh, did he tell you about that?
Laurent: No.
Tiffany: No.
Adrianna: It’s a real, its much better than the Moulin Rouge. Apparently. You know it’s all Americanised. But this real old. Old Paris. You know like with. Like the movie Moulin Rouge with the old projections, and the red velvet everywhere. So we went there and watched these gorgeous women do their gorgeous thing. And they gave us this free drink which is this thing. This big thing with like this much gin in. so we got really smashed.
Laurent: And then we went to eat, and then we drank more. We were at a restaurant very close to where this picture was taken. Maybe a hundred metres from there, where I don’t know what we eat. Probably beef fois gras.
Adrianna: It was a great night. Because the street life there is amazing. All the little cafes and the people. (2) Romantic. And dressed up, feeling Parisian. You know. It was a lovely evening.
Tiffany: And what you enjoyed about it, was the, the drink and the Paris and the decadence.
Laurent: Ja the whole vibe. Exactly that vibe
Tiffany: It sounds amazing.
Adrianna: It’s amazing, it’s divine. It’s all those things.
Tiffany: (3) OK. And again, what is it you like about this photo?
Laurent: (4) It’s the vibe of that moment again. It’s good hey. The Saint Germaine. The vibe of that moment.
Adrianna: Ja. Umh.
Tiffany: Alright.
Tiffany: Is there anything you don’t like about the photo?
Laurent: (2) Maybe the red face again.
All: (laugh 2)
(5) Definitely had a very bad hang over the next day.
3 that moment was so good
laughs
3 ja it was a fantastic evening. Ja I think a lot of our photos are just evidence of things that we might not remember otherwise.
Both: (laugh 3)
Tiffany: And who took the photograph?
Laurent: Some passenger.
Adrianna: A passer by.
Laurent: We give him the camera, we ask him to take the photograph. (4) We must have been very pissed by then. Because the people behind us, are laughing at us.
Tiffany: (laughing) Yes, I noticed that.
Laurent: We couldn’t even stand on our feet then.
Adrianna: Ja, we were very vrot.
Tiffany: Well the way it comes off is that you look very, sort of smart, and calm and dignified.
Laurent: Not so after a while.
Adrianna: We shook like this.
Tiffany: (laughing) Yes, I noticed that.
Laurent: The shot is good because it is instant and you stay there. But in fact we were very wobbly.
Adrianna: (4) Ja, but I don’t think we look like normal people there.
Tiffany: (2) Why not? (3) How not?
Laurent: We are not dressed up like normal people, like usual.
Adrianna: There I see. Wild. Decedent. Man with his gorgeous, young blonde. I look like a hooker
(3) Sorry (laughs 4)
All: (laughs 4)
Adrianna: It looks like a decadent photo and I think. Um people who, saw, who were there. Or if we were like that in South Africa. They would stare at use I think,. In Paris its normal there.
Tiffany: What would they stare at?
Adrianna: (3) We look different there I think (5) I think because we’re dressed up. Ja.
Laurent: (inaudible 3)
Adrianna: And maybe, because the memory makes me think I was like a movie star. It looks like something out of a movie. (laughs)
Tiffany: (3) And how are you like a normal couple there? 41.34 or are you not at all like a normal couple in this photograph?
Adrianna: what is a what, couple?
Tiffany: Well, I guess I don’t know. What do you think?
Laurent: It’s a relation.
Adrianna: (2) If normal, is like the whole white picket fence and the.
Tiffany: (2) I guess that is what, you were talking about.
Adrianna: The traditional
Laurent: Traditional.
Tiffany: The traditional thing
Laurent: Like every couple I think, it is a question of what you like. And I think also it is a question of compromises, and, and, balance. Between what the one likes, and what the other one likes. And just to, stick to those things, and that’s it, you know.
Tiffany: (3) Umhuh.
Laurent: (4) So I don’t think it’s so much different, from a normal couple. You know. Not so different from another couple. (3) Except to that I don’t think we want to go in our relationships for kids. And a few other things that we decided. But for the rest, we are the same.
Adrianna: I don’t know. When I think traditional. I see like, when people move in, and get the white picket fence. And the dogs. The kids and dah dah dah. Then people start playing roles. The woman starts playing the role of the wife, the mother. Or the breadwinner. It’s more like you have expectations, you know. It’s almost an unspoken set of rules, its marriage or something. That you start having to do this, I expect you to do this, I expect you to do that. Whereas I think we, as much as I sometimes wanted more, and then realise it’s not me. We are very independent.
Laurent: We are a very liberal and few couple in fact hey. Compared with most people.
Adrianna: And we probably end up helping each other more than most people. A lot more than a lot of people who do. Because they are just running around doing things for each other. But I think, because we are running around doing things for our selves, we have a lot more to give each other. We’re not dependent, you know.
Tiffany: So you feel like your strength as a couple, is in you independence as people. And as artists?
Laurent: Partly, ja.
Adrianna: (2) Ja.
Laurent: (3) Sure
Adrianna: Ja, I think because, we, we are both, very insisting on freedom. We always say free to be free. So I can be free with him. And he can be free with me. And I think, I’m probably the instigator. Sometimes, when I have been hanging out with a friends of mine. Who have this, a bit like a perfect relationship. and I think, I keeping thinking, ah, I’m missing out on that. Because somewhere along the line, you’ve been brought up to believe that that is what you must want. And that is what happiness is. It that, it’s the bloody consumerism. It’s the magazine saying this, every bloody month, this is what happiness is. And this what right and happiness is. I mean, you have this as well. You and Geoff have an unusual way of life as well.
Tiffany: Absolutely. Every Valentines Day I have this internal argument with myself. Because we kind of agreed that Valentines Day is just this consumerist thing. And neither of us bought into it. But every Valentines day I have this, should I buy him something. Should I ask him to buy me something. Should we celebrate it this year, maybe it would be fun. But no that’s just so wrong. That would be stupid and just not really knowing how to deal with it.
Adrianna: (2) I must say I do have weak moments. When I see friends I haven’t seen for a while. My more traditional friends. Who have found a wonderful partner, or a marriage. And I sometimes think, oh am I. Am I missing out, am I going to look back and think, oh I wanted that. But then I think I can still have that. I’m young. I definitely, I am not interested in having kids. I, ja. Its just not part of my life. My art. I don’t want to have to give up, give my life to a parasite. For eighteen years. Something. Something. Ja, it’s just. There is no pressure with that. I don’t think.
Laurent: You didn’t bring a camera with you?
Tiffany: No. I didn’t.
Laurent: OK (laughs 3). Oh, I thought maybe you are also taking photos.
Adrianna: It’s us who bring the photographs.
Tiffany: I thought about it.
Laurent: (laughs 5)
Tiffany: (5) Um. Ok. You were talking about how couples compromise, and I was wondering if you could say more about that.
Laurent: I think it’s always a bit of a compromise, hey? I think. How, how do you struggle to live with two people. Because two people are two completely different things. And the one likes this. And the one likes that. And all different issues of life. And. I know of living even, hey. And so it’s always a question to balance out a bit. I don’t think. (2) I think it would be very boring if I could find something that was like you.
Adrianna: (3) What like, like.
Tiffany: (laughs 3)
Adrianna: Tiffany?
Laurent: No, no. (laughs 5)
Tiffany: I didn’t think of it that way. (laughs 3)
Adrianna: (laughs)
Laurent: So like to you, hey. So it's true. Hey? I just think in a relationship, then of course,
automatically, you are different. You are two complete different identities. And the of course at the
beginning of relationship you have that joy, that very passionate thing. And then, and then you
come to a moment when you have to balance out a little. How she likes it, how I like it
Tiffany: (3) Um
Laurent: You know.
Tiffany: (3) Initially you are attracted to some one because they are the same as you, and then
you find that they are also different. And then you get annoyed with them, because they are
different from you.
Laurent: (laughs)
Adrianna: I always, I always thought the other way. Like you connect, ah, I know this, ah I know
this. And then you see, the similarities.
Tiffany: That's also true.
Adrianna: You see similarities and difference in fact.
Tiffany: That's also true.
Adrianna: (3) you fall in love because you connect. And then you realise you’re very different, you
see there are so many differences.
You always have that in a relationship.
Tiffany: It's true.
Adrianna: And it's quite hard to work through all that, you can’t always agree on everything. (4) I
find compromise. I don't think we’ve ever sat down, and had normal discussions about how we
are actually going to compromise in our relationship. But I think, we are like.
Laurent: Practically you grow that way in life.
Tiffany: You have to, yes. Yes.
Adrianna: You end up being flexible. We do a hell of a lot together.
Laurent: We have to be flexible (5) Ja.
Tiffany: (5) And then, just two more questions and then we are done. Now we are talking
generally, about just people in relationships. Not necessarily you two. Why do you think people
want to be in relationships?
Laurent: I think in the first part it is quite a natural thing. Man is attracted by woman. Woman is
attracted by man. Or man by man, and woman by woman. But you are attracted by the same sex
or the different sex. I think that is certainly one of the pure natural situations.
Tiffany: So it is just a natural thing.
Laurent: Just a natural thing.
Adrianna: (3) I think. (3) I think I want someone to share my happy moments and my sad
moments. I want to share.
Laurent: I like to share happy moments. I don’t like the other one.
All: (laugh 3)
Adrianna: But it’s like. It’s like going to watch a movie on your own. It’s fine. But if it's a funny
movie. It isn't funny watching a funny movie on your own. (2) but then you want someone.
Laurent: It’s everything. You want some to eat. To drink, to take.
Adrianna: To share.
Laurent: To experience different foods. And you know some, I think the experience. Travel. And
it. It's true. It is a lot more fun if there is two.
Tiffany: I'm sure.
Adrianna: And I must say, I find, anything big, or scary, or happy. I am dying. To tell Laurent. I just
have to tell him. Because I need to have someone to tell. I have to share. I want to share. To
have someone to.
Laurent: To be able to listen
Adrianna: (laughs 4)
Both: (laugh)
Adrianna: (5) Anyway. Kind of like that.
Tiffany: (laughs 2)
Laurent: (2) (laughs 4)
Adrianna: I think it’s natural. I also think. Um (5) It’s, its comfort. It’s security. I’m not just saying financially. Or in your. I definitely know. I find it difficult going out. Without a guy. I feel safe with. Because other wise I know. I have drunk men coming on to me. (2) And I’m not saying I’m attractive. I just know I have these guys. Unless I’m with a girlfriend. Or (3) someone who they will leave me alone with. But going out on my own, or with a girl sometimes. We get harassed. Sometimes. But if I’m with Laurent, I get left alone.
Tiffany: (inaudible)
Adrianna: I can relax, I can go wild and misbehave. And feel that no guy. Is going to try. Get on me that night. If you know what I mean.
Tiffany: I do.
Adrianna: So I can’t go out, on my own. Because every man there is thinking. Oh she’s available or I’m going to try with her. Or just. In the day I don’t feel like speaking shit with a stranger half the time. I would rather just be one my own then. I want to feel I’m safe. I find it protection. You know
Laurent: Um. (2) (laughs)
Adrianna: (3) But yeah.
Tiffany: And what do people find difficult about relationships. What do people find t be the hard part about relationships? (4) I suppose what we spoke about earlier. Either you discover that the person is not the same as you. Or you discover that the person is the same as you.
Adrianna: I think. I’ve always. (3) I think one of the biggest problems, in all relationships, be it employees, parent and child, brother sister. Is expectations. Is having expectations, you know. Without. And I find myself having them all the time. Without knowing it. And I try to stop myself. You know you must expect someone to be. But that person should love you enough to know those things anyway. But it shouldn’t be I expect you home at this hour, I expect this on Valentines Day, I expect this, or I expect you to open the door for me. I think. A kind person does those things automatically anyway. Is considerate or thoughtful of their partner (3) without there being expectations.
Tiffany: OK.
Adrianna: Demands, you know. And demands, of, people, or of. So (3) And I think, um, in a lot of things, careers, and time wise. I know couples who are, I know one friend’s a pilot, and I know it must be difficult. Because she’s got a wonderful career, she’s travelling the world. But the, her husband’s on his own all the time. So he gets really involved in his fishing and his sport. He’s a really sporty guy. And he has suppers with his mates. But I think when she comes home, she’s on holiday essentially. So she wants all of him. And she can’t understand why he is so busy. And I think, that must be, and incredible people, lovely couple.
Laurent: But difficult to.
Adrianna: And I think.
Laurent: But again it is a question of compromise, how far you go. You are in those relations. And you accept that. And then you love to work. And maybe she will say that in future when I come home, lets try to have three days for ourselves. And you know, probably she will ask things like this.
Adrianna: I think, ja I think then. When everyone wants everything. If everyone wants their career, their dream, their house, their everything. (3) if you can both achieve that that’s fine. It’s the equality thing. If one is making everything, and following their dreams. And the other is making all this sacrifices. Then it is not fair. If there is a kind of equality.
Laurent: A balance.
Adrianna: And I think ja, there is a lot of the normal types. That believe so much in this normal thing. They get through ten years of marriage and they think, carp. I haven’t done much. I haven’t fulfilled my life, I haven’t followed my dreams. I’m sad, I’m empty. (2) you know, so I think. (4) Ja, we’re all essentially selfish people and I think.
Laurent: Ja. I think somewhere, without knowing. I think every human being, a little, without even knowing, you are a little bit egoist. Huh? You have that little part of egoism in you. It is even a self protect for yourself. And you need that little taste of egoism to be happy in life. If you give it all away you have no room for yourself. You have no room for the things that you really like, you cannot be happy. To be happy with yourself in the first place before you can make other people happy or have a happy relationship. You have to be happy yourself. It is a very important thing.

Adrianna: I must say that I, ja, but you too, this herd mentality. This all, like I say, that, that illusion, That picture perfect. Like I say, Fair lady. My dad always says, he could kill. Because he says, he recons, that half the problems in his marriage come because mom was reading articles, in the House and Home. You must be going on family holidays, you must be doing family dinners, you must be going out, you must be having outrageous sexual positions all night. You know what I mean. And these magazines, they sell this thing. And to be those women we would have to spend three hours doing our make up every day. We would be perfect. (2) That perfect. Running around being a mom, having a career, having a gorgeous sex life, looking after your skin, your anti-age cream. It’s just ridiculous expectations.

Laurent: Ja, but these are. You can’t expect every person to think like you. I think some people are perfectly happy like that. (3) Some people are perfectly happy by living, uh, uh, uh more normal life. And work. And mirrors. And kids. I think people are very happy with it. It is a different way to see life. (2) But everyone id different. I see a lot of people enjoy [a city]. It is a retrace to start with. I am a city boy myself. But then you get out, you see that. When you go to [a city] there are a lit of people who you know you can communicate with because they are so involved with their job and their big car must be there. And the thing. They don’t even have time to live any more. They only have time to work and show off. And it is quite a horrible scene to look at. But it’s a choice. Maybe they are very happy in that situation.

Adrianna: I think what I am criticising is that it. It’s almost, it’s brainwashed. In the media, it’s brainwashed that this is the correct or the good way.

Laurent: You must do this or that. You are not. You know there is so much things that are brainwashed, that you don’t look good if you don’t wear these kinds of clothes. And then you start getting frustrated, like do I have to eat hamburgers and Wimpys, do I have to wear these Diesel jeans. And do I have to have that mascara or that fuel to be successful or to have a good life. And without knowing to, you’re getting those things. It is sometimes hard to, you know.

Adrianna: What I am saying also, is that mom and dad, out of love for me, and just wanting their daughter to follow that pattern. You know. And it is hard for them to see Adrianna likes other things or needs other things, to make her happy.

Laurent: It’s still quite conservative. Look South Africa. If you look you see all the same things in cars in clothes and things are the same all around the world. Because everything everywhere now becomes a world scene. And then the films are the same and the magazine and the products. The big lines. But somewhere on its own, Africa is still a conservative place, hey. It is still conservative. You see that at certain moments. In dinners or in (3) um, the the, how the people talk to each other. (2) When they drink they go bananas, but I think before that. And they drink a lot hey. I think Afrikaans people, when they start to think their Klipdrift, they drink a lot, and then suddenly things you wouldn’t expect, they come out. But before that, somewhere it is very conservative still (3) I would say, compare it not with the rest. A lot of places are a lot more conservative. If you go to Iran, Iraq.

Adrianna: But I think. In our society then ja. Obviously we are agreeing on the same thing now. For example my brother got married this year. And they seem very happy. But the way it was done, it made me, it made a lot of people worry. Close friends worry. Because it was very quick. They rushed into it. And almost working so hard for the perfect kind of wedding day. The formalities, and even the ceremony, seemed quite, false in a way. Even my dad thought it seemed quite corny in a way. You not natural and normal. It just felt like imposed. A very imposed structure. For a young couple who haven’t know each other long enough to find true love

Laurent: To know each other.

Adrianna: In themselves. It’s almost like they are forced and they had to go for lectures, with the minister, on how to be a good wife and a, a good husband. And I think fucking hell, what
pressure. And I think they are happy. But obviously, they are going to have to knock heads many
times in the future, to work out all those things people need to work out. But I think, what I am
saying is this thing I think a lot of couple present this perfect. Because they are too afraid to say,
behind closed doors it's a different story. But they try so hard to look picture perfect. And
everyone wants people to think I'm picture perfect. The blonde wife. The right car.
Laurent: And the same thing around the again. You cannot always script. You see that, and it is
not your life and it is not my life. But you cannot criticise it. Because they are probably
tremendously happy in that kind of life. So what can. So maybe you are like that. Maybe you have
that dream. To have the big wedding. And kids and BMWs and you know.
Adrianna: No. I'm not criticising
(inaudible, they speak over each other 5)
Laurent: Everyone has their own.
Adrianna: But I think.
Laurent: Everyone has different views.
Adrianna: (laughing) No I agree.
Tiffany: I think you’re criticising people who take on those expectations and dreams without
thinking about it.
Adrianna: Ja.
Laurent: Without thinking.
Tiffany: And I think what you are saying is that you have to find happiness inside of yourself, and
be your own person. So you really, kind of saying the same thing. If I can mediate for the two of
you (laughing).
Laurent: Ja.
Adrianna: And I know, like from my parents. Before my brother’s married, my mom and my poor
suffering mom, she said to me, that D Evans’ wife said to me. (in a high singsong voice) Aren’t
your kids ever going to get married, because I really encouraged my kids to get married. Have
you encouraged your kids to get married.
Laurent: (inaudible 3)
Adrianna: And you can hear, all my parents friends are like, oh, I’m on my. Her daughter has
gone and done this, and married now. So for me I feel it a lot from my parent’s generation.
Expectations to do this or that. And the kids who have done all the right things are, ah, what a
lovely girl, and it's all perfect. And I'm the different one. And my mom is like, can't you be the
same. And I remember all the little comments. Yu know. I can see she is always like, why can’t
you be normal always wanted a normal daughter, why can’t you be normal. And I want grandkids.
Have normal home. So I get it, it bugs me.
Laurent: It's their expectations, and you can’t say nothing wrong about it. They art raised like that,
they think like that, and it was like that. And suddenly a change has come. In Europe I think that
more that half of the couples, they are not even married. They lived together. Like my daughter,
they are going to get married now, but they love together almost five years. It is changing now.
And most people they do it more out of formality now. Because it is for the taxes or, and
otherwise they pay both separate taxes and it is a lot higher and it is accumulates. And ja.
Adrianna: And I tell you something, and I can’t separate life from art. For me life and art is one
and the same. I think about this often as I work. As I am problem solving in my work, it is much
the same process as in life. And I think like, taken as, as the big step into the unknown into the art
world. There is no one to draw benchmarks from, compare to. I have a lot of art friends who have
done a lot, and very well, are successful, but they have had to find their art thing. It is finding
individuality that makes your art. There is no conformist way to do art. Unless you go into
commercial advertising. I don’t know whatever. But in fine art. It is the same as this relationship.
there is no set path. There is no like a normal career. Ja I do this and this. I get promotion, I get
leave, I get my gold watch. And then normally you have some one probably my age, you know
that’s the plan. We buy a house, we move in. first we get two dogs together and we have kids.
Get marries. Dah, dah dah. It’s a formula almost. And I think with me giving up my normal career,
and my, and you know and entering. We were together. And what I like is that we are discovering
for myself. We are figuring it out for ourselves. And I do battle with. You know then suddenly
taking a step onto the other foot. Thinking I should be doing this, I should be experiencing that.
But that is pressure from others around you. Or seeing friends very happy in the normal things, and then thinking oh gosh, am I doing the wrong thing. I get insecure. Because it is an unknown territory I find. But you know. But every lesson I learn makes me stronger and makes me grow and makes us better. And you know, I am trying to be better about it all, I think ($)

Laurent: Voila.
Tiffany: Ok is there anything you would like to say, comment on, ask me.
Laurent: Thank you for the interview

Frieda and Fernando
Tiffany: But the first question is what is the story of when you took this photograph?
Fernando: It's actually quite a nice story. (Maybe we wouldn't have brought the picture if it wasn't). Poem Hotel. Nice breakfast, warm sunny morning after very warm...Lets call it reunion...night. (3) Blue skies ahead (like today, still). (2) Adnan, I'm not sure of the spelling, the hotel manager, loved us! And took the picture of a lovely morning. (3) Well (2) I think it was taken shortly after we met up in Istanbul after a year of long distance e-mails, letters and calls. After meeting once in Berlin. (3)
Frieda: The picture was taken by the owner of the hotel we were staying at: the Poem Hotel (3) of course! (2) Specially chosen by us, poetry being the stuff most of our...‘correspondence’ was made of. Our room ‘number’ was a poem entitled 'all of a sudden'. Anyway as you can see, I look blissfully happy. Actually I do think it was after our first night there (laughs 2) (hint, hint, wink). We were having breakfast, a very Mediterranean one, and I remember just dreamily listening to Fernando's stories.

Tiffany: (3) It's a beautiful photo.
Frieda: Thank you. Tiffany: I especially love the wild stained glass widow-like leaves behind you. (3) Can you tell me more about the time before the picture? When you were apart and emailing and poem writing.
Frieda: Hmm. (3) It was the best of times. It was the worst of times. (3) It feels very long ago now. When we met in Berlin, I wrote Fernando a note. Something about our words finding one another in the tiny streets. With reference to Porto's maze-like little streets in the old part of the city, which Fernando had then told me about. (3) It sounded very romantic. And not get trapped in dead-end silences. I think because we had some misunderstandings when we met, among others about the ethics, or lack of it of a certain German philosopher. (2) And then, the first e-mail(s) we sent to each other, after I was back in South Africa and he in Portugal, was about a bridge and meeting in-between. And so our words met. Like a mirroring, also kaleidoscope-like and in this virtual in between space. We could play and imagine. Together. I've always believed that I express myself better in writing. And I guess in this way, Fernando got really close to me. In spite of the distance. (3) Though after a while it was not enough. Anymore. And we wanted a closer closeness.
Fernando: (3) I was telling Frieda how an interview in written words is so different, how it would be impossible to tell that story like that, in presence. (3) I guess the old days, or some of the old days. We've had all sorts of old days. Made mostly of writing sculpted words and stories, made of phone conversations running out of air time, and of impossibility to reach. Had those ways too. Rounder forms sometimes. (3) But also distance, and lack of mundane. Mundane is good. Life is all about it, and mostly around it (3). But we had nice stories going while we wrote to each other. Remember the waiter Frieda? (2) And it was good and creative. It created at least the possibility of today, I guess. There's always more story, but maybe this is already something.
Frieda: (2) Aaah. (3) It's so nice to read Fernando's version. Actually I just said maybe we should start e-mailing each other again like in the old days (laughs 2). I remember the waiter (laughs) And the postman and the taxi driver (3) Who used to wait on us, in the imaginary, virtual cafe we would meet. And in a way, this was maybe trying to create a day-to-day 'real'. Togetherness. What Fernando calls 'the mundane'. (4) Sometimes, often actually, in writing. Fernando has this way of saying things, that just says it all. Like about the waiter. (3) Characters from our own film noir. Crossed with moments of tragic comedy. Yup (laughs 2), I guess it has to do with the mundane.
Tiffany: (2) I imagine it will be very lovely to hear one another's versions of things. Especially as both of you are very in love. (3) I liked what Fernando said about the mundane. (3) I remember longing to just wake up next to Geoffrey. And I still find I love those simple, routine. Everyday things the most. (3) And I also found living with Geoffrey for the first time, when we got married (laughs 3) The inundation of, the incessant. Mundanity. Overwhelming.

Frieda: I'm not so okay with the mundane. (2) Fernando and I have been agreeing too much in this interview! (laughs 2). But I agree with you, about the simple routine, everyday things. Waking up together. I mean, I wake up, and then I have to try very hard to wake Fernando up (laughs 2).

All: (laugh 3)

Frieda: Whereas, before (3) In the romantic in-between times. I would happily watch him sleep (2) For hours. (2) And having meals together, is still simply wonderful and we love to go shopping. (2) But sometimes. I miss the romantic stuff. Even cheesily so. In love. in words (sighs) (laughs). Yes. And that was what was good about the old days.

Tiffany: Um. (2) You both express the old times ambiguously. The best and the worst. The poems and the stories, and the beauty and intimacy of words. And also the difficulty, misunderstandings and dead ends. (3) And I think you are both saying that your relationship is shaped by that. Beginning. Could you say more about that?

Frieda: (3) I find this question difficult. I'm not sure if the start was the most important shaping influence. (2) Then again that's not what you said. It's just that in-between, after meeting in Istanbul. And getting to know each other. In the flesh so to speak. There were so many long months, of distance and longing. And then all the bureaucratic obstacles, of visas and the financial problems of phone bills and plane tickets. (sigh) (2) That when I finally got there two years ago. The longest we've been together, that is in the same physical space. I felt that the anxiety of separation more of an influence. Than the ambiguous, in-between, torturing, lovely, poetry. Of the start. But yes. I do think it's very much a part of 'us'. Really special. Prosaic words to describe it alas. And we still always imagine together. In that way it shaped us most I think. And we always have this reference in words. Of the creative possibilities between us.

Fernando: Yes. Um. (3) I'm not sure if it is shaped by that beginning. (2) Not denying that it still marks our experience of each other. (4) We moved and we are on the move, though nowhere for now. But that beginning made it possible to get here, to get to be moving as a we. I mean it was wonderful and painful, it forced fears, and difficulties, but also bold commitments. (3) That's what we made of those conditions. That were not simple at all, even though, gladly we tend to romanticize them. (2) And I am happy about it. It made us decide that even though we are nowhere. We are. And now I see us making more of a place, and way, to be. So again shaping.

Tiffany: Could you tell me about the reunion?

Frieda: Well, like I said. That was after a year of distance. And it was really the first time we were alone. Together. Still it felt like we already knew each other. Well I suppose we did. But I had only one or two pictures of Fernando. And it was different of course to see him face-to-face. And realize yet again how gorgeous he is. I guess it was a bit like being on honeymoon. We had one before we got married instead of after (laughs 3). But also we had to become acquainted with each other's rhythms. Didn't we, Fernando? (laughs 2) I was amazed at how much and how easily he could sleep. Like he could fall asleep anywhere, in our room not in public that is. Anytime.

Kind of like a cat. (2) He was, is very catlike. And he was so, lovingly caring. (4) Even though after this great picture I got an attack of blisters and did not look too good in subsequent photos. (2) But there were also other gritty things. Things we could only tell each other face-to-face. That were not so easy to hear. Or that maybe did not entirely fit the romantic version of us. (2) So we talked, and we fought a little.

We laughed. We cried. (2) But we were us. Clumsy, in some ways. Veiled, with transparency though. Too desired to stop at that.
Fernando: I arrived one day before. Or was it two? And tried to arrange pick up taxi for Frieda. And stuff like that. I was, of course, anxious and I feel we both were at the same time ecstatic and cautious. Though I remember feeling that I knew things would be ok. (2) I knew her enough to know that. (2) Even if together didn't work, and we had to face the sadness of it. (3) There were of course some more or less difficult negotiations and some resisting fears. But we managed to have a wonderful time. And overall I think it was a deep meeting. Meeting deeply. Though not necessarily extensively. Um (2) I think I strayed a bit from the moment of the picture in my telling of it. I guess for me it was part of a bigger moment, picture, motion picture!

Tiffany: So, um. (3) Could you tell me what you like about this photo. For what reasons did you choose this one, to talk about?

Frieda: I think because it, the picture, holds the bliss, honeymoon-likely, of our second, first meeting. So happy. So finally. Together. (3) Now I have that song in my head! (4) We have other pictures too. (laughs 3)

Fernando: Like Frieda said, it was a bit like a honeymoon before the wedding. It was, just before going to [an Eastern Cape town]. That prolonged that feeling for me. I guess it was then, different for Frieda. Because then she was home. (3) And the hotel, the room with a window over the Marmora Sea. (3) It was really blue. Everything. (laughs 3). And I guess you start the day with breakfast. So did we. (3) It was like the nice Mediterranean fresh breakfast of our relationship to be. So I guess it is a good picture to select.

Frieda: It was really blue (laughs 4)

All: (laugh 2)

Tiffany: I like the photo. Its like a movie poster (laughs 2). A romantic drama probably. The wide expanse of grey sky. And the two of you. Victorious. And complacent beneath it.

Frieda: That is a very poetic view.
Um. (4) My own wedding was quite complex I feel. We wanted to honour our families. And the families. And the ceremony. Was a tangle for me and us. Could you tell me more about being wedded and weddings.

Fernando: (2) I don't know if I can say a lot about being wed. (5) I don't know if it feels so present to me that I am. Married. But I guess feeling committed to someone, sharing spaces of present and future with her, means, maybe the same. (3) It is a nice struggle. I guess others would put it as a dance. Although not against, but for, each other. And oneself. (3) There's nothing natural about it. It is somehow a violence. To ourselves and each other. That we prefer, or see as good, as making more. About or, of us as. Being present in the world. (3) It doesn't have to be complicated because it doesn't have to be anything. It is difficult to really believe this. Titles bring luggage. But they don't really have to. (4) Negotiating with someone you love is better, though not always easier, than negotiate with someone you. Hate. (3) Marriage. (4) Don't know what else to say. (3) Things come to a place. The mundane takes us closer to life. We still love togetherness. We still deal with it. (3) I got myself a good wife! (laughs 3).

Frieda: I kind of feel the same way as Fernando describes here. (3) Although. Here in Portugal. Being able to say 'my husband is Portuguese' is sometimes like a magic key to acceptance, to being in place. (2) Being and getting married is big here. On a Catholic scale (laughs 2). (2) And so. With these words, I get two-in-one. Being a proper, read married, woman and the wife of a proper, read Portuguese man. (3) But I don't go for all that. Like I said, there's the romantic, cinematic picture of 'our wedding day'. I mean in general. Which I have to admit. I want, wanted. (3) And then there's the institution. The license you get. The seal of authenticity, you receive only upon marriage. Like only now you're really together. That I don't think is fair, needed. (3) And I also think Fernando got a good wife. (laughs 3)

Frieda: I was glad that that part at least was simple. (3) But I also missed a wedding in the traditional sense. With a wedding dress. Something old something new, etc and bridesmaids. And you would've been one of course (laughs 2). And I missed the presence of my mom, and my sisters, and my friends. And even the complicated rituals. (3) I wish I could've been at yours. It sounded so amazing. Though a-maze-ing. (laughs). Before we got married. Legally that is. I wrote my own wedding vows that I read to Fernando one morning in South Africa, when everything was still uncertain. We had planned to get married there. But the bureaucratic things yet again were too complicated. (3) Though we found a willing, wonderful reverend. An intelligent sensitive one whom I knew. (3) Just then when it came to the vows the whole 'until god separates us by death' was just too heavy. (3) And not us. (2) Also since Fernando is not exactly a church-person (laughs 2) And so. (3) In a way I am also relieved we could skip those trappings. The forever-ness of it. The fixed man and wife-ness of it. The pressure of arranging everything to please everyone. In that sense I like what Fernando said. That it was just about us. (3) So far no female members of my immediate family have had a traditional big glorious one. My mom and dad eloped, my sister and her "husband" had to get married. The way young single mothers have to. (3) But thinking of ' to be wedded and weddings' in general for me also has two sides, at least, the whole ideological weight of it and the absurd baggage that goes with it. The script of what the bride should do and the bridegroom, and the bouquet and the speeches. And then on the other hand the lightness of celebration of the party afterwards. And sometimes the beauty of it if not done in the conventional way. The things that mark it as special. I do like.

Tiffany: (sighs) (3) It seems a simple and beautiful enactment that has grown from many tangles. The tangles of apart-ness. And the tangles of institutions. I found my wedding to be a complicated. Dance? Between two people I did not recognise. Both myself. (laughs 3) There was the me who did not want a ceremony, family, diamond, cake and dancing. There was the me who wanted it all. (laughs 2) A huge diamond, a white dress, everyone I knew from birth to the present. There is something lovely about the ceremony. And also something difficult. That I think you both speak of. (2) And I'm interested in how, how you two, balance. Feel. Perform with that. Especially considering the language, country differences.
Frieda: I'm not sure. (3) I suppose it helps that we agree on some things. As we've stated. I know we are not like other couples. (3) And like that we are not. (2) Though sometimes I want others to also appreciate that. (4) That we are committed. Though we don't have the house, and the baby and the income. And stuff. (3) And that we may or may not get those things. (2) The baby thing is a sensitive issue between us though. (3) Still I think the two of us 'balance' okay enough. We still meet each other in-between. In English. With bits of Portuguese and Afrikaans here and there (laughs 3).

Fernando: Frieda teases me sometimes about the language, my singing English (laughs 2). But I also tease her about all sorts of things. (4) We know there are particulars to our situation, way of being together as a wedded couple. But I don't feel there's much to make of that. I don't feel, I don't know what I perform except that I perform cooking and not as much cleaning as I should. (laughs). There's significant difference in what one has to balance. (3) We have to balance life, with, being in each others lives and wanting to be there. (4) I guess I am in the easiest end of this bargain because I am still where things are familiar. The country, culture, language thing. Being married was not familiar before, and so that is new. (2) But I don't think I carry the weight of the contract. Just the commitment to myself and Frieda. (3) And married or not I try to leave the roles aside. Except while teasing frautjie (laughs 3). (2) Or maybe I am just unaware.

Frieda: I wasn't thinking of the fact that I am far from the familiar. Actually. Though now I will (laughs 2). And I appreciate that Fernando did. Maybe because I don't relate that to being married. Just too difficult circumstance. Fernando does not clean as much as he should. Again though I don't think that has much to do with being married. Except that when I complain about it, I sound too much like 'a wife' (laughs 3).

Tiffany: (laughs 3)

Frieda: I wonder about you, Fernando. Mentioning cooking and cleaning as parts of performing roles. But okay. I'll not be the critical psychologist now (laughs 2). Also wondering if the teasing isn't actually a kind of awareness. I am rambling now. (3) But one more thing. (2) I was thinking that I also feel I owe it to my family, somehow. To have a 'proper' wedding. (2) And I was thinking about, how the word 'proper' keeps coming up for me too. 'Propriety'? And 'property' (2)

Tiffany: Um (2) It's all good (laughs 2) I wanted to know next, the reason you chose to discuss that picture.

Frieda: Um (2) I guess because it is 'our wedding picture'. Or at least a photographic moment of the day we got married. Like we said, that was a big step in the, legal, process of being together. Fernando: Wedding photos have a certain weight. You expect them to be, exist, show, smile, glow, signal, mark, etc. And they expect you to be there, cut the cake, pose, throw the bouquet, etc. Our wedding picture, as our wedding had some of that. We are a couple, but had more having less. So I guess it is a good image to discuss the freedom. In-between. The shades possible in the image of "married couple". Or even "just married".

Frieda: I just went to say Fernando already had two and a half coffees (laughs 2)

Tiffany: I'm not sure whether to be jealous or afraid (laughs 2)

Frieda: I think both reactions are called for.

Tiffany: Um (laughs) Well, I think it what you have both been talking about, and what Fernando has said about the photo leads quite well to my next question. When you look at both photographs, and their stories, how would you say they show that you are like and also not like "any other couple"?

Frieda: (3) Like 'any other couple' we fell in love and got married. (3) Unlike 'any other couple' we fell in love in words and over distance(s). Before we even held hands. And we got married because we wanted to live together. Simply.

Tiffany: I like what you say, Frieda, about marriage being for you two, as simple as living together. (2) Its a simple statement, and we have spoken about how it is complex earlier.

Frieda: (laughs 2) Yes. (2) Although living together is not always so simple of course. (laughs).
Fernando: Probably we are like and not like "any other couple". But that also goes for "any other couple". (3) I do think we are special but that is a personal thing. And not a social thing. I don't think we are a special case. (2) Trying to be together, and live like that, makes us a couple, to build togetherness negotiating another, so, to make it possible, finding space beyond convention, finding traps old and new. (2) I guess everyone has to go there sometimes.

Frieda: I think we are a special case socially too. At least I used to. In that I moved from South Africa to Portugal and that before we had this virtual very long, long distance relationship. But since being here I've come across similar 'cases' (laughs 2). I do still also think we're special like that. Though I suppose more in the personal sense. Fernando wrote about (3) uniquely him-and me, and our worlds. Socially still, also, in the sense of him being white, European. And me being 'of colour, "African". I think maybe because of being South African. Here, in Portugal, there's a history of so-called mixed relationships though.

Tiffany: I've asked as though I know. But I don't. So I'm asking you. What is a normal "any other" couple?

Fernando: I also don't know what a normal couple is. One would expect the normal couple to be one without. Transgression, of rules, times, bodies (2) But I don't know. (2) I guess that's for the ones doing research on couples to think about (laughs 3)

Tiffany: (laughs 3)

Fernando: Anyway, the "any other" couple may also be the one without particulars. Courtesy of the homogenisation tendencies of the social. And courtesy of other great homogenizer. Google. Here is the "any other" couple (laughs and shows a line drawing)

Frieda: Hmmmm. (2) I don't know. I don't like to participate in the 'normal'-ising discourse. (2) But oh well. Here goes (laughs 2) Boy meets girl. No big age, cultural difference. He courts her. She falls for him. They get married. A white wedding, dress, cake, vows. They have a honeymoon. Move into their new house. Have a baby. (2) That kind of thing. Though I know there are so many variations on the theme that are also more or less normal these days.

Tiffany: (2) Hmmmm. I like the picture. What is he holding behind his back?

Frieda: I think it's something around his neck, not behind his back. A, 'the' knot maybe just tied. Or a label, fresh off the shelf? Or a lock. (2)

Fernando: I don't know. (2) I thought it was a top hat. But maybe it's something else. Like an axe (laughs 2)

Tiffany: Maybe my research is getting to me, but I thought it was a camera (laughs 2)

Frieda: Actually I thought it was a camera at first too. Then I changed my view. (2) Maybe your research is getting to me (laughs 3)

Fernando: It could be a camera.

Frieda: Fernando has to go. He's teaching later this afternoon, and had to set things up in another computer room (2).

Tiffany: Ok, that's fine. Maybe, do either of you have any questions for me. Or things you would like to say about your relationship or the interview?

Frieda: I don't have any questions right this moment. Feeling bit hormonally challenged. But if anything comes up I'll let you know.

Fernando: And then just to say we both really enjoyed participating. Thank you.

**Lungisile and Ayanda**

Tiffany: So I want to ask. (3) Which one would you like to speak about first?

Ayanda: (4) Any one.

Tiffany: Any one?

Ayanda: Ja, any one.
Tiffany: It doesn’t matter? (4) OK. Maybe you can tell me about this one. (3) When was this one taken?
Ayanda: It is at my daughter’s graduation. The graduation by the, the school. The preschool.
Tiffany: The preschool of this little girl. And she is your daughter? This is your daughter.
Ayanda: Ehay.
Tiffany: (3) And maybe you can tell me what happened on that day?
Ayanda: (3) On that day, it is the graduation. All the children, the little children, by the school. This daughter, she wears these clothes and it is for the preschool. So I take this picture, that, that I can remember.
Tiffany: OK.
Ayanda: To remember for the preschool.
Tiffany: So tell me. Who are these people? This is you.
Ayanda: This is my cousin.
Tiffany: Your cousin.
Ayanda: This is my daughter.
Tiffany: (2) OK, and what is your daughter’s name?
Ayanda: Asemahle.
Tiffany: OK. (2) Maybe you could spell it for me?
Ayanda: Ehay.
Tiffany: You can use this pen (2) and paper.
(Ayanda writes the name)
Tiffany: Umm, OK. Thanks. (3) Umm. OK. And were you there? Lungisile?
Lungisile: Yes, Madam. I was there. I am with this cousin there.
Tiffany: And this is your daughter?
Lungisile: Yes, it is my daughter.
Tiffany: And it is because you did not go to school?
Ayanda: I did not go to preschool.
Tiffany: Ah. OK. (2) So you were also there, Lungisile. (2) How did you feel at this graduation of your daughter?
Lungisile: I am also happy, Madam. I also did not go to school. She can go to the school. And it is my daughter. She can have the chance I did not have. It is important for her, for her to have a life. It is good for her. And this day it is good for her.
Tiffany: Um, I am glad for her too. That she can have this.
Lungisile: Yes, Madam.
Tiffany: (3) And you are proud for her.
Lungisile: Yes, Madam.
Tiffany: That she has this chance, and you did not have it. (2) Then she can go to the school.
Lungisile: Yes. Yes.
Tiffany: And now she is in the school?
Ayanda: Yes she goes to the school.
Tiffany: It is difficult for you? The school? It is difficult with the money?
Ayanda: Yes, she must have the clothes. And the things. All the things. So it is the money for the school. But she must have it.
Tiffany: (3) Yes. Um. How old is she?
Ayanda: She is six.
Tiffany: Um. OK. In the picture?
Ayanda: She is six.
Tiffany: Um. Maybe you can tell me (2) about when you know you will have the baby. How did you feel, when you find you are pregnant?
Ayanda: (3) Oh, I feel so angry. I am angry that I have this baby. This daughter. I am angry by the doctor, and I must go and tell my mother. I must say, now I have this baby. I have a baby. And she will be angry. I am also young then. It is young to have a child. She will say, how must we have all the money, for all of the things. There must be money to pay. For the baby. And then I go to him. I say, now I have this baby. What must we do now? And he says, you must do the abort. And then my mother, she go to my father. My father says, no. A baby is a blessing. It is good to have a baby. He says we must always look after the child. We must keep the child. The child can look after you. So then I feel happy. I am happy for this child.
Tiffany: Can you tell me why you are angry? When you find about the child?
Ayanda: No. I am so angry. I think, I can’t have this baby. I think, to tell the doctor it must be to abort. I even go to the doctor. The hospital. I don’t want the child. My mother is angry. She says there must be the money, and the man. And the man is not there. And there is no money.
Tiffany: But then you say you want the child?
Ayanda: My father, my mother must tell my father. And I am scared. But she tells my father, and he says that a child is a child. I must look for the child. And then I am happy. I don’t want to abort. So I go to him and say, this is what my father say. And so I keep the child.
Tiffany: So then you are happy to have the child?
Ayanda: I am happy. Yes.
Tiffany: (4) But it is hard for you then. With the child. It is hard because of the money?
Ayanda: Yes, it is hard. There must be money for the hospital. For the food. For the clothes.
Tiffany: For the school.
Ayanda: For the school. Yes. (3) And this man, he was not working then. It was difficult to find the work.
Lungisile: It is so hard.
Tiffany: So, um, how did you feel. When you hear, you hear she will have the baby?
Lungisile: (2) Oh, it is so hard. I am stuck, I don’t know what to say. I think she cannot have the baby. She must take it to the hospital. Have it to the hospital. She must abort.
Ayanda: But then my father speaks, to him. And he say we can keep it.
Tiffany: Ok, so this is hard, to have the child, but your father speaks. And then you are happy for the child?
Lungisile: Then I am happy. I am happy with this daughter, for this daughter. It is good to have the children. And I must pick myself. I must pick myself up. I have this wife, and this daughter. I must look after. I find the work.
Tiffany: (4) You said, you said you were young. How old were you? When you have the child.
Ayanda: Fifteen. I am still by the school.
Tiffany: (3) So, yes, and how, how old is your daughter now?
Ayanda: She is six.
Tiffany: (3) Um, ok. Um. Yes, so you found work?
Lungisile: Yes, Madam.
Tiffany: Is it the work you have in [an Eastern Cape town]?
Lungisile: Yes, Madam.
Tiffany: What work is it?
Lungisile: I work for the maintenance. The road maintenance. In [an Eastern Cape town].
Tiffany: And this, it is difficult for you to have the child, but then you are happy. Does this happen with other people? (3) Is it hard also?
Ayanda: Yes. It is.
Tiffany: So you are the same?
Ayanda: The same.
Tiffany: So you say. You take this picture, to remember the day?
Ayanda: Yes. I am proud of this day.
Tiffany: (4) Ok. And what do you like about this picture? (3) Do you…
Ayanda: I like the clothes of my daughter. The traditional clothes.
Tiffany: Oh, I see. She is wearing the traditional clothes. What are these clothes for? The traditional clothes?
Ayanda: They are for a wedding.
Tiffany: Oh I see.
Ayanda: For a birthday. For a party. For a graduation. The clothes and the paint on her face. It is for the ceremonies.
Tiffany: Oh, for any kind of, kind of occasion. Like a any ceremony or party. They are clothes for a special day?
Ayanda: Ehay.
Tiffany: (4) Ok. So maybe you can tell me about this other picture. Who are these people? This is you, and, is this your daughter?
Lungisile: No, this is my daughter.
Tiffany: Oh, I see. Oh. And this person?
Lungisile: This is the wife of her cousin.
Tiffany: Oh. Um. And these babies?
Lungisile: They are the children of the woman. This woman.
Ayanda: (2) They are twins.
Tiffany: Oh, twins. I see. They are twins. And when was this picture taken? What happened then?
Lungisile: Oh, hey. It is for my brother. The day he becomes. They say he becomes a man. It is for my brother. There is a big ceremony. We must buy the meat, and the things to drink and the tobacco. There are lots of people here. To this house. This is why the woman, this woman, she is here. Also Vuyo is here.
Tiffany: Ok. So there is a ceremony for your brother?
Lungisile: Yes.
Tiffany: (2) How, how do you feel at this ceremony?
Lungisile: I am so proud. Of my brother. To become the man. and I can do this for him. There are people and they say we need this. Or we need this. They ask for beer or meat or things. And I must get these things. And I am working. I get the money. So I can give the people things. So it is happy. I am proud.
Tiffany: Um (3) I’m not understanding nicely. I don’t know about this ceremony. Can you tell me about the ceremony? For your brother.
Lungisile: Oh, yes. (2) I’m, it’s for my brother, to be the man. we say he becomes a man. (3) (explanation in Xhosa 16).
Vuyo: (2) Oh, I see. He says, he tells me. It is this ceremony that must be done for the boy. When he does it, we say he becomes the man. You know. When he has been in the jungle, the bush. Then he will return after maybe a day. It is the circumcision. This thing, yes. And then when he returns, to the home. Then we say, we must have all the things. He must have the new clothes. We say he is a new man, a new person. Like reborn. He must have the new clothes. There will be many people there. They will all also tell him he is a man. There must be many people. So that day they had come from many places. And also here, this place. Also I was here, that day.
Tiffany: Oh (laughs 2)
Vuyo: Yes (laughs 2). Yes. So then the people will ask for things. They will say, you know. Where is the beer? Where is the tobacco? You know these things?
Tiffany: (laughs 2)
Vuyo: So, on that day. He must get these things. Yah, he must get all these things. And he has the work, so he can get these things for his people. He is also the man. Now his brother is a man. He must show him, this is the way things are. You must be a man like this. So he is proud he can get, he can do all these things.
Tiffany: Oh, so it is the ceremony to become a man. On this day. And he, Lungisile, you are proud that you can, also be, a man. Like you are strong.
Lungisile: Yes, yes.
Tiffany: Um (2). So to be strong, To be like a man. It is to work. And to look after the people?
Lungisile: Yes (explanation in Xhosa 7)
Vuyo: Oh, he say. It is to look for the family. It is the right way to do things. For us, it is the right thing also.
Tiffany: Oh (2). Um. (2) And you, you were also here that day?
Ayanda: Yes. I am here.
Tiffany: What is this day like for you?
Ayanda: I must do all the work. I am happy. I am proud for the brother. It is a big day, to become the man. (2) So I must get the food. Make the things. I am here and I must do the work. All the work.
Tiffany: You must look after the people?
Ayanda: Yes.
Tiffany: (3) So this is the day, there was a ceremony, for your brother. And there were many people here. And you were proud because you have the work, and you can give. To the people?
Lungisile: Ehay.
Tiffany: Um, and this is a picture. To remember that day, that you had that for your brother? Ayanda: (2) Yes, it was.
Tiffany: And other people, they can, they must also, do this work. And they must show they are a man, by giving this. To the people.
Lungisile: All men must do this.
Tiffany: Can other man do this?
Lungisile: Other men can do this.
Tiffany: It isn’t. I mean, is it, can it. (3) No. (3) So, um. When was this ceremony, with your brother?
Lungisile: (answer in Xhosa)
Vuyo: It was end, of the year. Last year.
Ayanda: Last year. Ending.
Tiffany: Um, and. How old is. Was your brother? Then
Lungisile: Eighteen.
Tiffany: Oh, um yes. (3) Oh. So. Um. Yes. So I want to know also. I want to ask. I forget to ask earlier. How long do you know each other, when you find you will have the child?
Ayanda: Maybe four years.
Tiffany: So, then. Um how long are your together?
Ayanda: I think, it is. It is ten years. He is there, or I am away. It is not all together. But all. Ten years.
Tiffany: Um (4) I see. Maybe. Ok. Can you tell me how you meet?
Lungisile: I see her, at the friend’s house. And I think, I want to meet her. I think she is a good woman. She is a student. She has good things. I like her. So I want to know her. And I ask the friend, to show her to me. And I say, can we be together. I say I like her. And (3) she says doesn’t want to. Then she comes back to me, an she says. Yes. Then we can. We can see each other. And we do. So then. Then we get the baby. And then I get the work. So now we stay here. To this house.
Tiffany: Oh, so you like her. What do you like about her. When you see her.
Lungisile: I think, she looks good. I think she looks like a good woman. (2) (Explaination in Xhosa 18)
Vuyo: This brother-man, says she is a good woman. She will not say the things. He has a girlfriend. Then he sees her. And this girlfriend. She is bad. She say all the things, to the other, to the people. She is hard. To him. And he sees her and he thinks, She will not do these things. She is at school. She knows what is right. She can look after the house. She knows about the family. She is clever. This woman is better than the other one. So he asks to speak to her.
Tiffany: So, um, you like her. Because you think, she is right. She will do the right things. You can be together, for a long time? And have the family?
Lungisile: She is good. Yes.
Vuyo: Um, ok. (2) Um, can I ask, he says you said no. to him. Why did you say no?
Ayanda: I am young. I am to the school. I think. I can’t go with the boys. I don’t want to go with the boys. When I see him at my friends house I say no. It is hard to go with the boys. I must to the school. But then I think. I go away and I think. I am thinking, the boy is not so bad. He is, he looks
nice. But I must check. So I ask the people. I ask about him. And they say it is ok. He is fine, he is not a bad man. And so I go to him and say it is alright. I want to see him.

Tiffany: How did you check about him?
Ayanda: I go to the other people. His friends. The people who know him. And I ask about him. I ask friends to ask about him. And they say, so it is fine. They say I can go with him. He is a good man. He will do the right things.

Tiffany: What things will he do? What is right for the man?
Ayanda: He will not hurt me. He does not beat his girlfriends. He is good to them. He will look after me. He can get the work. He does some of the work. He does not do the crime. He does not steal.

Tiffany: Is this the same work. In [an Eastern Cape town]?

Lungisile: (Question in Xhosa 5)
Vuyo: (Explanation in Xhosa 6)
Lungisile: (Answer in Xhosa 9)
Vuyo: No. it is not the same work. It is while he is still here. In [an Eastern Cape town]. He does the other things. Maybe some work, in the gardens. He does some work, in the house. He will go away to the place. And when he comes back, with the things. Things to sell. The marijuana, the pills.

Tiffany: Ok, other work. Still in [an Eastern Cape town].

Vuyo: And he goes out, away.
Tiffany: Ok. Um, thanks. (3) Yes. Ok, so I wan to understand nicely. You met each other. At the friend. And then it is four years. And then you get the baby. And now, you are living, together. Ten years.

Ayanda: We are not together. Living together. I am at school. The four years, we see each other. I am here, he is there. I am at the school, friends. Not all the time. Then I get the baby. I am away a year and a half. I have the baby and then after a year and a half, I live here. In this house. With him.

Tiffany: So it is six year, living together?
Ayanda: No. I go away. A year and a half. When I have the baby.

Tiffany: (3) Where did you go?
Ayanda: I go away. I am not here. I go to my parent’s house. Then I am here.

Tiffany: (3) Um. So you are not always together. But all, it is ten years. There is four. You are at school. Then you have the baby. Then you are away. You come back, and it is living here, together. For ten years.

Ayanda: Um, yes.

Tiffany: And are you happy, with this house, and together?
Ayanda: Yes, he is a good man. He brings the money. Everything I need, I can say to him. I need this. I need these things. I can phone and tell him. And he will get the money for me. All the things I need.

Tiffany: So it is, it is important that he has the work?
Ayanda: Ehay.

Tiffany: So that he can, you can get all the things, you need. (4) And, for you, is it good for you. To live together?

Lungisile: (Answer in Xhosa 16)
Vuyo: Oh, so. This brother-man says, she is a good woman. She looks to the house. She looks to the child. She does not say bad things. She is good. she is a good wife.

Tiffany: Um, so it is the things, you saw when you see you like her. It is these things, that is good to be with her for.

Lungisile: Yes.

Tiffany: Um. So. Ok. Then. So. Is it difficult, when you must leave? When you must go to [an Eastern Cape town]? To work.

Lungisile: (answer in Xhosa 15)
Vuyo: He says, no. It is not difficult. It is good. for him. And also for them. There in [an Eastern Cape town]. It is not so good. the house is not right. There is no electricity. No lights. No water. The house there is not so good as here. The school is far. It is better for them here. It is better
they stay here. And as a matter of fact, he tells me. This brother-man say, they did stay there. At first. They try to stay there. But it is not good for them. It is better here.

Tiffany: Oh. I am sorry to hear this. It is so bad for you there? There is no work in [an Eastern Cape town] for you?

Lungisile: (answer in Xhosa 10)

Vuyo: He did try. I say, as a matter of fact. He works here for a while. Before the baby. Just the small works. And he must get bigger works for the baby.

Tiffany: Um (4) Yes. Can I ask, also. Why do you not get married? (3) Do you…

Lungisile: Yes, um. It is good: we um. Do.

Tiffany: (6) Why is, it good?

Lungisile: (6) (Asks Ayanda a question in Xhosa 4)

Ayanda: (Answers in Xhosa 8)

Lungisile: (Answer in Xhosa 19)

Vuyo: He says it is right. If the man and the woman, they know this is the person they will live with. Like he knows, she is a woman, he can spend his life with. And she know. He is good to spend my life with. So they know, they will be together, in all things. They can have the child, they can live together, die together. All that. It is all through their life and they know to do these things. If it is serious. If it is not just casual. There must be these things to happen. And also, for us, it is the lobola thing. There is the money to pay to the parents. Or not money, not only money. The woman must have the new clothes. Those certain clothes, that even a person, a person on the street. Will know. That this. This woman is a married woman. They must be able to see. So for us, it is more than this. There is a lot of money, that is involved.

Tiffany: I see. I think. (3) I’m not understanding nicely. I see. You say, there must be the money for all the things. The new clothes. And also he says. He says. I’m not sure. (4) it is. (5) Um. If, a man and a woman, want to live together. If they know they will stay with each other. Then they must do these things. It is right. For the marriage?

Vuyo: Yes. You have it. Exactly.

Tiffany: Oh, I see. Ok. Um. So. Then I will just ask, why do they think, the man and the women like to be together?

Lungisile: (Asks in Xhosa 9)

Vuyo: (Answers in Xhosa 7)

Lungisile: It is good for the man to have the woman. She can help him. She does all the things for the house.

Tiffany: Ayanda, um, what, do you think?

Ayanda: It is for the babies. To look for the babies. It is better for the child to have a man and a woman. For them it is better. And the man he can get the money and the things. The man can do the work, and she can be with the children.

Tiffany: Ok. (3) Why, do, why do couples stop to be together? Why do they fight?

Ayanda: If he is beating her. Or if it is one who is sick. And then they cannot look after him.

**Nombulelo and Makhaya**

Tiffany: maybe you can first tell me how you met.

Nombulelo: (2) Ok. My friend was working here. She was working for Nick James (2). Then she asked me to come and visit. She was living here. Then she asked me to come and visit. And I just meet him. And I love him the first time (laughs2)

Tiffany: (laughs 2)

Nombulelo: And I think. This one is mine. (laughs 9)

Tiffany: Ah! (laughs 9)

Nombulelo: So since then. (3) We are fine

Tiffany: Ok

Nombulelo: Ja. He is sweet.

Tiffany: Ok


Tiffany: So how long have you been together?


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Tiffany: So that is five years. That is a long time.
Nombulelo: Ja
Tiffany: Maybe you can tell me, what was the thing you like? When you first see him. How did you know? (laughs)
Nombulelo: OK. Um. Um, what I like about him. Um. He is sweet. He likes to stay to his house. He hasn’t got lot of friends. He’s not drinking. He’s not smoking. As, as my ex-husband. Because my ex-husband was drinking and abusing me. And then I find this sweet guy. And I say this one is mine. And I so its fine. (2) And he loves my children. I want someone who loves my children. (2) And he loves his child. (3) He is a really father. So.
Tiffany: Ok
Nombulelo: His a good father to his family
Tiffany: So he is a good father and he is a good man
Nombulelo: Ja he is a good man
Tiffany: And you, what do you feel when you meet her?
Makhaya: (41)
Tiffany: You can say, what you think, or what, you feel.
Makhaya: (32)
Nombulelo: Maybe he feel the same way. But I don’t know. He is not a talkative person
Tiffany: Ok. (laughs 3)
Nombulelo: (laughs 3)
Tiffany: Ok.
Nombulelo: So I don’t know.
Tiffany: Ok, um. Ok. That's fine.
Nombulelo: Did you feel the same?
Makhaya: (nods) (2)
Tiffany: So for you, it is also like you see this woman and you think, ah, she, is mine. I want to be with her
Makhaya: (nods)
Tiffany: (2) Ok. And what is it like, what do you do together. What things do you do together. Now you stay together.
Nombulelo: (2) Ja we are stay together. And if I need something. (2) Advice to my children, he just advise me. (2) You see. And we love our children. He loves my children like his. You see I love his daughter like mine. So we are doing everything together. (2) And his family. You see. And his family, it is a good family. So. I love them very much
Tiffany: Ok, so your families are very close.
Nombulelo: Ja
Tiffany: Ok.
Nombulelo: And his daughter is like him, she’s like him. She’s sweet.
Tiffany: Um.
Nombulelo: She’s a sweet young girl.
Tiffany: (3) And can you tell me, um. Oh. I forgot what I wanted to ask you (laughs) (11) I wanted to ask about. Um oh, yes. Both of you have been in other relationships before this. You say you were married?
Nombulelo: Ja, I was married.
Tiffany: And were you married?
Nombulelo: Ja, he was also married. He was with the wife.
Tiffany: (2) And how is, what you two are like. Is it different from you marriages.
Nombulelo: It is different from mine.
Tiffany: Oh, you said your husband. Abused you.
Nombulelo: It is different from mine. Ja.
Tiffany: Ok.
Nombulelo: Ja
Tiffany: Ok. (3) And why did your, why are you not married? Anymore?
Makhaya: (2)
Tiffany: To the woman?
Makhaya: It is not easy to be married these days. (20 You can trust someone, but eh. It end up that they. (3) They disappoint you.
Tiffany: Oh, I see.
Nombulelo: Ja, it is like that.
Tiffany: Oh.
Nombulelo: Ja, he was disappointed by the woman, she was, he was married to.
Tiffany: Oh
Nombulelo: (2) So. (2)
Makhaya: The girlfriends as well. some girlfriends, disappointed me.
Tiffany: Ok.
Makhaya: (2) Most of the time. I keep. I stay on my own. I don’t have a problem. I just. I listen to music. Watch TV.
Tiffany: So you can be strong on your own (2). Then they won’t disappoint you?
Makhaya: Ja.
Tiffany: (3) Maybe we can talk. How is this relationship different. To those other relationships that were difficult. From the women who disappointed you and the husband who was not good to you. Did not treat you well. (3) You are both happy now?
Nombulelo: Yes, I am happy.
Tiffany: Ok.
Nombulelo: I am happy with him. And, um (3) I will. If there is something that we are not, we don’t like. We just talk about it. See?
Tiffany: Ja.
Nombulelo: So. He is a good listener. And I am trying to be a good listener to. See? (laughs)
Tiffany: (laughs)
Nombulelo: So I try to do that.
Tiffany: So you are strong, you speak to each other, you listen to each other. You families are good together.
Nombulelo: Ja, ja, ja.
Tiffany: Ok.
Nombulelo: His family is like my family.
Tiffany: (6) Ok, and on a. What do you do, just on a normal day. Tell me, what it is like on a usual day, just to be together?
Nombulelo: Um.
Tiffany: Just to be together?
Makhaya: (laughs)
Nombulelo: Um, maybe here! I think.
All: (laugh 4)
Nombulelo: He is cooking sometimes. Cooking (laughs) sometimes.
Tiffany: Ok.
Nombulelo: And playing the music, and dancing together
Tiffany: Ah!
Nombulelo: (laughs 3)
Tiffany: That is so lovely!
All: (laugh 3)
Nombulelo: The music. He is a music man. He likes the music too much. And I like the music that he likes. Because I want him to be happy. So you see (3).
Tiffany: (2) That is so romantic, that you dance together
Nombulelo: Ja (laughs 3)
Tiffany: Geoff and I sometimes do that, and I like but when we do that.
Nombulelo: (laughs 3)
Tiffany: But I am a very bad dancer.
Nombulelo: (laughs 3)
All (laughs 3)
Nombulelo: I love this man
Tiffany: Ok.
Nombulelo: Um, what I think. I think. This was the man, that God, was keep for me
Tiffany: Oh.
Nombulelo: He keeps this man for me. I love him very much. I want to die with him
Tiffany: (3) I am happy you have found each other.
Nombulelo: Ja.
Tiffany: It is so good. To have some, who is good for your heart.
Nombulelo: (2) He is good for me. He is good. He is very, very good. To me
Tiffany: Ok (3). So on a, you on a normal day, you will maybe watch TV, listen to music. He will
cook, maybe.
Makhaya: Go to bed, most of the time (laughs). Cause we feel tired to sit like this. We want to
relax.
Tiffany: And he cooks sometimes, do you cook?
Nombulelo: Ja, he cooks, sometimes.
Tiffany: And you, do you cook?
Nombulelo: He likes, the potjie kos (laughs)
Tiffany: Ok (laughs)
Nombulelo: Yes.
Tiffany: And is it difficult, because you live in town some of the week? To be apart?
Nombulelo: Ja, I’m going to live in town now, because I am working. See. So it is going to be
difficult. But he, he is fine with that
Tiffany: Umhuh
Nombulelo: So. (4) He is fine with that. (5) because I am phoning at night. I phone him at night.
To see that he is fine (5)
Tiffany: Ok, and how, I’m now asking about just relationships. What you think. Not maybe yours.
but why, do people want to be in a relationship. (2) Why do a man and a woman want to be
together.
Nombulelo: (sighs) (4) Me, to me. You need someone, you need to be loved by someone. You
see? You need to be. (3) You need to be in someone’s hands, and feel that, this. Person loves
you. You see? You know our parents loves us, but they didn’t love us like our boyfriends and
husbands love us. You see. So, it is different. So you need a man to love you.
Tiffany: What is different, do you think?
Nombulelo: (laughs) Um. (5) There are things that you can’t, talk to your mother and you can’t
do with your father and your mother. Um, maybe (3) see talking together about everything. And
the sex. You see. Sex is, it’s a very, very important thing to the relationship. See? So. Ja.
Tiffany: Ok. (4) Are there any other reasons, why, else do men and women want to be together?
Nombulelo: Um to have family. See? To have children.
Tiffany: (3). You two will not have a child?
Nombulelo: (3) No.
Tiffany: Oh, you said…
Nombulelo: He’s got a child from his ex-wife. A girl. And I’ve got from my ex-husband. I’ve got
these two girls.
Tiffany: Yes.
Nombulelo: You see?
Tiffany: Um.
Nombulelo: We don’t want to have other children. Because we already got three children.
Tiffany: Ok (4) And why, what is difficult for me and women when they are together. Also, I don’t
mean you. I mean what do men and women find difficult. (3) Maybe, what, why do people break
up?
Nombulelo: Um (2) Um. (3) Disappointments. (4) Um. (8) And the man to have a. loads of
girlfriends. Abuse. (2) Um, disrespect. You see? And the most, these days, is women abusing
men. You see? That is. It is a thing that now we are, we see. Women’s abusing the men. So, um.
These things are making people to broke up. People didn’t communicate, because, um, if I , I’m
not communicating Makhaya. I shout at him. He is not going to give me the respect. He is going
to be like that. So I have to respect him, so he can respect me. (2) So these are the things that
um. (2) People can be broke up.
Tiffany: Ok
Nombulelo: Another thing. uh, for instance. I am staying her. If Nombulelo doesn't like this place, she will leave me. Something like that. If you don't want, to live here. To stay in the townships. Not all people want to stay here.
Tiffany: So maybe if you disagree about something.
Nombulelo: Because lots of people come here and say to us. You can't stay here. I can't stay here. And we say, we like to stay here (laughs 7).
Tiffany: So you both like to stay here
Nombulelo: I like to stay here.
Makhaya: Ja.
Nombulelo: I like to stay here. I am happy to be here.
Tiffany: Umhuh. And how do women abuse men?
Nombulelo: Ja. You know the men, used to, to beat us. See? but now. Women are beating. Mens now. You see? So that is abuse. Taking their money and give them a small amount.
Tiffany: Ok.
Nombulelo: From their salaries. That is abuse. You see?
Tiffany: Ok.
Nombulelo: And didn't want the man to feel free. To visit friends, visit families. You want your man to stay in the house like a pet, or something. So that is not good. So you must go and free. Free to meet other people. You want your man to speak with the other girls. That is not good. He must feel free to speak with anyone.
Tiffany: And the woman she must also feel free?
Nombulelo: Yes.
Tiffany: So abuse, is when, maybe the man or the woman, tries to, control, the other one?
Nombulelo: When the one controls the one. Ja.
Tiffany: I see. Ok. And maybe you can tell me, what is. How is a. what is a normal couple? What do you think it should be like, when a man and a woman are together?
Nombulelo: Married?
Tiffany: Do they have to be married, that is a question? Do you think a man and a woman must be married?
Nombulelo: No. Because we don't want to get married. Because we are happy to stay like this. You see?
Tiffany: There is no reason.
Nombulelo: There is no reason.
Tiffany: And you are happy.
Nombulelo: We are happy.
Tiffany: When a man and a woman are together then what do they do together?
Nombulelo: When they are not together?
Tiffany: No, when they are together.
Nombulelo: Ok (5) I just wan tot talk about us. (laughs 3)
Tiffany: Oh, that is good. I think it is because you are happy.
Nombulelo: I don't know other people
Tiffany: Ok, I see.
Nombulelo: Um. To us, we are happy with, about everything we are doing. You see?
Tiffany: Ok. ok. So you are happy just to spend time together
Nombulelo: To spend time. Just to spend time with him.
Tiffany: And you are happy that he does not control you.
Nombulelo: Ja.
Tiffany: And you do not control him (laughs 2).
Nombulelo: Yes.
Tiffany: Ok. And what are the other good things in your relationship. You said your families are close.
Nombulelo: Ja, our children. We love our children.
Tiffany: (2) And are there any difficult things in your relationship?
Nombulelo: (5) Um. No. (3) (laughs 2) No. At the moment. We don't know. (laughs 2) But at the moment. We haven't. (4)

Tiffany: Ok. (5) Um, now maybe if we look at this photograph. Lets look again (11) Maybe you can tell me, when you look at it. What do you like about it?

Nombulelo: (3) (ask in Xhosa) He is too shy. (laughs 3) (4) What I like about it is, too. Being close to him. Because I haven't got a picture of him and I. You see. This is nice.

Tiffany: It is nice. You're sitting together. And you are looking happy. Smiling.

Nombulelo: And he looks nice.

Tiffany: And what do you? Do you like the photo?

Makhaya: Yes.

Tiffany: And what do you like about it?

Makhaya: Um.

Tiffany: The same things.

Makhaya: Ummuh. (laughs 2)

Tiffany: (3) Is there anything you don't like about it?

Nombulelo: (6) No, it is fine. It is. It is.

(Nombulelo gets up to serve Makhaya food 1: 46)

Nombulelo: Ja, it is nice to be happy Tiffany.

Tiffany: Um.

Nombulelo: (3) Because you can't stay in a relationship that you are not happy. It is not good. To stay in a relationship like that that (4).

Tiffany: Why is it not good?

Nombulelo: Um. (2) If you are not happy. I don't see. Anyway that you can stay. Because you are not happy. And, and, and abuse. You know in my, in my marriage. Um, my husband was abusing me, beating me and the children. So I stayed because, as, as. As Xhosa tradition, its it's a. the old people said, you must stay at your, at your husband's house. You see? Because you are married. So, um, we can't do anything, go back to your husband. So, um. That was not good.

Tiffany: No.

Nombulelo: You see? (2) So, um. I wasn't happy really. I wasn't, I wasn't. so what was said I um. I always take my time to spend time with him. Because. He didn't do better things, good things for my family and my children. So but now. I am happy. Because my children. Talking with him. Chatting, about everything with him. And, um. And um. (3) They love him. They love him. So I am happy because they love him. If I can break up with him, my children will be cross with me. Because they love him. If I stay a long time in town. They say, mom, go back. Because they don't want him to stay a long time, on his own. So. So. (3) That shows that. Um. We are happy. We are all happy.

Tiffany: You are all very happy.

Nombulelo: We are all happy.

Tiffany: Both your families. And that is important to you, that your families are happy?

Nombulelo: Yes. It is important.

Tiffany: And how is your life different now that you are happy in your relationship. To when you were very unhappy with your husband?

Nombulelo: The difference. The difference is. I am happy with my kids. And Makhaya, he is. He is happy and I am happy. And we didn't fight. If you know, these years. We didn't fight. If we were your, I used to be wrong.

Tiffany: Oh (laughs 2)

Nombulelo: (laughs 2) He would say, no you are wrong. he tells me that no, uh uh, you are wrong. You are doing it wrong. so I listen to him. You see? So um. I am happy because he. Just drive me to, to have a nice, a better future. You see? (7) my, marriage and um. I. Was very, very bad.

Tiffany: It sounds bad.

Nombulelo: It was very, very bad. Because I nearly, be. Been killed, by my husband. He wanted to kill me and the kids. We were staying at Uitenhage. Then he wanted. He's got girlfriends. He stays with the girlfriend and he loves her. She loves him. He loves her and um. So he didn't love me now. because I've got children, then he loved the new girl. See? Then he wanted to kill me
and the kids. He didn’t want me, to go back to [an Eastern Cape town]. He wanted to kill me there. So then. He hanged me. With um. With um. Electric wire. See? So. He, he wanted to go to the kids and, he wanted to slaughter them. Then the kids. When I cried. The kids heard that I am crying in the bathroom. He wanted to kill me in the bathroom. Then the kids go to the neighbours. And tell the neighbours. Mom is crying in the bathroom, and she was with our father there. Then go goes up, out and looks for the kids. Then he didn’t find the house where the kids were. Then um. (3) The he goes to the neighbours, the other neighbours and look for the kids, and the other man. Come and. Come and help me then. Then we ran away. That is what happened.

Tiffany: That is a terrible thing.
Nombulelo: Then the neighbours, I wasn’t got even a cent. The neighbours give me money to go back to [an Eastern Cape town] with the kids. Because they say. If you stay then you will die. So I said, um. (2) Um, I don’t want him and I divorced him. After the divorce he died.
Tiffany: Oh.
Tiffany: Oh. You are very strong to get away from him.
Nombulelo: Ja. So that is what I like. I am happy. I am coming from a bad relationship. you see? That was a bad relationship for my kids too,
Tiffany: Very bad for the kids.
Nombulelo: You see?
Tiffany: (4) So you say, you met in 2002, about five years ago.
Nombulelo: Um.
Tiffany: Did you come and live here straight away?
Nombulelo: Not, the straight away. I used to come and go back. And come and go back.
Tiffany: Ok. um.
Tiffany: Ok (3) So when did you come to live with him?
Nombulelo: (3) I don’t know when. Um (4) 2004.
Tiffany: Ok. (2) So you first, you go and come back, for quite a long time. And then you come and stay here. What made you want to stay here?
Nombulelo: I wanted to be close to him.
Tiffany: Ok. Ok. So it is important to you?
Nombulelo: I wanted to feel that I owned him.
Tiffany: Ok.
Nombulelo: (laughs 3)
Tiffany: How do you mean?
Nombulelo: He is not going to get anyone.
Tiffany: Oh (laughs 2).
Nombulelo: He is mine. You see? (laughs) I wanted to be sure that he is mine. You see?
Yes, it is different when you live with someone. You feel you can see him, all the time. I want to see him, at the time I want to see him. Even at night. I just put the light on. I can look at him and (inaudible) (laughs)
Tiffany: (2) And you say, you don’t fight?
Nombulelo: No.
Tiffany: I was going to say, what do you do if you fight.
Nombulelo: (laughs 3)
Tiffany: (laughs 2) But you don’t fight.
Nombulelo: Oh, he is not a fighter. Um. He is not a fighter (laugh 3) He is a sweet man, really. He is an angel. He is an angel.
Tiffany: (2) And. The. (2) When you do have things that are difficult in your relationship, what do you do?
Nombulelo: We try to sort out. You have to try to sort it out, there are places, to sort the problems. Of the relationships. Like um, FAMSA, see? Just go to the FAMSA. You can go there to get the counselling and the advice, see? These are the places that are good for the couples, and the married people.
Tiffany: Ok, I think I have asked everything I want to, but maybe you want to ask, or say something more about your relationship or the interview. Maybe you want to ask me something.
Nombulelo: No. I don’t want o ask something. Ja.

**Indira and Haroun**

Tiffany: So. If you could, um, choose one of your photographs. One we can start with.
Indira: Ok. Um, well. (4) We can start with this one.
Tiffany: (2) Ok. Maybe, you could tell me. About it.
Indira: What about?
Tiffany: About the photo. Um, what happened the day it was taken. What were you um doing?
Indira: (2) Well. It was at a birthday. Of our, of Haroun’s friend. It was Mike’s birthday. So Ash was taking photos. with his camera. And the, he got someone. I don’t remember who. Do you remember?
Haroun: (3) Um, no. I don’t.
Indira: (2) Um. So he got someone. To take the photo of us. Also.
Tiffany: (3) Um. It looks like a, like busy place. The people, I mean. Can you, um, tell me. About the party?
Indira: Well. it was for Mike. Like I said. And ja, there were lots of people. Lots of people. His friends.
Haroun: (2) Ja, lots of friends. It was one of those, like student, [an Eastern Cape town] parties.
Indira: Ja. One of those parties. (laugh 2)
Tiffany: Why, um, why don’t either of you drink? If I may ask.
Indira: For me, for me its religious. I mean, not really. I. I shouldn’t drink because of my religion. But I don’t. I don’t practise those things. Any more. My parents do. A little. But not strictly. We were never strict. So it think, you know. Its like I’m not used to it. I don’t know it. For me, you know, I don’t like it.
Haroun: Um. It is kind of the same for me. Its. Its not a big thing, in my life. I just learnt, you know, from my parents. That alcohol is not a good thing. And when I came, when I came to Rhodes. I did try.
Indira: Ja, so did I. I tried some things. I never (laughs. I never got drunk though. I don’t actually know, what its like. To get drunk. What it feels like. (3) it doesn’t look so good, you know (laughs 2)
Tiffany: (laughs 2) No, sometimes it doesn’t, does it.
Haroun: (@0 So ja. Um. I tried beer and whiskey. And, what is that stuff. Um, vodka. Vodka. (laughs 2) I sort of liked vodka. But I didn’t really, you know, enjoy it. All that much. I like, didn’t see the point. So then I thought, well. Maybe I won’t drink.
Tiffany: Um, and do you, find it difficult. Not to drink?
Haroun: Um, sometimes. It’s a thing so many people do. And especially. When you’re in first year, its hard. Not to drink. To say no. and people think you’re too much. Like too boring. Or dull. Or whatever. But its, fine. I guess.
Indira: We spend, a lot of time together. Like we go out together. Now. at first we didn’t (laughs)
Like before we met, we did it on our own, you know. He went out with his friends. Did things with his friends. And I, um, I had mine. So it was like that. (2) But now, its like we have friends, who know us, know we don’t drink. And even, even if everyone else, is drinking. Then at least it both of us, like him and me, who, isn’t. drinking.
Tiffany: So its like, something you do together?
Indira: Ja, I suppose so. Yes.
Haroun: Um. Yes. I never thought of that.
Tiffany: But you both, decided not to drink, without the other. Like you made the decision, independent of each other?
Indira: Yes.
Haroun, Ja, before I met her. I just got tired of it. The drinking thing. At Rhodes.
Tiffany: (4) Um, so we were, we were talking about the party. What was this party, where the photo was taken, and people were drinking.
Haroun: a lot (laugh)
Tiffany: Drinking a lot. What was that party like.
Haroun: Um. (2) Like most parties are here.
Tiffany: (3) Oh, I mean. Can you tell me, more about what its like, at these parties. For you two. Not drinking. And going together. Like that.
Indira: (4) Um. I remember, I think I enjoyed this one. There was good music. And I like to dance. (laughs 3) I really like to dance.
Haroun: Ja, she really likes to dance.
Indira: So. Um, and Ash brought his music. I think he said. He brought his hard drive.
Haroun: I have a loot of music. Like I collect it. I get my friends, when I visit, to swop with me. To like give me their music. From their hard drive. So I have a lot.
Indira: Some of its horrible (laugh 2) Like pop-py stuff. And old stuff. I like the drum and bass. The hip hop. Some of the rock.
Haroun: ja, but I just get people to give me whatever they have (laughs 2) I don't care. I just decide later. Like I play it and decide later. Sometimes. Sometimes I find new things. That I like.
Haroun: ja, like remember that stuff we got from Rob.
Indira: (2) Um, no. (3) I was. I was thinking of that, like Bollywood, dance stuff.
Haroun: (4) (laughs 2) What?
Indira: The thing, you made fun of it. (laughs 2). But then I said it was cool. (laughs 2).
Haroun: (3) Oh, ja. Ja. (2) (laughs 2) That was cool.
Tiffany: (laughs 2) And you took the music to the party.
Tiffany: And did you, I mean do you, dance together. Ever?
Indira: Usually I just dance.
Haroun: sometimes I do. I also dance. But she's good. I mean Indira is a good dancer. (laughs 2) I'm sort of clumsy (laughs 2) I suppose.
Tiffany: (laugh 2) I know the feeling. I always have two left feet. Can't dance. At all. (laughs 2) My husband, is always trying to teach me. (laughs 2) But I always step on his feet. I need proper lessons.
Indira: (laughs 2) Its not so hard.
Tiffany: That's what Geoff says. (3) He's also a good dancer. (laughs 2)
Indira: I like it, when he does, when Ash tries to dance with me. He thinks he's no good. but he's (2) not that bad.
Haroun: (laughs 2)
Indira: (laughs 2) I don't mean that. I just mean. You think you can't dance. So you're like. Self conscious. So it doesn't work. Like that.
Tiffany: (laughs 2) That's what Geoff tells me.
Indira: Oh. Um, but I like it, when we do dance.
Tiffany: What do you like?
Indira: I like. (2) I don't know. Its fun. Its nice to move together. Its nice when it feels like we can make our bodies do the same things, co-ordinated. (2) and I like the feeling of being so close. Its romantic, ok. (laugh 2) Its just romantic. There is nothing so romantic as dancing with someone.
Tiffany: (3) How do you feel. Haroun?
Haroun: I’m too busy trying not to step on her feet. Like hurt her. (laugh 3) I’m really, really bad.
Indira: No you’re not. You’re not.
Haroun: Um. (laughs 2) Maybe we should go for lessons?
Indira: Maybe.
Tiffany: It sounds like fun. I think. (3) Um. Ok. So, this party. It was a friend of both of you?
Indira: um, he is, um. Now. When the photo was taken. I had just, I mean I met him a few times. But only a few.
Tiffany: (2) Was this party, soon after you first started going out?
Indira: (3) We met. We met in, at the end of first year. And this is. Soon after the start of first year? I think it was.
Haroun: Ja, I suppose so. That sounds right.
Indira: So it was like. We started seeing each other. And then there were exams, and the end of the year break. So we both went home. (2) And we called each other. And emailed. But we weren’t together. Then (2) We saw each other, when we got back to [an Eastern Cape town]. And that had been. I don’t know. I think its usually two months. (3) And Mike’s birthday. Its in May, or something like that. So it was maybe six months we had been going out. It was new. But not that new.

Haroun: Um.

Tiffany: Ok, and how did you meet?

Haroun: It was through I think a friend. We both knew Angela. But not very well. well, I don’t know her well.

Indira: And I was good friends with her. We were in res. The same res. And we went to this Rucus thing. Like a cheese and wine. And Angela was, she liked a friend of Ash’s.

Haroun: oh, ja. (3) She was stalking Budge. She was always, like always coming to talk to him and. Its not that she’s creepy or anything. She was just always there. And really obvious. Obvious that she liked him. (2) But she was friends with this other friend. And Indira was there with them all.

Haroun: So we were all there. In the same place at the same time. And they all said, let’s go to Harry’s place to see a movie. And we did.

Indira: So I saw him. And I thought, he’s nice. (laugh 3) He’s really nice.

Tiffany: (laugh 2) Love at first sight?

Indira: Pretty much (laughs 2).

Tiffany: Um. Um ok. Do you know, do you remember, what you liked?

Indira: I think. (laugh 2) I don’t know. I just thought, he looks sweet. He looks like a kind person. He had a nice smile. Gentle. (2) He laughed a lot. He seemed funny.

Tiffany: so it’s humour, and being funny you found attractive?

Indira: Something like that. His naughtiness also. He’s funny in a naughty way. But he’s sweet. Not unkind. (3) And he’s tall, and dark. (laugh 2) And handsome.

Tiffany: (laughs 2) Um. So its also, looks, that you find attractive.

Indira: Ja.

Haroun: ‘Um, ja. I also, I thought she was nice. I thought she looked so small. And graceful. And such a, also her smile. I liked her smile.

Tiffany: So you both, liked each other, that first night?

Haroun: Ja, I think so.

Indira: Um. That’s right.

Tiffany: So then, what happened?

Haroun: Well, we went. To this friend’s house. I mean, you know, the place he was staying. His digs. And we watched a movie. I think maybe. Was it Sin City, we watched?

Indira: Um. It could have been. (3) It was something. Budge, has this big, collection of movies. DVDs and things he gets, off the net. He downloads. And we all. It was s big group. We all watched it together.

Haroun: And we sat together. We spoke at the Rucus thing. But not a lot , you know. And then I thought. I should sit with her. I should talk more to her. So I did that. (laugh 3) I don’t remember what I told her. How I got her to sit with me.

Indira: I think we talked about movies. Movies we liked. (3) we both like a lot of the same movies. Sci-fi movies. And also books. We talked about that. (laughs 2) It sounds a bit boring now. but it was good. it was good that night.

Tiffany: Ah. That is really sweet. (2) It’s romantic. You know.

Indira: Um.

Tiffany: (2) So would you say, it was the. It was having those interests. Movies and books, you said. That attracted you. Those things in common.

Haroun: (2) Ja. It was like. First there was just liking her. Liking her look. Kind of (2) Then, I spoke to her. And we kind of spent the rest of the night together. You know, talking. And watching the movie. (2) We were with those other people, but it was also, like we were together. The two of us. so then I also liked the way we were together. It was easy to speak to her. It was nice, to be with her.
Indira: Ja, like my heart started to jump. That night. (laugh 2) When he smiled at me. It was exciting.

Tiffany: Its very cute, and romantic. (3) So after that night. What did you do? Like how did you, is that when you started.

Indira: Um, ja, kind of. (3) After that, we. Um, we saw each other. With the same friends. And then we, we went to supper. Like a date (laughs 2). We went on a date.

Haroun: Ja. We saw each other around. Like just, by chance. But our friends. I think your friends too. My friends knew, I liked her. So they would, they would ask her friends, and like her also. To come with us, when we did stuff. (#) You know, watch movies, or go to the dam. Or the beach. Whatever. So we kept meeting up. Then I asked her out, on a date.

Indira: So then it was like. It was official. We were together. But you know, its always, a little while. First the dates. Then you say, ah, his my boyfriend. She's my girlfriend. It wasn't, I mean it isn't all fast. It doesn't all happen immediately. So it was a few months.

Tiffany; (3) Ah, ja. Ok. (2) Shame. Then it was the end of the year. And you had to both go away.

Indira: Um, ja. That was hard. For me. I was all, like excited. To see him. And I was happy. To be with him. (2) Then we had to be apart again.

Haroun: (2) Ja, bad timing. (laughs 2)

Tiffany: Um. (2) Maybe that's the bad thing about meeting at university, at Rhodes at least.

Indira: Um.

Tiffany: And how, long. Have you been together now?

Indira: It's well. its two years. It was a year, last year. In October. So its now. nearly two. I guess.

Haroun: Ja, nearly two.

Tiffany: And you, you live together. Now?

Haroun: (3) Ja. We thought. It makes the most sense. We lived. Both of us, in separate digs. Last year. In our second years. So we would see each other, maybe at one digs, maybe at another digs.

Indira: But that was like, a lot of organising (laugh 2). And sometimes we would, like not see each other, because we had too much, like we were too busy. So third year. This year we thought we could stay together. Also then, then it’s less rent.

Haroun: We share a room, in the digs of a friend. Like a friend of mine. (2) his parent’s they have a house. So we rent it from his parent’s. my friend. And he gets things fixed if they have to be, and he gets good people, I mean, like other friends. Its all friends that stay there. (2) So it’s quite nice.

Indira: And we share the rent, for the room. (3) So, that helps. It really helps me. My parent’s. we’re from Zim, and I have a bursary. To be at Rhodes. So it helps, to share the rent.

Tiffany: Oh, ja, I see. If you share it must be easier for your parents.

Indira: Ja, they don’t know. That I stay with Ash (3) But it really helps. With the money. And I think it’s good, for us. We get on well, together (laughs 2) Otherwise we’d break up (laughs 2). So its fine for us.

Tiffany: (4) Um, your parent’s don’t know you live with Haroun.

Indira: (2) No.

Tiffany: (2) You can’t tell them about him?

Indira: No. (2) Um, they know about him. (2) But they, they think we live, in separate places. You know. (2) For us, in our culture, its not right. To live together. (2) But we don’t we don’t sleep together. We don’t have sex. (laughs 3) We just share the room (laughs 2).

Tiffany: You just share the room.

Indira: Ja. My friends, they laugh. They don’t believe me. That we don’t have sex (laughs 2) But a guy and a girl can just share a bed. Can just sleep together. (2) You don’t have to have sex.

Tiffany: (2) So you don’t have sex, but you share the room. And it works for you.

Indira: Right.

Tiffany: Because its easier, for you, financially. To share the room, the rent.

Indira: Right.

Haroun: my friends, they also don’t, they don’t believe me. (3) They say, she’s so pretty. What’s. like what’s wrong. (laughs 2)

Tiffany: (laughs 2) So what do you say. To them?
Haroun: Well, I just say. We don't have to have sex. We don't need to do that. Just because we sleep together. We're together. But we don't need to have sex.

Tiffany: (2) And. What do they say?

Haroun: (laughs 2) I don't think they get it. (laugh 2)

Tiffany: Is that. Difficult for you?

Haroun: No. Not really. It's fine. (2) It works for us. Right?

Indira: Ja, its for us. Not for them. It works for us.

Tiffany: You both seem, very strong, people. You've made up your minds, not drink. Not to, have sex. And you, you do what works for the two of you. Like people don't usually do that.

Indira: Ja. People think, oh, I have to drink to be cool. Everyone drinks, I have to drink. I can't have fun if I don't drink. (2) And the same for sex. But it isn't true.

Haroun: No.

Tiffany: (2) Are these decisions. Not to have sex. Not to drink. Are they on religious grounds. Like for religious reasons.

Haroun: Um, no. not really. (2) Like I said. It's you know. With the drinking. It's what I'm used to. In my family. My parents. That kind of thing. (3) So that is just how it works. And then about the sex. That's, um, that's for Indira. It's for her, really.

Indira: (5) I. I'm not. I can't tell my parents I live with him. (laugh 2) I need. (3) They aren't strict. My parents. Like I said. But they wouldn't want that. From me. So I want, to be with the man, to marry the man. I have sex with. It's not religion. For me. (2) I think, I want to respect them. My parents. Respect the way they live their life, and the things, they have taught me. (4) For them. For my parents it is religious. They aren't strict, but they do believe. They do the things. Some of the things. The prayers. The fasts. (2) And so do I. But it's not so, important for me. (2) So I can't just, do what all the other girls are doing. (3) I want to wait.

Tiffany: And it works. For both. Of you.

Indira: That's right.

Haroun: It's hard. (laughs 3) It's difficult. I guess. You know. (2) But we are together, and I, we will do the things, make things work.

Tiffany: I think you're very, strong. To stay together and do this for each other.

Indira: Um.

Haroun: Ja.

Tiffany: (8) Ok. Well, um, why did you choose to bring this photo? To speak about this photo?

Indira: Um. We don't have, very many. Photos. (laughs 2)

Haroun: (3) We don't have a camera.

Indira: So this was. This is. There are only two. (laugh 2)

Tiffany: (laughs 2) Oh, I see. (laugh 2) Ok. It's not like you had a choice. (laugh 2)

Haroun: No. No choice (laugh 2).

Tiffany: (3) Ok. Well, shall we look at the other one. (laughs 2)

Indira: Its another. it was a few months ago actually. It's a dinner party.

Haroun: At the place where we stay. (3) Like a house warming.

Indira: (2) It was more like a dinner, than a party. Not so much, so many people.

Haroun: Not so much drinking as the other photo (laughs 2).

All: (laugh 4)

Indira: Ja, it was group of people. Like each of us. from the house, invited maybe two people. Or three people. And then we all. We cooked different things. Each person in the house, cooked a different course. (3) And it was fun.

Haroun: Except me. (3) I didn't cook. (2) Indira cooked. Well baked.

Tiffany: (laughs 3) Oh, you don't cook?

Haroun: I do. I do actually. (2) I like to cook.

Indira: (2) He cooks well.. He cooks a lot.

Haroun: I had a huge assignment. (2) Even though it was the beginning if the year. I was working on it. And the other people, in the house, they said we could do dessert (laughs 3). Like because its easy (laughs 2) You just make one thing.
Indira: (laughs 2) So I just made a cheesecake. I love cheesecake. And we go ice cram. (2) So it was easy. (2) But Ash didn’t cook. (2) We wanted to do, like a curry. A breyani. We sometimes make a breyani. Together. (3) But there wasn’t enough time.

Tiffany: Oh, I love. Breyani. (2) I lived in Durban for a while, and there was amazing, amazing restaurants there. Such good breyani. (3) Lovely. What do you usually cook?

Haroun: (2) Oh, um. We like Italian. (laughs 2) Italian. Pastas. Pizza. That kind of thing.

Indira: We’re also vegetarian. (2) So we just have vegetables, bakes, lasagnes. That kind of thing. (4) he makes and amazing veggie lasagne.

Tiffany: (laughs 2) I’m also vegetarian. I love veggie lasagne. I’m coming to your place for supper (laughs 4)

All: (laugh 4)

Tiffany: Um. Ok. So it sounds like a fun. Relaxed night.

Haroun: (2) ja. Relaxed. Nice people. Some music. (3) Just showing people, this is where I live, this who I live with. And we mostly, we are mostly all friends with each other’s friends. So it was big group, of people who know each other. And who are friends. (3) It was fun.

Indira: (2) Ja, it was fun.

Tiffany: (2) And you seem to, you even got all dressed up.

Indira: Ja. I said, if it’s a dinner party, we should all be formal. (laughs 2) It was fun. Like a real, fancy party. (3) A special occasion.

Haroun: It was good.

Tiffany: You look very gorgeous and happy there. (2) Happy gorgeous people. (laughs 2)

Indira: (laughs 2) Ja. (2) We don’t get dressed up much.

Haroun: (2) Ja, this is [an Eastern Cape town].

Indira: (2) And we just, we don’t do all the parties, and things. So it was fun, to have an occasion. And make it special.

Tiffany: (2) And getting, specially dressed, that was part of it all.

Indira: I thought so. (2) I liked wearing that dress. I don’t usually get a chance to. Like I’m not going to Pick ’n Pay, or lectures in it. (laughs 3).

Tiffany: (laughs 2) I see that.

Haroun: (2) oh, why not?

All: (laugh 3)

Tiffany: (2) Um, you say you don’t do all the parties and those things. What do you, do together? Usually?

Haroun: (2) watch TV.

Indira: (2) We go to movies as well.

Haroun: We visit friends. (2) Or friends visit us. Like we said, we have some, of the same friends. So. Ja.

Indira: (4) it’s our third year. So there is so much more work. We work quite a bit. I think, there is less. Time. To do other things. (2) We work hard. Especially Haroun (2) He, he’s doing Comp Sci. And I don’t think, some people say that science is harder than BA, but I don’t necessarily think that. But he has more assignments. Every week. It seems like. And I really want to do honours, you know. Both of us do. So we are working, you know, for that.

Tiffany: (3) Um. I see. Ok. It is more work, especially if you want to get into honours. (#) So, you, you tend to do, like watch TV, or visit or go to movies.

Haroun: Ja.

Indira: Um.

Tiffany: And there isn’t much else to do. In [an Eastern Cape town]. (laughs 2) I mean other than drink, get drunk. (laughs 2)

Haroun: Right (laughs 2).

Indira: Um (laughs 2). Not much. The library. (laughs 2)

Haroun: We like going to the beach. In summer we do that. But, you, know, its quite a drive. It’s like a day.

Tiffany: (2) it’s nice to stay, at the beach. [A coastal town] or [a smaller coastal town]. If you can. Like if you know someone with a house or something.

Haroun: (2) Ja, that would be good.
Tiffany: (2) They say, the best thing to do in [an Eastern Cape town] is to get out (laughs 3)
All: (laugh 2)
Tiffany: Um. Ok. So, I guess you chose this one for the same reason. As the other one.
Haroun: Yes.
Indira: (laughs 2) Right.
Tiffany: So, um, (2) ja. Um, when you look at these photos. And the stories, you've told. Like about the dinner party and the party. Can you tell me, how do you see yourself, being like any other couple?
Indira: (5) Well, I don't really think we're different. From other couples. At all.
Haroun: No.
Tiffany: Can you tell me how? Like how are you the same?
Indira: We live together. We care about each other. We see each other every day. We help each other, do things for each other. We're the same.
Haroun: Ja. We're the same. Pretty much.
Tiffany: Um. (6) I see. Ok, so a couple, a normal couple, is one that is together, does things together. Cares for each other. Spends time together. All those things, those kinds of things?
Indira: I'd say, (4) And, we do things for each other. We agree, to do things, for each other. Like Ash said. The sex thing. We sleep together (laughs 2) But nit se. for me. Its what I need. So we agree about that. We talked about it. And we sometimes talk about it. And then we agree, like to do, something. Something that one of us needs. So we do things, we look after each other. We agree. We share ideas.
Haroun: Ja, and I think in that sense. (2) a thing a couple does, we do, is learn from each other. A couple helps each other. And when things are hard, Indira will help me out. Maybe tell me, I'll do this. Or maybe if you do things this way. It'll be better. We help each other see, and do things, like, you know, in a better way.
Tiffany: (3) You support one another. and that is important, for a couple.
Indira: Ja, ja, ja.
Tiffany: Um, I see. And how, are you, different from the usual couple? Would you say.
Haroun: We're non-drinking, non-meat-eating, non-sexual. (laugh 2) in [an Eastern Cape town]. That's unusual. (laughs 3)
All: (laugh 3)
Tiffany: It's like the things, you don't do. That make you different?
Haroun: ja, I would say so. Guys and girls have sex. They drink together, and then have sex (laughs 4).
Indira: (2) And we don't do that. We're a little different, ja.
Tiffany: Um. Can you say, how that feels, to you, both?
Haroun: well, it works, for us.
Indira: It's frustrating. Maybe irritating. (2) All the people, some people we know. Having sex, and drinking. And they look at us. they don't just say, ok. That's them. They can do that. It's what they want. (2) Like we can be nice, be friends with them anyway. (3) They think we're crazy. They think there's something wrong with us. (2) Like they can't really accept us. because we don't do all the things they do. We must be weird, somehow. And that hurts, sometimes.
Haroun: (2) Ja, but Ind, we're happy. It's what we want. (3) They can just do, what they want to do. (3) We do what we want.
Indira: Ja, Ash, but sometimes, they look at us. they're unkind. It hurts.
Tiffany: (2) Oh, um. Oh. I'm sorry, Indira. That isn't fair of them. It isn't fair. (3) Like Haroun said, it's what you want, how you must be. (2) But I'm sorry they hurt you. (4) How do you, deal with that?
Indira: what?
Tiffany: (2) being hurt?
Indira: (5) I suppose, I scream in a pillow. (laughs 3)
Haroun: (laughs 2) She does.
Indira: No, its like Ash says. I know, I've made the choices I need to. I'm happy. I have Ash. And he's very good to me, for me. (3) I watch TV, I make myself cheesecake, or pizza, or comfort food. (3) Like I phase out.
Haroun: (4) I give her a hug.
Tiffany: (3) do you feel hurt?
Haroun: (3) Sometimes. But, like I’m a guy. I have other ways, to be a guy. And I’m not the rugby playing type anyway. (3) So I’m used, to being. Different. (2) I’ve always been, I suppose a nerd. A geek. At school. At university. But I have other, geek friends (laughs 2). And we’re fine. Together. Us geeks. (4) I’m also happy to have Indira. To be with her. (5) That means a lot.
Tiffany: So you seem to both, support one another, through the being different from other Rhodes students, and other couples. You have each other.
Indira: Ja, it’s important that we’re in it together.
Tiffany: (3) Sjoe. Ok. I see. (5) So, ok. Um why do you both think, men and women want to be in relationships? Generally speaking.
Indira: For support. (3) For sharing ideas and support.
Tiffany: (2) Sharing ideas?
Indira: Like Ash said. To help each other see, how can we do things in a better way. I think, friends can do that. But friends aren’t always there. I live with Ash. I know him well. he knows me. He can see the things I need to see. Sometimes I can’t.
Tiffany: Ok, to help each other through things. Support each other. (3) Can you think of other reasons?
Indira: It’s nice just to have another person there. Like I know Ash will be home, around this time. Then I can get a hug. Then we can have tea. Then we can watch Smallville. These kinds of things. On Friday we can watch a movie. He’s there. For me. (4) I like that.
Tiffany: The continuity. His presence.
Indira: Ja.
Haroun: (5) I would agree. Yes. (5) I like having a person around. And it’s someone who cares, about me. Who wants the best, for me. Like that.
Tiffany: (5) So, why then, what reasons, don’t people like being in relationships?
Indira: I think if you don’t listen to each other. (5) if you don’t understand what each other needs. Then you start to get irritated. Like pissed off, excuse my language. You get angry. He should say this, he should do this. I need this, and he isn’t giving it to me.
Tiffany: (4) So, misunderstandings.
Haroun: And maybe, maybe they can’t come to an agreement. And understanding. Like you have to compromise. You have to be able to say, she wants that. I want this. How can we both be happy. And if you can’t find a way. For both to be happy. Then you’re both unhappy. Or one is happy and the other is unhappy. (2) And that’s no good. that’s not a real, a real relationship. it doesn’t work.
Tiffany: (2) I see. Like you say, you two do the things that work for you. (2) But some people, they can’t find the things that work for both of them?
Haroun: I’d say so.
Indira: People are selfish. People want their own way. (3) But if you’re two people. You can’t always have that. You can’t always have your way.
Tiffany: (2) I see. (5) Thank you, for telling me, all the things you’ve told me. For your stories. Thanks.
Haroun: It was interesting. (3) It was nice to talk.
Indira: (3) It was nice to talk.
Tiffany: I just, want to ask. If you have anything more, to say about relationships. About your relationship. (6) Maybe about my questions, or the interview.
Indira: Um, no. it was nice to talk about these things. We don’t usually. Not really.
Tiffany: (3) Ok.
Haroun: Ja. I don’t have anything to ask. Nothing to say.

Dara and Michael
Tiffany: So what is happening in that photograph? What is the story of that photograph?
Michael: Um, just came back from lunch with, um, friends.
Dara: Ja we were invited to lunch with friends and we took the train. Which we didn’t often do.
Michael: No.
Dara: And we took the train to Tai Chung and we took the train and had lunch.
Michael: Who took the photo?
Dara: Um, May.
Michael: Oh.
Dara: May. May took the photograph.
Tiffany: And who were you having lunch with?
Dara: Um, students.
Michael: Students.
Dara: They were. They were girls who didn’t really have boyfriends. They didn’t really do much on weekends. So they always
Michael: Asked us out to lunch. Which was rather annoying
All: (laugh 5)
Dara: We finally had to say yes.
Tiffany: So you complained. No, no. no.
Dara: It was sort of an obligation after a while.
Tiffany: And what was it like, lunch?
Dara: It as good.
Michael: Lunch was good. The usual Chinese crap. But ja, good.
Dara: Lunch was good. The food was weird because it was this buffet and it was kind of like. It’s never really satisfying. You never really get what you want. But it was a nice lunch. The people were nice.
Tiffany: And they were just students?
Michael: Ah, students and friends.
Dara: More friends than students. Because we had been teaching them for so long
Tiffany: Ok.
Dara: Ja.
Tiffany: And was it a, a special occasion. It was just like lunch.
Dara: No it was an average weekend. Average weekend.
Michael: Just lunch.
Tiffany: So an average weekend just lunch. Ok, and you’re going home. So tell me (7)
Dara: We’re on the deck of the train. On our way home.
Tiffany: You’re on the deck of the train. You don’t go by train a lot. (3) what was funny.
Dara: It was
Tiffany: I mean you’re laughing about something.
Michael: We were just drunk.
Dara: Ja, we were drunk as well.
All: (laugh 4)
Dara: It had been a long afternoon
Tiffany: (2) You do have the beer.
Dara: That was the joy of Taiwan
Michael Ja, the beer (inaudible).
Dara: You could buy beer anywhere.
Tiffany: (2) I do remember that. Ok (2) Um. So you’re on your way home. And its been a pretty typical lunch
Michael: Was it Sunday or Saturday?
Dara: Sunday.
Michael: Um.
Dara: It was Sunday. Ja, because we only had Sundays off.
Michael: They asked us (inaudible) inviting us to lunch.
Tiffany: And ok, was it kind of a free lesson kind of thing?
Michael: No.
Dara: No. no. not with these guys with some people it was. But not with these guys.
Tiffany: Ok.
Dara: But.
Michael: It was more kind of a fun thing
Dara: Ja.
Michael: They didn't ask us English questions.
Dara: No. no. no. no. there was possibly the odd, what is this in English
Michael: Yeah
Dara: You know the food. But it wasn't they didn't use it as an opportunity. Which a lot of guys did try to do. But not these guys. They were very sweet. The one was out. She organised our tickets for us. Flores.
Michael: Flores
Dara: Fleur.
Michael: Floor. Floor.
Dara: I don't know. Strange names. Very, very strange names.
Tiffany: And you met in Taiwan.
Dara: Yes.
Michael: Yes.
Tiffany: How did you meet.
Michael: (laughs) In a pub.
All: (laugh)
Michael: That's sad.
Dara: The first time I saw you. You were in an alleyway, pushing your moped.
Michael: Ok.
Dara: And it had broken down. Which it did fairly, did it do fairly regularly at that time?
Michael: That was the little 50cc. Ja. Purpley.
Tiffany: (laughs 2)
Michael: Yeah.
Tiffany: (laughs 3)
Dara: And we went bowling that evening, but we didn't really talk that night
Michael: That was the following weekend.
Dara: Oh, yes, the following weekend.
Michael: And the following weekend was your birthday, was it.
Dara: Yeah, my birthday. And then I, I phoned your house. And I didn't get you, I got Aaron. And I was very upset because even at that time I didn't really like Aaron all that much. And getting Aaron on the phone was kind of like. Oh, oh, but I really wanted Michael.
Michael: Was that the time I was in Hong Kong?
Dara: That was a long time before. That was months before. That was when I first arrived in Taiwan.
Michael: You met Ashley before you met me.
Dara: Yes. Whenever I, whenever we did anything with your housemates, it was always while you were in Hong Kong. And I didn't really meet you until much later.
Michael: She went out with, with Ashley. And Johno.
Dara: Yes, Johno.
Michael: He was fucked out of his tree.
Dara: That was funny
All: (laughs 2)
Dara: Johno was the first, first foreigner I met in Taiwan. And I'll never forget that night. Because he was pissed out his bracket. And he had his wallet out. And he was going. This is my girlfriend
Tiffany: (laughs 2)
Dara: She's so beautiful, she's so beautiful
Tiffany: Shame.
Michael: He's shrine.
Dara: His shrine to his girlfriend.
Tiffany: Oh, shame. (2) So, I'm not quite getting this. You met in the pub. (5) And Michael was out side with the moped before.
Michael: No.
Dara: No that was the weekend before. But that was the first time I saw, I saw Michael.
Tiffany: (2) Oh, oh. He was outside. And the first time you met
Michael: Was the following weekend
Dara: when we talked and met each other was the following weekend.
Tiffany: And that was like, you had been phoning the house and got Aaron
Michael: No, no.
Dara: That was the weekend after my birthday party.
Tiffany: Ok so you kind of
Dara: Met the weekend before
Tiffany: And you talked
Dara: (3) No, not really
Tiffany: (laughs 2)
Michael: Lift home on the moped.
Dara: Ok.
Michael: (laughs 2) Drove into the wall.
Dara: He drove into a wall.
Tiffany: Ah. That's so romantic
All: (laugh 3)
Dara: But if you can imagine the two of us, our combined weight on a 50 cc. I really though I was going to die. And Michael driving into a wall was even funnier.
All: (laughs)
Tiffany: And then there was the birthday party, your birthday party
Dara: The weekend after, in Tai Chung.
Tiffany: And when did it become official?
Dara: (3) I still think.
Tiffany: Was there an official.
Dara: The first time I remember Michael called me his girlfriend. I remember that very well.
Michael: When was that?
Tiffany: (laughs)
Michael: I’m in kak now.
Tiffany: (laughs 2)
Dara: Ggg. Remember when he went to Australia
Tiffany: Ok.
Dara: And you introduced me to Katie Tai.
Michael: I introduced to her to you.
Dara: On the bus trip to Tai Pei.
Tiffany: Ok
Dara: And we spent the night with Aaron and John in that hotel. That hotel. That flea bag thing.
The Queer.
Tiffany: The Queer.
Dara: It was actually the Queen. But the R. No sorry the N on the name card looked like R.
Tiffany: That's funny.
Michael: And I phoned to say I missed you.
Dara: Yes, that was
Tiffany: Ahh.
Dara: It was really, really. I never thought he would call and when he did it was like wow.
Tiffany: Aahhh
Dara: Wow. He phoned me all the way from Australia.
Tiffany: Ahhh.
Dara: All the way.
Michael: (laughs 2)
Tiffany: And, you were there for how long, together?
Dara: I was there four years.
Tiffany: I mean together.
Michael: Yeah. (3) Three years. Three and a half years?
Dara: Three years.
Michael: You couldn’t really say we lived together until the last
Dara: Ja.
Michael: So I would say the last year or so we lived together
Dara: Yes. Before then we lived in separate flats but we did we were definitely together.
Michael: Ja, for sure. I mean, for most of the week I stayed at your house.
Dara: Ja, I mean, I didn’t share a bedroom
Michael: (laughs)
Dara: (laughs) He shared a bedroom. I didn’t share a bedroom
Tiffany: (laughs 2) so it made a lot more sense to go to your place
Dara: Well yes
Michael: Yes
Tiffany: And what was it like not living together?
Michael: (2) Um. Yeah, ag. I started to get used to it. I mean after a while I thought it was just normal to wake up next to her
Dara: Yes.
Michael: And when I didn’t spend the night it was sort of like where is she?
Dara: Yes.
Tiffany: Ahh
Dara: Yes.
Michael: You get uh, uh, yes. I mean you get
Tiffany: You get used to it
Michael: Comfortable with each other, and you miss it.
Tiffany: So you lived apart for a while, and then you just decide it made more sense to move in together.
Dara: Ja it did
Michael: Ja.
Dara: It made a lot more sense.
Michael: We just thought, you know, why should you travel all the way from Tai Chung. And I felt comfortable it felt right.
Dara: And we also felt we weren’t risking all that much because we had been together so long. But it did feel weird the first few weeks.
Michael: Because that place was mine
Dara: Yes.
Tiffany: What was weird about it?
Dara: (3) for the first time sharing a space. And my things being
Tiffany: Oh
Dara: (2) Having to take up space in his space.
Michael: Well I, space, you were moving into a male dominated area.
Dara: I mean its not only that its like. Is it ok if I put that there
Tiffany: So it felt like it was Michael's space.
Michael: That didn’t take long to change though
All: (laugh 3)
Tiffany: And then you had to find place for your things, and that was weird?
Dara: Yes
Tiffany: But it didn’t take long
Dara: No, no
Tiffany: Cool
Dara: No
Tiffany: Ok
Michael: there were fewer beer cans.
Dara: We cleaned up more regularly. Or I cleaned more regularly (laughs
Tiffany: (laughs 2) Um, and. You kind of worked in the same place did you ever work together?
Dara: (3) By together what do you mean?
Tiffany: Well I suppose we did work together.
Michael: We did work together.
Dara: Ja.
Michael: At the same school. Yeah
Dara: Well he was kind of my boss. You were kind of my boss. Sort of.
Tiffany: What was it like working together?
Dara: (2) Frustrating in the beginning, I think.
Michael: Ah, I, I.
Dara: Because I had issues with Maggie, and I always thought you know. I was kind of like, I wish he would stand up for me.
Tiffany: Oh, ok.
Dara: But it was like. I think if you had I also would have hated that.
Michael: Ah, well. I was called the boss.
Dara: You were screwed either way.
Michael: I was so-called boss. But that wasn't true. And I was the token guy who had been there longest. (laughs) That was the only reason I was.
Tiffany: So you were nominally Dara’s boss.
Michael: Basically I was the highest paid teacher. Maybe it worked that way. I don't know. Basically they made me talk to teachers, when they arrived there, to tell them how to teach. Which was. (2) Awkward.
Dara: Ja,
Michael: Yeah, so. Also Maggie used that leverage between us.
Dara: Yes.
Michael: So.
Dara: Yes.
Tiffany: Oh, what did she do?
Michael: Ah, ah, you know, tell Dara how to teach.
Dara: Ja
Michael: Silly I mean.
Dara: That was what made those first few months at TLC very difficult I think.
Tiffany: So it was less about what was happening between you two and more about?
Michael: Yeah, nothing was really going on between the two of us.
Dara: Ja, ja.
Tiffany: The boss was playing you off on each other.
Tiffany: And how did you deal, with that?
Michael: We just said fuck it
Dara: Ja. I think in the end what, what basically happened is that you and I. either unconsciously or consciously decided that work would be work.
Michael: It worried you a lot more than it worried me.
Dara: It worried me more.
Michael: You got upset about it.
Dara: I took it personally. I took everything that Maggie did to us personally.
Michael: And I just said ag.
Tiffany: And is that just, how you deal with things in general?
Michael: (2) Ag
All (laugh 2)
Tiffany: Ok, so you are more able to just go. Whatever.
Michael: Yeah, because I knew, I know we wouldn't stay there for ever. Basically they would say, ah, Dara is fired and I'd say no big deal, lets go. I mean I had a lot of ties there.
Dara: But that was also towards the end, when we did have so much friction with them. And I would say, ok, I'll just pack my bags. And they would say, well is Michael going with you.
Michael: And ah, ah.
Tiffany: And you said yes,
Dara: Basically
All: (laugh 3)
Dara: Yes. I mean
Tiffany: (laugh 2)
Michael: I mean. You always think you’re irreplaceable. But everyone is irreplaceable. I mean you have a few students. Big deal. Its drop in the ocean.
Dara: Absolutely.
Michael: It’s a revolving door. Especially in Taiwan. I mean I speak to Dara. I said it doesn’t mean anything.
Dara: But that didn’t help at all. I didn’t really listen (laugh2 )
Michael: Ag.
Dara: I listened but I didn’t really listen
Michael: Her father’s blood coming out in her.
Tiffany: (2)Ja, its unavoidable
Dara: It is.
Michael: A one track mind. When it gets in.
All: (laughs 3)
Michael: All in all, I would say our stay at TLC was pleasant.
Dara: That picture was taken during that time.
Michael: I would say, overall it was pleasant
Dara: Yes.
Michael: Ah, I ah.
Dara: I loved it.
Michael: Yeah. I would be upstairs working. It was. It was the money was fine.
Tiffany: Umhuh.
Michael: No.
Dara: Yeah. But I remember moving it, it, it felt very natural because. We came back from our vacation here is South Africa and I just never went back home. (laughs)
Tiffany: You had you bags and basically that was it?
Dara: I went to get my stuff basically, eventually. You know. That was the hint, that I’d moved our.
Tiffany: Cool. Ok and the time in Taiwan was in general good.
Michael: Ag, I’d say yeah. It was good.
Dara: We had a good life there.
Michael: Yeah, I mean yeah. (2) It was easier.
Dara: We had a very easy life style.
Michael: No responsibility. Which is a terrible thing. No responsibility
Dara: It wasn’t really, responsibility. I mean we had responsibility but we didn’t have accountability
Michael: Yeah I suppose.
Dara: I think.
Michael: Nothing would have stopped us just leaving one day. I mean a lot of people did. Just get on a plane one day and not come back. No
Dara: (2) Not many ties.
Michael: So, the question was where to go next
Dara: Or anyone to feel sorry to.
Michael: (6) Yeah, no.
Tiffany: Ok.
Dara: Going through roadblocks with beers in your hand. They don’t stop you because they can’t understand you.
Tiffany: So it was an easy, cool time. A good time. (2) And how does it compare with (3) Being here. Together?
Dara: (7) Very different.
Michael: Very, very. Yeah.
Tiffany: In what ways?
Dara: We went from having no responsibility or accountability to complete responsibility and accountability. And
Michael: Accountable for our actions.
Dara: Everything. With the pub.
Michael: Yeah, I mean. Well the pub was still a good experience. I wouldn’t say t was all bad.
Dara: No it wasn’t all bad. That was very difficult
Michael: Yeah but it was also an eye opener. It also tested our relationship to the max. And I mean.
Dara: Very, very.
Michael: For us to get to that, and I think that was the biggest hurdle. I think we can.
Dara: But we had our moments
Michael: Yeah, ah yea,
Dara: We had fits. I mean a lot. We really did. We had some doozies. (laughs 2) Really.
Michael: Yeah, but I mean we got through it. It shows something. A resolve. Something.
Dara: Absolutely.
Tiffany: What was the challenge of the pub?
Dara: (5) Running a business together.
Michael: Running a business other is a lot different from working together
Dara: A lot different.
Tiffany: (3) In what way?
Michael: (2) Um, just the pressure. I mean. I mean getting things done, paying bills doing this doing that. When we were just working it was like ok, pay the bill.
Dara: You pay the rent, you pay the water you pay the lights and its done
Michael: Yeah, but when you’re both running a business together its not just yourself you’re worrying about. Its your employees, your customers.
Dara: That was a lot of pressure.
Dara: Its not just our household. But we also had to run a household.
Michael: Yeah.
Dara: It was running the business that took up every waking moment. Because it was basically open almost twenty four hours a day
Michael: I mean even on your day off. You still get the phone call on Sunday night. Michael, there’s a problem. You think. I just started to relax.
Dara: I just started to relax. I just started to have dinner.
Michael: Yeah.
Dara: Now I have to go sort out some sort of fight or some sort of problem
Michael: Or we’ve run out of Jeagermeister. I mean fuck. Oh, sorry.
Tiffany: No problem. Its cool.
Michael: Yeah I mean, its also dealing with people, you also get the feeling like they can’t do it so fuck I have to be there twenty four hours a day. It has to get done.
Tiffany: Umhuh
Michael: And that also put friction at work. And also when we got home, we would talk about the pub.
Dara: Ja. We didn’t talk about anything else. At home
Michael: So it was what are we going to do tomorrow. What has to be done. Ah, he’s a fuckhead.
Dara: We didn’t talk about anything else. So it was that you would feel like I wasn’t pulling my weight, and I would feel you were blaming me. And that would set the tone for it. We started assigning blame to one another. And that, that’s when things go pear shaped. But we went through patches, and then the blame started.
Tiffany: Oh.
Dara: And then it was like nasty, nasty, nasty. And then it would be fine again for a while and then we would start blaming one another again.
Tiffany: So there was a lot of responsibility. That went along with owning a business together, and owning a pub.
Dara: Yeah
Michael: I don’t think it was just the pub. I think it was any business we would have owned together.
Tiffany: Ok, so it wasn’t the pub, it was any business.
Michael: Yeah.

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Tiffany: And you found that it was difficult to. Do anything. Difficult to separate your relationship from the business.
Dara: Yeah.
Michael: Yeah.
Dara: Because we were the business
Michael: Yeah.
Dara: And us being there kept it ticking over.
Tiffany: So you had only yourselves to blame.
Michael: So now she works and I work. And when we came home, we’re not talking about the same thing. We’re talking about different days.
Dara: Um.
Tiffany: Ok.
Michael: And you know. (2)
Dara: That was weird. Those first couple of months when we were separate. I don’t know about you. But I missed you so much.
Michael: Yeah.
Dara: (2) It was terrible, because I mean. We worked together ion Taiwan and then we had the business together. And to not have him around was terrible.
Michael: But that was also because you weren’t working.
Dara: Ja.
Michael: I mean you had a lot of. Idle hands are the devil’s work or whatever they say.
Dara: Ja. Lots of time to build up. Nasties. (laugh2)
Tiffany: (2) Ok, so it was at first very difficult not to be working together.
Dara: As difficult as it was to work together it was difficult no to.
Michael: Also the environment when you think back. It would have been better if you were behind the pub, doing the books. Or something. In retrospect.
Dara: In retrospect, if we had divided our time differently, it would have been much better. But because we both insisted on being there all the time.
Michael: And we’ve worked that out now, Stiaan and I. there is no need to be there in the morning
Dara: Exactly.
Michael: I mean that way at least you get to lay in the morning and you’re there at the appropriate times.
Dara: And it would have been better if I had done maybe days.
Michael: Yeah, just sat there. Yeah
Dara: It would have worked much better
Michael: Yeah now we know. I mean it’s a learning curve. But we jumped off the deep end.
Dara: Yeah, we did.
Michael: But its done now.
Dara: Yeah.
Tiffany: But you seem to feel like it. The challenge of getting through running a business together helped your relationship that seemed to be how you started talking about it.
Dara: I don’t know.
Michael: I just think if we’ve been through all that and we’re still together, it shows, it proves. I mean. Maybe if we didn’t have a strong relationship. maybe we both. It would have ended in fucking tears.
Dara: Yeah, but it could have easily. I mean the low times we went though them were about as low as you possibly could get. I mean the way we felt about each other at some times was. Just.
Michael: Yeah, the silent treatment.
Dara: Ah, oh. (2) We were awful to each other sometimes. I mean really awful Michael: (laughs 2)
Dara: (laughs 2).
Tiffany: But I love that you’re both laughing about it now.
Dara: The fact that we got through it is very good though. (laughs2 )
Tiffany: And you’re kind of saying that if you can get through this there is not much you can’t get through.
Michael: I’m sure there will be much worse ahead.
Dara: Absolutely. But hopefully we'll feel like if we got through, we will also be able to laugh about that a couple of years down the line as well.
Michael: No relationship is perfect.
Tiffany: No.
Dara: I mean, God knows what is going to happen after the baby.
Michael: (3) Ag.
Dara: Who knows. I mean, that's the next hurdle.
Tiffany: The baby is the next hurdle.
Dara: Yes. (4) The next hurdle.
Tiffany: Ok.
Dara: The next. (3) Interesting chapter.
Tiffany: The next chapter.
Michael: (laughs 2)
Tiffany: What do you think is going to happen in the next chapter. What is that hurdle looking like for you, two?
Michael: Jus sus. Ah, Jus sus.
Tiffany: Um
Michael: More responsibility, more love. I mean its. I don't know.
Dara: (3) I think it will be like the pub.
Tiffany: (3) (laughs 3) Put that on a bumper sticker.
Dara: Ah, I know, it sounds awful but it will be. We're going to have to learn again to pay attention to one another, and be a couple. Outside if focusing on one, thing.
Michael: Ah, yeah.
Dara: And that one thing could easily take over. A child, all the time. The baby did this and the baby did that. I mean, we could very easily martyr ourselves to that cause rather than martyring ourselves to the cause of the business.
Tiffany: um.
Dara: Martyr ourselves to the cause of bringing up a child.
Michael: I mean we won't know until it happens.
Dara: and he won't feel like I'm pulling my weight and I won't feel he's pulling he's weight. It'll be the same kind if thing.
Michael: You don't know how you'll react till it happens, no one knows how they'll react. You know when a father sees his child when a mother sees her child. The reactions. Uh.
Tiffany: Um.
Michael: You know.
Dara: (2) What if you don't have that reaction. That's the next reaction. (laughs)
Tiffany: (laughs)
Michael: Uh, now you’re thinking too much.
Dara: You see, that, that gets me in trouble.
Tiffany: Ja. I know. (2) How did you both feel when you heard you were going to have a baby.
Dara: Excited. (3) and scared.
Michael: Excited. We had been trying for a while. Trying. Not trying. I don't know what you would call it.
Dara: Well we had thought we could.
Tiffany: That the possibility was open.
Dara: Yes. Good.
Tiffany: (2) Thank you.
Dara: Exactly.
Michael: But no. I’m happy. I know it is going to change my life. (2) but make it more. Exciting. (2) Interesting.
Dara: Yes.
Michael: (inaudible) I mean, yeah. (2) Everyone has their own views on parenthood, but you go through that.
Dara: Yes.
Michael: You see kids and you think, ah I won't do that.
Dara: Yes.
Michael: But, fuck. You know. When that little thing comes. (laughs ) Inaudible
All (laugh 2)
Michael: So I don’t know. We say everything now but when it comes along.
Dara: Ja. You don’t know.
Michael: So its an open chapter that hasn’t been written. So I think its just there to write it as we go. I don’t think we can write it now,
Tiffany: But you’re excited about it.
Michael: Yeah, ja. (2) It’s just that a lot of things are happening at the same time. So. At the moment, juggling as lot of shit. (inaudible) Oh, shit this is happening as well. oh, no Dara’s pregnant. Oh, this happening as well. so it all happened at once sort of thing. So its.
Tiffany: Other work stuff.
Dara: Yes.
Michael: The pub you know. Money and all that happening at once. So its sort of like yoh. Sjoe.
Dara: (4) Its good.
Michael: Its good.
Tiffany: (3) ok. Uhm. (3) Shall we talk about another photograph.
(pause to change rooms)
Tiffany: why did you choose that photograph to talk about? The one in Taiwan?
Dara: Because it has happy memories I think.
Michael: Typical Taiwan.
Tiffany: Typical Taiwan.
Dara: (2) Typical us in Taiwan. The beers, the cigarettes. We both had a very good time there.
Michael: Uh.
Tiffany: Ok. (3) Um. (3) Ok. And lets talk about the next photograph.
Dara: Ok.
Tiffany: What’s happening in that photograph?
Michael: (3) its our wedding
All: (laughs)
Dara: No prizes for that. Its our wedding
Michael: Its just after we got married.
Dara: Yes.
Tiffany: And tell me about the day you got married.
Dara: It was a beautiful day.
Michael: Ah, it was lovely.
Dara: It was a cold day, everyone looses very, very cold in that picture
Tiffany: (laughs 2)
Michael: Its day I won’t forget.
Dara: Yes, a lovely day.
Michael: Don’t remember a lot actually.
Dara: I remember being very nervous.
Michael: I cried when I saw Dara walk in.
Tiffany: Ah.
Michael: Yeah.
Dara: I think I cried just about. I was in tears when I reached the front. The I don't know if you could call it the altar. The front part of the audience thing. (laughs 2)
Tiffany: Uhhuh.
Dara: Ja. Very emotional, day. Very, very emotional.
Michael: Yeah it was good. It was a blur. From the morning it was blur. And it just went smoothly. It just went shwum. It went quickly
Dara: Yeah
Michael: Yeah. No
Dara: It was beautiful day
Michael: No, it was
Tiffany: (3) And (2) Tell me about the time just before the wedding. About getting ready for the wedding.
Dara: (3) That went well. I think we organised it fairly well and we planned it fairly well.
Michael: Yeah. Well. it wasn’t hectic
Dara: We kept it simple
Michael: There wasn’t really much planning to do,
Tiffany: And was it a conscious choice. That you wanted it simple
Dara: Yes. It was.
Michael: Yeah. We wanted family and friends. I didn’t wanted people there who. (2) No that didn’t mean anything to me but someone I hadn’t seen I in ten years to invite.
Dara: It wouldn’t have made any sense.
Michael: I didn’t want that.
Dara: Its also the people that were, that were introduced us and were around there when we first got together. And also people we hadn’t seen in a long time. And people came from all over the world to be there. Which was fabulous.
Michael: Part of our life from when we met onwards to that point
Dara: Yeah (2). And hopefully onwards into the future as well.
Michael: (2)Yeah. Its true.
Tiffany: (5) I like that you chose a group photo.
Dara: Um.
Tiffany: Why did you choose a group photograph?
Dara: Because its important I think. These are the people who were there for us on our wedding day who hopefully will be there for us. When we have trouble in our relationship or when we have trouble in the future or when we need a shoulder to cry on. I don’t think any relationship can survive without that.
Michael: A support network
Dara: (2) And also example, to be followed
Michael: (2) Yeah for sure,
Dara: I think
Tiffany: (2) That’s nice.
Dara: Lots of good examples. In that photo. To be followed. (3) I think. (3) of good relationship.
Tiffany: (2) And what would you say is a good relationship? what are those examples teaching you
Michael: (6) Ag.
Tiffany: Its not a test. I’m just interested.
Michael: Ah, ah. Test. Multichoice is easy. All of the above. I don’t know. Everyone has their own opinion of what makes a good relationship. I think its just important that you talk.
Tiffany: Um
Michael: We’ve been through the stage where you don’t talk. And its better if you talk. To know what’s, what’s bothering you.
Dara: Avoidance techniques.
Michael: I don’t know. You learn as you go what makes a relationship.
Dara: Yes
Michael: No one can tell you what makes it work a how to
Dara: Yes. And I suppose. I don’t think I’ve ever had a relationship I can compare to ours
Michael: That’s true
Dara: Its ours
Michael: You make a relationship as you go. There’s no written laws.
Dara: (2) I think what the relationships in the photo have taught us, I mean we have so many couples that have been together for a long time. But not necessarily. We’ve also in that photo got lots of examples of, like Felicity and Joseph, couples who have gotten married late in life. And Aunty Erica and Uncle Pete. Its like a don’t give up kind of thing. As well. and you know. (3) You’ll find happiness, and be together you know, as long as you both struggle to keep each other going. I think.
Tiffany: (2) That’s a good lesson.
Dara: (2) I think.
Tiffany: And it’s one you’ve already been playing with, like you were saying, with the pub. Not playing with
Michael: Yeah.
Dara: Ja.
Tiffany: (2) Working with when you were working with the pub.
Michael: Keeping up. You know there are better times ahead. There are better times to aim for. If you give up at the first hurdle it’s the point. That’s why we have girlfriends and boyfriends at eighteen nineteen. Ah there’s another one. What’s the point of hanging around for this issues. But when you find someone you care about it’s worth fighting for.
Dara: And I think also that we had, such and easy, a wonderful, not an easy. I don’t want to say easy because I don’t necessarily think our relationship was easy from the start. But just such a happy go lucky time in Taiwan.
Michael: Um
Dara: You know. That it. It’s always a fun thing to look back
Michael: Yeah
Dara: And say gee we were like that then. And we could be like that in the future.
Michael: Ja
Tiffany: So like you’ve had an ideal time and. That’s something that you are going to hold on to
Dara: And fight to have. To have back again
Michael: Not that we don’t have it now. (2) Not as happy and lucky.
Dara: Not as,
Michael: But at the moment it could be better it could be worse. I don’t know
Tiffany: (3) Ok. And why did you get married. I don’t know if that’s a stupid question. But why get married
Michael: (6) Ag
Dara: Ah (2) I wanted to get married
Michael: Ja I wanted to get married. I don’t think it was for anyone else. It was just for us. We contemplated it a long time ago.
Dara: oh, yes, while we were still in Taiwan.
Michael: So. No, it is someone I want to be with for the rest of my life so it gives a
Dara: Formalises it
Michael: Formalises it
Tiffany: Its kind of a non question for you two. Its kind of like. Why wouldn’t we
Both (laughs)
Dara: Well it seemed like a totally natural progression. Although you would get people who would say why didn’t you do it earlier.
Michael: It felt right then
Dara: Yeah.
Michael: I mean. (2) Could have got married in (3) Taiwan.
Dara: Yeah. In a funny alley way. With.
Michael: But I think you also get married for other people sometimes.
Dara: And it meant a lot to us to have family and friends with us there.
Michael: Yeah
Dara: Getting married in Taiwan would have been like
Michael: (4) Null and void
Dara: Not null and void
All: (laughs 6)
Michael: It would have been a non event.
Dara: It wouldn’t have been as sentimental. That’s probably why you’re saying null and void. No?
Michael: Yeah. It would have been like, where’s the friends. Where’s the family. (inaudible)
Dara: It would have been another, another night. Going out and drinking. Basically.
Tiffany: Ok, so it would have been a non event because you didn’t have the support of friends and family.
Michael: Yes.
Dara: It would have been students.
Michael: It would have been twenty students. Singing. It would have meant. What's the point. We would have gotten red envelopes
All: (laughs)
Michael: We would have been paid to have the wedding.
Dara: That would have been good that's why Andrew had two weddings.
Michael: Yeah, he was smart.
All: (laughs)
Dara: He also had half of the Chinese mafia giving him money so.
Tiffany: That must have been good.
Dara: We missed that wedding
All: (laughs)
Tiffany: Ok, so. I think you answered my question about why did you choose this photograph. (4) So now looking at these two photographs. How would you say you are like any other couple in these photographs?
Dara: We're like any other couple?
Tiffany: Like a usual couple (8)
Michael: Um, uh, eh, uh. The usual. Happy times there. Even happier times there. Its like a usual couple. (inaudible) is that what you mean. Like comparing it to any other couple
Dara: Well we're happy. We're clearly both drinkers, smokers there. So it indicates we share the same kind of lifestyle there.
Tiffany: Ok.
Dara: And if we didn't share that same kind of lifestyle we wouldn't necessarily have gotten together.
Tiffany: Ok. These things make a couple.
Dara: Yeah and in the other photograph. That's us and our families merging. That's also normal for any couple. That they are.
Tiffany: (3) What is a normal couple?
Dara: I don't know.
Tiffany: I'm asking like I know. But I don't.
All: (laughs 4)
Tiffany: You were talking just now like about (4) Uh.. You were saying how. You're couple. You're relationship is different from other relationships. The way that you can say how a relationship could be.
Michael: Yeah I mean I don't think you can compare a couple to any other couple. I mean comparing us to you we're two different couples. We live different lifestyles. We live different places. Have been through different hardships.
Dara: Yeah.
Michael: So that gives. I mean comparing a typical couple, I mean I don't think it can be done. There is no typical couple. So I don't think. I mean how do we compare to other couples. We love each other. Other couples love each other too. And there it stops. And you splinter off into your own couples.
Tiffany: So the next question, how you differ from other couples is not going to be a very productive one.
Dara: (2) No. because I don't think we
Michael: Every couple is different. I can’t answer. (laughs 4) I know it’s a silly answer
Tiffany: No, its an answer.
Michael: Its like saying every couple has a different hobby. How am I different from another person. Surely there are reasons. But how can I say
Tiffany: No that’s a good answer. (3) And. What do you think people find. And we’re not necessarily talking about your relationship now. What do people, why do people get into relationships?
Dara: (6) To share your life with someone
Michael: you also
Dara: to share your hopes and your happiness. And your failures.
Michael: You need someone to be with
Dara: (5) yeah someone as you say to share with. You also crave someone to be with yes
Michael: I think its just natural and I mean. That's why you have fifty friends when your twelve and maybe five friends when you're forty. That's who, that's your little. Niche. And then there is someone special inside of that niches who is yours as well. someone you share with. Not that you don’t share.
Dara: But you do.
Michael: Yeah, yeah. I know. Not share in a physical way
All: (laughs)
Michael: We're going down that street. But also you don't share everything with everyone. In a couple you share private moments that you don't share with others.
Dara: But its also cool that you're comparing it to friendship. I mean I think that’s a big part of it as well.
Michael: I mean you must be comfortable with that person. To be able to sit in a room together and not have to talk
Dara: That's what I think. I first thought. You know. This is someone I will spend the rest of my life with when you do feel that comfortable with that persons. When you feel. Comfortable with those kinds of silences.
Michael: Yeah. You know. Like your first fart.
All: (laugh)
Michael: You know you're going down the right street when there is a fart.
All: (laughs 3)
Michael: Or the woman farts.
Dara: There you go. There you go.
All: (laughs 4)
Michael: Its when you
Dara: I know its true
Michael: It when you let down your doors. Not your doors
Tiffany: Walls doors.
Dara: Your guards. No. Its true
Tiffany: Uhuh.
Dara: (2) And you don’t feel sort of skaam. In front of them
Michael: And its also putting up with your friends persecution that you are ready to stay with this girl.
Dara: Yeah, yeah.
Tiffany: What do you mean?
Michael: Well your friends are part of your life. And all of a sudden you have to put up with someone else, in your life. They have this thing of saying. Why are you spending so much time with her. You should spend more time with us. And that’s when you make the decision. Is this the woman I want to be with. And lose the friendships. Or if they are my friends then they will stay with me through this.
Dara: Yeah, yeah. If they are my friends then they will obviously not disappear just because I’m spending more time with him
Michael: Yeah. It’s the initial shock of his spending more time with her. He’s found. (3) Not a replacement.
Tiffany: It sound like you have explations of this. (2) I mean experience. Not explaition. (laughs)
Dara: Very very very much so
Michael: Yeah, so I mean. Its. I mean its initial shock to your chummies, your mates, your chinas. Whatever you want to call them.
Dara: (2) My friends loved you
All: (2) (laughs 4)
Dara: All my friends loved you but you’ve not necessarily liked all my friends.
Michael: Ah, well (laughs) that’s the way it goes. I mean
Dara: But now its good we have friends in common. I mean the friends who have only known us as us.

Tiffany: So you’ve had to juggle friends and your relationship. it sounds like.

Dara: Michael did. In the beginning.

Michael: It wasn’t just that. It was nationalities. A cross between

Dara: Yeah

Michael: I mean that was also. That was hard. I mean fuck it now. Its not a problem now.

Dara: There’s always this. Why are all Australians like that? Why are all South Africans like that?

Michael: The generalities.

Dara: And we take it personally. You know (laughs 3) It was. Ja. I’ll never forget. There was this South Africa day where you got really upset. Michael was the only one wearing a South Africa jersey.

Michael: (2) And I was still made to feel.

Dara: And no one spoke to him.

Michael: Even though I was with Dara at that time

Dara: It was an awful day

Michael: It was like you’re an outsider. We don’t want you, to be part of our. South African day, sort of thing. And though fuck.

Dara: And they still gave him a prize for wearing the jersey. (laughs 3)

Tiffany: (laughs 2) Oh no.

Dara: Like really patronising

Tiffany: Terrible.

Dara: It was an awful day.

Michael: Yeah

Tiffany: So have you found being different nationalities is an, is an issue

Dara: It can be. It can be a challenging

Michael: It isn’t any more.

Dara: Not anymore. But it could have been.

Michael: Still when people find that I am here and you’re not there. They sort of thinking. Why is he here and she not there.

Tiffany: (3) Why do people think that’s odd?

Michael: Ah well

Tiffany: (2) Why would an Australian ever come to South Africa

Tiffany: Oh, like South Africa is so crap

Michael: Yeah

Tiffany: Oh, I get it.

Dara: And he’s faced a lot of criticism.

Michael: People stills ay now, oh why are you here. Oh. Its. Its happened that way. And I have my good days and my bad days when I get befucked.

Dara: (2) And that’s also a thing. We both know we could have gone either.

Michael: Yeah

Dara: But it really (3) And I know he’s doing this for me now. But I know at some point. Ant some point if we went to Australia. I’d also struggle. And I’d also get through it. I know I would. Because I still have him

Michael: Um

Dara: (2) but its made it. Its also made it worth it.

Michael: Yeah

Dara: It makes it worth it

Michael: Yeah (3) Although I’ve made a lot more friends here than I did in Taiwan. Of South African people.

Dara: Yeah.

Michael: That was general population that was.

Dara: A little strange.

Michael: Yeah. (2) You know. They love to hate South Africa.

Dara: They also loved to hate other people
Michael: Yeah so
Dara: So it was an odd group. (2) They were very insular. They didn't like letting in outsiders.
Tiffany: Especially not Australian outsiders.
Michael: Yeah
Dara: It was anyone. New Zealanders. You know. Always eternally suspicious of other people.
With the whole apartheid thing you find people are always, very sensitive. And very. Ja. Ah. We had a couple of.
Tiffany: Sounds defensive
Dara: Ja. That's it. And the defence is the kraal. Lets make kraal.
Tiffany: Laager
Dara: And we're going to stay in the kraal. The laager. Laager mentality.
Tiffany: Laager mentality.
Dara: But I think that is what you found difficult. About being in a group of South Africans
Michael: (2) In Taiwan, yeah. But not so much here.
Dara: Not here.
Michael: (3) here. Here South Africans are a bit different from the South Africans in Taiwan. I don't know what it is. Its hard to explain.
Dara: (3) Ja, I think if I go to Australia I would find Australians would be different from the ones I met. Not everyone is like Aaron
Michael: And there would be a South African very close at hand anyway
Dara: Yes (laughs)
Tiffany: (3) Have you found being in South Africa very difficult. Michael?
Michael: Uh, ja. When I wasn't working it was fine. I was like tourist. Everything was holiday. You know when we first got here it was mainly like friends and family
Dara: Not the general population
Michael: Not the general. When we first started at the pub. Some people were very anti-Australia. You know, why did you get away with such and such.
Dara: And you know, people just open their mouths. They don't realise its going to affect other people. And its then awful to. It kind of tensed the whole evening when someone said something stupid. Without thinking.
Michael: Or they don't really know.
Dara: Yeah. Out of ignorance.
Michael: I mean I didn't know anything about South Africa till I lived here. I've been here now three, four years. I'm a lot more aware of what goes on here. Than I was. In Taiwan. I was ignorant in Taiwan and I shouldn't have said a few things. But I know better now. I mean its opened my eyes a lot. I'm much more aware of a lot of things. So I mean. (2) Just the diverse culture. Taiwan was diverse and weird and that sort of thing. But is one culture. I mean not one culture. God knows how many.
Dara: Ja, its ethnically, its culture, its tribal.
Michael: Its all that. And I didn't realise how much hatred is still here. (5) it like that
Dara: Ja
Michael: And you still see some of that hatred in people. Its scary for me. And ja, I grew up in a country that did the same thing as apartheid. But I never saw the hatred. I mean I talk. I'm racist. I say kaffir. But I never actually dealt with a black person until I came to this country. And to still see the hatred in some people's eyes. You see this isn't just going to go away. And that is
Dara: Scary.
Michael: And I mean I talk. But to see that hatred. And know what he says he means
Dara: Yeah
Michael: That is to me, that's very scary.
Dara: Very scary.
Michael: To see that hatred to know if they had half the chance they'd do it all again
Dara: Yeah
Michael: And you know I go along for the ride.
Tiffany: (4) In whose eyes do you see this hatred?
Michael: Um. I still see it from blacks towards whites and whites towards blacks.
Tiffany: It goes both ways.
Michael: And also the coloured have it towards.
Tiffany: (2) Ok. So just lots of hatred going in many directions.
Michael: Ja.
Dara: Ja. I see it at the factory.
Michael: And you know they say that hopefully this new generation that has been brought up in the new democracy won’t have this. But who knows. Maybe they have had it imprinted by their parents. We don’t know. When will it end.
Tiffany: (2)Um.
Michael: I don’t know. Its still sitting there, underneath, and you know, scary I think. And it could explode.
Dara: And that’s also what made you feel so paranoid about being here at first.
Michael: Um, um. I didn’t know how to react to certain groups of people.
Dara: Exactly.
Michael: If a black person walks into the pub should I just wonder him and tell him to get out.
Tiffany: (laughs)
Michael: But I don’t know.
Dara: What is the social norm.
Michael: Yeah.
Dara: Absolutely
Michael: And then you sort of learn, quickly what is what. Who is a decent colour. Who is a skommie. Whose going to stab you in the back. But you still don’t know
Dara: You’ll never know
Michael: I still don’t know.
Dara: You’ll never be a hundred percent sure.
Michael: And I’ve met a lot of nice black people and lot of nice white people. But I’ve also met the reverse of each culture. And you still see. You know uh, uh, you don’t know until you’ve lived here, and know the people. I mean I hadn’t even been here long and I can still feel it.
Dara: Yeah
Michael: Um
Dara: But I think you’d be more sensitive to it. That the rest of us would be. For us its almost like the norm
Tiffany: I think we
Dara: We’re desensitised.
Tiffany: We take it for granted.
Dara: It’s a norm
Michael: (2) Ja.
Tiffany: You’re looking with new eyes.
Michael: (2) Yeah you take it for granted. But when.
Tiffany: To a certain extent. I mean
Michael: To a certain extent. Yeah. But how long are you going to take it for granted for.
Tiffany: Yeah, I mean, that’s why it continues because as South Africans we take it for granted that certain things happen in certain ways.
Dara: Ja.
Michael: Ja.
Tiffany: And then why (3) Wait what did I ask before. What is difficult about relationships? Why do people break up?
Michael: (3) As I said earlier I think they break up because they haven’t found the right person and they don’t think it’s a big deal to break up. I mean we’ve all been in relationships. Broken up. Gotten back together. Broken up.
Dara: But to have that feeling like this is someone, I never ever want to lose. This is someone I never want to be with out.
Michael: And to feel, just to say ag
Dara: To fight for it. You’re not just going to give it up. (2) What was the question again?
Michael: Why do couples break up?
Tiffany: What's difficult about relationships or why do couples break up.
Michael: I mean couples break up. They have to learn
Dara: Balancing things.
Michael: I mean learn the person. Learn the person's personality. What they like. What they don't. Just like. And I mean if you're willing to go through all that and keep going. And love this person. Then just throw it away when you've
Dara: Exactly
Michael: Just because of a little hiccup along the way for something bigger and better.
Dara: They don't see the bigger picture.
Michael: They don't feel its worth it.
Dara: Yeah. This is the other thing.
Tiffany: (3) Ok, so the process of being in a relationship is about learning all of the things about somebody. What they like what they don't like. And some people. Will see something they don't like and go.
Michael: Fuck it.
Tiffany: Fuck it.
Dara: Or just go I'm not willing to live with
Tiffany: Ok
Dara: But when you find someone you're totally comfortable with then you're not willing to.
Michael: That's why I say you have to do it yourself.
Tiffany: So what you think what is really needed is a feeling like you're really committed to this person and no matter what if you don't have that feeling. You're more likely to go. Fuck it
Michael: Yeah absolutely
Dara: Yeah
Michael: I don't know when you get. What do I wan tot say. I also think people take the step when they shouldn't take the step. (2) They get married when the don't really want to get married. And that's also a mistake. As well I think, for some people
Dara: (3) They go into it too quickly.
Michael: Yeah
Dara: Or
Michael: Without thinking.
Dara: They don't know each other
Tiffany: Oh, oh.
Michael: I think that is a lot of why marriages break up. They don't really maybe realise.
Tiffany: Ok so they have this feeling like I've fallen in love with this person.
Michael: Yeah.
Tiffany: And then they go ok, lets get married
Dara: Um
Michael: And go from there.
Tiffany: And they don't know all kinds of things about the person. And then they find out and they go, fuck it.
Michael: Yeah, yeah.
Dara: Ja.
Tiffany: Ok.
Michael: But then there's the. That's not to say it doesn't work.
Dara: It might work. You never know.
Michael: It depends what you are willing to put up with and work with.
Dara: And some people maybe the commitment of marriage is what they need to have, in order to focus them. The need to. I love this person to stay with this person. I'm married to this person. But for us we didn't need that. I think we got married more to formalise our relationship
Michael: Yeah
Dara: And to say we're together forever,.
Michael: Um
Dara: In a formal sense. And in front of our families. And have our families together
Michael: All jolling
Tiffany: And for million
Dara: (2) Of course. That’s another thing. We also wanted, we made a decision that we wanted to have kids. So.
Michael: (3) Sometimes. Or of it happened it happened
Dara: we never talked. Or we did talk in Taiwan
Michael: Yeah, but we could never see ourselves staying there. We thought about it but it didn’t seem practical.
Tiffany: (2) No it does seem highly impractical in a country. Where you don’t understand the language.
Michael: But it happens in Taiwan as well
Dara: Yeah.
Michael: I mean Andrew has been there. He’s married. He’s having a kid. And he’s learned to adapt. He’s learnt to speak Chinese. Fluently.
Dara: And you’ve had to adapt as well.
Michael: Yeah, I’ve had to adapt.
Tiffany: Ja.
Tiffany: True for you this is a foreign country.
Dara: Even though its English speaking
Michael: That’s debatable
All: (laughs 3)
Michael: There is still Afrikaans people who refuse to speak English to me
Dara: They think he’s being difficult.
Michael: They call me Engelsman. And I’m actually a foreigner.
Dara: they think he’s being difficult.
Tiffany: They don’t recognise your accent?
Michael: no.
Tiffany: (laugh)
Dara: But you know there are so many people who don’t recognise that he’s Australian.
Michael: Ja, I have to tell them I’m Australian. I know a bit of Afrikaans. I can fool around. I can understand it. But when they start just talking then I can’t. (2) Please speak English. Then it gets a bit silly at times.
Dara: They’re really rude. Really, really, really rude.
Michael: (2) it’s not just the Afrikaans. Its also the coloured. I mean
Dara: ja, ja, ja
Michael: its also black people that want a job. They’re English isn’t very good. trying to communicate. Its just like in Taiwan.
Tiffany: Um
Dara: Ja.
Michael: I mean you just have to learn to adapt. This is actually worse than Taiwan. You have to learn how many languages. To speak to how many people. (2) I guess in Taiwan you have to learn a couple of dialects. (2) its adapt of die. Sink or swim. Whatever you want to call it. (2) And if you’re not an adaptable sort of person. (2) You wouldn’t go into it. (2) It’s a lot of the reason that people didn’t like Taiwan. They didn’t want to adapt.
Dara: Ja, I think that’s why we stayed there so long. That we both adapted so well to it.
(2) Ja, its like here. I wouldn’t have stayed here if I didn’t like it. I would have said fuck. This is fucked up. I want to fuck off. But.
What would happen if you both didn’t like each other’s country of origin? You’d end up living in America or something (laughs 2)
All: (laugh 2)
No fuck that
Well you know when Michael first proposed to me. I remember thinking where are we ever going to get married
(2) I don’t know. Its all the same anyway. Globalisation has sorted that out pretty quickly.
Tiffany: Coke Cola and MacDonald’s.
Dara: Exactly.
Michael: I mean its no. the world is so global now. there is that link. Or (inaudible)
Dara: (laughs)
Michael: I don’t know. Whose to say Dara will like Australia if we do go there. She might say.
Fuck this. Lets go home, you know. Where is my home you know.
Dara: It would have to be really terrible for me to do that.
Michael: You never know. You might just, not like it.
Dara: Yeah, maybe. You never know.
Michael: This could have turned out all pear shaped as well. I could have said. I’m not living with
these okes. Who are these darkies. Jus sus.
All: (laugh)
Michael: Those toothless fucks. Who are they.
Ja. Maccassar. (2) And they stick a whole different
All: (laughs)
Dara: You do a beautiful imitation.
Tiffany: You do.
Michael: I mean when you walk into the kitchen you have three people from Maceasar. Two
whites. There are three different cultures. Or four different cultures. With Stiaan. Whose
Afrikaans. And then there is me. Who is the so called soap peel
Dara: That's a very dirty word.
Michael: Ja, like in that environment you have so many different cultures and ways of thinking.
I didn’t know you knew that word.
Michael: What?
Tiffany: Anyway I asked all the questions I wanted to ask.

**Pam and Kelvin**

Tiffany: So if you just want to choose a photograph we can start with. (10)
Kelvin: You choose.
Pam: I haven't given this any thought.
Kelvin: Well that's good.
Pam: Um, spontaneous.
Tiffany: That’s gorgeous. You both look so happy.
Pam: That was actually my fortieth birthday. I was wearing a wig. A hair piece. Remember? It’s a
fun thing. A friend of mine. Lauren actually. Had a dinner, just afterwards, so I wore it for part of
the evening. So we had some friends around and some dinner. And this was in the kitchen.
Tiffany: Ok. So tell me about that party that the photograph was taken at.
It was a very small intimate party. We just had a few close friends. We had a caterer from this
system that I belong to that I was talking about earlier. With talents. So you pay them in this
currency that I use, which is like a barter like thing. They do Chinese food. And we had a Chinese
tea ceremony.
Tiffany: Wow
Pam: Ja. And it was just close friends. And I actually found it quite stressful, to be honest. I
wouldn’t really say I enjoyed it all that much. Because it was like, I don’t know. Don’t ask me to
entertain. I think I will enjoy our wedding more.
Kelvin: I think the logistics of the party were stressful.
Pam: Ja.
Kelvin: I think that is what happens. You get so caught up in preparing the moment that you forget
the moment. Preparing for the moment.
Pam: Ja.
Kelvin: But it was good. all our carnivore friends. Forgot that they weren’t eating meat.
Tiffany: That’s good then.
Kelvin: They just enjoyed the spread. Ja. It was great. (3) That is taken in our kitchen.
Tiffany: So that is this house.
Kelvin: Ja.
Tiffany: Ah, ok.
Pam: Ja.
Kelvin: Which you find. When we entertain. Easy [to Iggy the dog] (3) we often tend to do it in the kitchen.
(knock at the door)
Kelvin: Most things happen in the kitchen. We prefer to entertain in the kitchen when we have dinner parties. So that particular night. A lot of our (6) photographs taken in the kitchen.
Pam: Um.
Tiffany: That's interesting.
Pam: Ja, near the end of the evening I think when the last few people, you know the closest few people, were still there.
Kelvin: Ja, that is where we were probably drinking coffee.
Tiffany: Ok, so this is at the end of the evening.
Kelvin: Ja. After the tea ceremony (laughs)
Pam: Ja
Tiffany: Ok, so at the end of the evening. Coffee after the tea ceremony. You’re relaxing, winding down.
Kelvin: It was at that time.
Tiffany: You look, just relaxed, and chilled.
Pam: Ja, it was like that. We look very happy in that picture.
Tiffany: And did you organise that party together.
Pam: No I think I did.
Kelvin: No Daniela does all the organising. (2) I do all the forgetting
Tiffany: (laughs)
Pam: No, Kelvin is often away at crucial times. So. (2) He’s far away an out of sight. So like the wedding I have organised that. So he just sort of arrives. But near the end he fills in the gaps. Like buying the booze and the candles.
Tiffany: So you kind of work together, on these things.
Kelvin: (3) Well, we do.
Tiffany: You do?
Kelvin: Work together.
Tiffany: (laughs) True, yes.
Kelvin: I tend to be very. (2) Often accused of being a control freak. (inaudible 5) What needs to get done, gets done.
Tiffany: Tell me what it is like to, work together.
Pam: Very difficult (5)
Tiffany: What is difficult?
Pam: What is difficult is often, because (3) Because work is such a dominant part of our lives, the conversations are dominated by work. Instead of how are you, how as your day. Personally, like you as a partner, as a lover I suppose. But its sort of work comes first. Especially when Kelvin is away from home. He finds often I go straight into work mode instead of finding out maybe how are you. And I do that because there are just so many things that have to be sorted out, so when we do. Speak to each other, when he is away, um. (30 I often like, he’s busy when I call so he doesn’t hear the call. And then it’s a bad time, he’s busy with customers he can’t take it, so when we do get a chance to talk. Maybe the family is asleep and he can’t talk loudly. You know, so its very challenging. But the sometimes um...
Kelvin: Ja. Ja. That’s the case when I am away. (3) But I think a big part of being lovers (3) Being a couple and then having to work together. Is boundaries.
Tiffany: Umhuh
Kelvin: Um (3) That is if you have a business decision, I mean you will always have a difference of opinion. Whether you like it or not.
Tiffany: Somewhere a long the line.
Kelvin: Ja, always. Always. And then we have to just caution ourselves, and remind ourselves. Hey, this is not about me not being unhappy with you. This is just about me not being happy with that order, that we have to fulfil. And when you see it like that, the it’s ok. But often, I mean,
initially it was hectic. I would say something and Pamela would assume, it's a personal attack. But it's not, it was I don't like the way that was done, why don't we do it this way. That tends to be my way. (3) So boundaries. And we. We've gotten a lot better... (inaudible)
Pam: When I say it's difficult. I don't say its negative, because there are a lot of great things about it.
Kelvin: No it's been brilliant.
Tiffany: Well what are the great things.
Pam: Ja. Well, a common goal
Tiffany: Umhuh.
Pam: Its not like he'll come home, and I'm consumed with this and he's consumed with at, and there's no meeting point. Like I think some couples might have. We are working towards the same dreams, and. We're involved. In. we want the same things. So our lives are very enmeshed. I mean another thing that we noticed is that. You know we don't have like separate bank accounts like his bank account, my bank account. You know everything's mixed. So if for example we go out somewhere, and, we buy coffee and a meal and it comes to say R80 and I pull out R100. And a twenty comes back. Whether he takes the twenty or I take the twenty it's immaterial, or. You know, his is mine
Tiffany: Umhuh.
Pam: And I quite enjoy that. And I know its not the case with most, well not most, I mean some couples.
Kelvin: Come, come [speaking to Iggy]
Pam: She's just wandering about. (5) we were saying, like, how many people have that, like it absolutely makes no difference if R1000 to pay for something comes from my pocket or yours. If Kelvin has cash because he's just done a show and I need money and he gives it to me. If I have because he needs I give to him.
Tiffany: Umhuh
Pam: So, that is part of one of the things that I would say is a nice thing about working together. Kelvin: I think the brutal honestly that comes with (4) the work environment because there (4) if something is (inaudible). If there is a real stress you've got deal with it. (3) And (4) you can't (3) Tiffany: Let it lie.
Kelvin: Let it lie, ja. And I've found especially now with being away. (3) Um., We've had to. (2) Confront, and address certain, aspects of our relationship. And I think I've always been. (3) Supremely confident about our relationship. I, I see relationships as a working, ongoing, workshop.
Tiffany: Um.
Kelvin: And there have been times that I've been pissed of with Pamela. And I'll say babe I'm pissed off with you. And she'll say, you know, why. And ok. My thoughts weren't good at the time. Or vice versa.
Tiffany: Um
Kelvin: And you know, a bit of introspection has been done, and I I'll come back and say I'm sorry about being insensitive yesterday, even though I felt I was right. But ja. So. (5) That's from. Depending on how you're seeing it, I, we think that's positive. About working together.
Tiffany: So you see working together as being quite a positive thing in that it helps you to confront things and see things almost more clearly.
Kelvin: Um, and also being in a relationship is also about working together.
Tiffany: Um, yes. So that is quite an honest way, you work together so you have to work with each other.
Pam: Um
Kelvin: Its kind of force on you.
Tiffany: (laughs)
Kelvin: But it's a good thing. I mean, while we say this Tiffany (3) I'm sure we're saying it today. Another time. (2) It could come out differently.
Tiffany: Oh, absolutely.
Kelvin: And there are lots of other couples like us, who have drifted apart. But I think that thing of setting boundaries, you know. Not only in the work place. But also personal space. Pamela,
respects my needs. And I do likewise. I play football on a Thursday, and Thursdays. Its really important for her that I’m happy with soccer. If she goes out with her friends I know its really important for her. So I’m happy for her. (4) So it’s a process. (4) um. Like (3). Excuse the language, why fuck around. We’re in this relationship we’ve been here for eight years. We want to start a family. We’re secure in this relationship. We’re secure with each other. (2) And, that’s warts and all.

Tiffany: Umhuh
Kelvin: Ja.

Tiffany: So is that were the decision came to get married.
Kelvin: (2) No, no, no. I think you know us, in the sense that we don’t always tend to do the things we need to do at the times we should. But, the decision to get married now. (3) Was prompted more by. The need to. (5) Ok, the baby thing was big thing.

Pam: Ja, but that was afterwards. We decided to get married before we knew about that.

Kelvin: I know but we always. Babe, we always mentioned, you know if the baby comes

Pam: We’ll get married

Kelvin: You know if Pamela walks down the isle with a big

Pam: It would be great.

Kelvin: You know

Tiffany: Um

Kelvin: Tummy, that would be fantastic

Tiffany: It would be lovely ja

Kelvin: (4) Well a couple of things. But for me getting the bay thing right is important. Because we. Have come to realise how stress, effects, the whole process, of pregnancy. An, initially we were going to do it in September. Initially we weren’t going to do it but our moms. Our respective moms, prompted us.

Tiffany: Ganged up on you (laughs)

Pam: Umhuh, pretty much.

Kelvin: But I think the baby thing is an important thing. Because Pamela is already, x amount years older this year.

Pam: 43

Kelvin: 43. And I just turned 40 this year. So we’ve got to be sensitive. To those conditions.

Pam: No you turned...

Kelvin: I turned 40 two weeks ago.

Pam: Then how can I be 43?

Kelvin: You’re 42.

Tiffany: (laughs)

Kelvin: No you’ll be 42 darling

Pam: Really?

Kelvin: Yes, 42.

Pam: Am I 41?

Kelvin: You’re 41 going on 42.

Tiffany: I also always forget how old I am (laughs)

Pam: Do you Tiffany? Because it’s the first time.

Kelvin: You’re a ’65 baby. I was a ’67 baby.

Tiffany: I do. The only way I remember is to count from my birth year. And I remember that, because of id number. (2) (laughs 2)

Kelvin: You’re turning 42 my angel

Pam: So I’m turning 42.

Kelvin: Four days after you’re getting married.

Pam: I was just saying. I don’t think I’m going to get many birthday presents this year.

Tiffany: (laughing) Shame, maybe not. (3) We organised ours. I don’t know if its badly, or well. There’s our anniversary, then Christmas, then my birthday, then Geoffrey’s birthday. All in two months.

Pam: Well you get it all over with.

Tiffany: Ja, that’s good. (laughs)
Pam: Ja.
Tiffany: Anyway. Um (4) We were talking about. Oh, I was going to ask, so family is important to you. Having children is important.
Pam: Ja.
Kelvin: Very.
Tiffany: And that is something you want to do as soon as possible. Because of your ages.
Pam: Ja.
Tiffany: And the decision to get married was partly because of your families. (4) is that right?
Pam: Um, ja. In respect for them.
Tiffany: And because you want to have a family as well.
Pam: Ja.
Kelvin: (2) Ok (4) And then before that we were talking about your work relationship and how that impacts on your, romantic relationship. and something that you seemed to be saying was that, boundaries, well Kelvin was saying boundaries are quite important.
Tiffany: And you were also saying that, with money, its quite nice that there are no boundaries.
Pam: Well in, in, that way. It is quite nice.
Tiffany: So that is an interesting tension between there being boundaries and no boundaries.
Pam: Ja, ja, ja.
Tiffany: Um (3)
Kelvin: Well I think the boundaries come in terms of. The interpersonal relationships because there are two entities.
Tiffany: Yes.
Kelvin: You know, we’re wearing different hats. As lovers, or maybe as (3) Partners, husbands, wives. (2) And then as (2) financial partners.
Tiffany: Yes, and work partners.
Kelvin: And in terms of our business, um. (3) You know Pamela has come into (3) With her acting, she. (3) Played a very peripheral role with the business. And as the business grew (3) she got more involved. And there were initially tensions, because. (3) You know I would relate to her. (3) In terms of getting something done. And I would say, pass on an instruction or give an instruction. And initially it was hard. It was hard. You know. What are we two equals in this business, how come I am the one getting all the instructions. Which you know, in terms of activity I was more active. Participation, I was more active than her. But we have managed to. Transcend that. Pamela is. If I may say. (2) You have evolved. (4) Pretty quickly into the business women you are now.
Pam: Except for my ring tone.
Kelvin: Except for your ring tone
Tiffany: (laughs 2)
Kelvin: Which you have heard.
Tiffany: I did just hear it, yes. (laughs)
Pam: Do you think its very unprofessional? For a woman to have a ring tone like that?
Tiffany: No, I don’t think so. I mean the ring tones you get these days.
Kelvin: As a business woman. (2)
Tiffany: I can’t say I have much experience of business people. But I must say, if I was in a meeting and I heard that ring tone, I don’t think I would be shocked or anything. But maybe that is just me.
Kelvin: Maybe its just me
Tiffany: (laughs)
Kelvin: But we’ve done very well. we’ve experienced, a lot of turbulence, recently. And, I just think we’ve done exceptionally well. we’ve faced some challenges. We have some limitations in terms of resources and. (3) You know, the respective roles we fill. In the different set up the costs. So Pamela now filling the role, of. She runs the business in [a city]. Were we to translate that into a salary, paid someone for those hours.
Tiffany: Umhuh.
Kelvin: (3) The business might not afford it. You know. And (inaudible) That’s made a huge difference. The different roles I play. Were we to pay people. That would come at a huge cost.
That we can’t afford. So I think if there is one thing (5) That you’ll always know about us and our relationship. We have always been up for those challenges. You know. With the things we’ve done. So be it. And I think, I know the reasons why we’ve managed so well with our business. Is because of pour strong personal relationship.

Tiffany: It sounds like you’re saying they contribute quite closely to one another. you’re working relationship and your romantic relationship.

Pam: I think so.
Tiffany: And you’ve kind of grown, with both of them.
Pam: I think so, ja.
Tiffany: Sounds like a great strength that you’ve had
Kelvin: Well you have to work at it Tiffany
Tiffany: Relationships are work.
Pam: They are, they are.
Tiffany: (3) Um, I don’t know how you two me. So how did you meet.
Pam: We met. Um, actually about. (2) Twenty years ago
Tiffany: Oh really.
Pam: At a home. There was a home for, a youth centre. In [a disadvantaged suburb]. And Kelvin was doing full time voluntary work. And I was involved and then I subsequently also did some voluntary work But we met, we met there.. (2) And I fell I n love. (5) It was really, I mean one of those things, like sjoe. Who’s that. But it took a while.
Tiffany: (4) And what happened in between.
Pam: Kelvin was. Ok, I was twenty four and Kelvin was twenty two, and then. (3) Well you can tell about Michelle.
Kelvin: (7) Ok. ($0 Ok, Ja, ok. Well, when we met. (2) um. I’d been in a long term relationship that. My late wife. Well, we weren’t married then. When she finished varsity she went and taught in Namibia. History was one of her majors. And I stayed and worked in [a city]. And (2) After a year and a bit of being apart, you know the long distance relationship started taking its toll. And we made a conscious decision to take a break. You know not to put the relationship under any pressure. And. If we see other people so be it. And after a certain amount of time we choose to be together, then so be that, you know. And it was, during that time when Pamela and I worked together that. We also had a lot of other things happening. Music. Acting. Over and above the work that we did. And I suppose it was just one more friendship that had potential to go further. You know, at the time. It wasn’t going to be. (2) And um, we went our separate ways. both had very similar experiences with our respective partners. I got married. My wife had a terminal illness. Pam’s partner also had a terminal illness. And both subsequently passed on. (2) And, we started spending time together afterwards, and then. It just. (3) Developed. Relationship further.
Tiffany: So you remained friends during that time.
Pam: Well actually we didn’t really see each other. It was about a nine year period. It wasn’t the kind of friendship where we would phone and meet for coffee. I would say if we saw each other in the street I would say oh hi Merv. But if it happened three times in none years that was a lot. So we weren’t close friends but, not actively friends. And then when I did sort of meet up with Merv again. How did we meet up again. We saw each other in passing and he said this is what’s happening. You know my wife is really ill, and I felt really bad for him. We can be friends and have coffee together. And then the friendship developed. But from my side, I didn’t see him as anything but just a friend. And then. After she passed away. He took a year just to mourn. When that year was up, then we could start spending more time. And ja. So it wasn’t an active friendship. It was more like just. Out of sight out of mind. And then, like oh, you, sort of. You know Tiffany: Ok, right. (5) And you’ve been together now, eight years after that.
Pam: Well, it was ’99 after that, we started.
Kelvin: Ja, like ’99, more or less.
Tiffany: (4) And how did the business start?
Kelvin: (4) I think you should start.
Pam: (3) Why?
Kelvin: We both have different perspectives.
Pam: Ok. I was working in a business with my mom. Which I wasn't really happy with, and it wasn't really going anyway. And she subsequently sold that business. So I had taken a year off, after. He was always in. clothing, he had his own clothing business. And when his wife was ill, the business. (3)
Kelvin: I lost a lot
Pam: Ja.
Kelvin: (2) I had two businesses at the time, and then one drained the other.
Pam: So ja.
Kelvin: So ja. (4) Took the year off. Did a bit of.
Pam: Au pairing.
Kelvin: Au pairing, ja.
Pam: So when we got together, I was ready for something different. He said look you know, I've been in the clothing industry, I had my own business. Why don't we start together. We can build up something. And for me to be blatantly honest it was pretty much ja, ok. It wasn't like, ja, I love clothing. And I think that was why the first few years were such a struggle, because my heart just wasn't in it. We made men's clothing, we didn't do any of this ladies stuff, which I can identify with. We did clothing for big men and everything was dyed. So I would be driving to the dyers with this car full of clothing. Garments in an un-dyed form and having garments dyed and sorted and I just couldn't relate. We started there and then we did develop. So.
Tiffany: (2) Sjoe, so your relationship and your business have really developed together.
Pam: Ja, ja. (4) Its true.
Tiffany: That must have been, I mean that sounds, very stressful to me. Starting a relationship and also starting a business together.
Pam: Ja.
Kelvin: Well I think. (2) Whilst it (2) It could, you know the relationship itself wasn't as new, you know, given our prior experience. But.
Pam: Ja, it didn't feel like an old relationship. It felt like resuming an old one. Interesting.
Tiffany: Ok.
Kelvin: Ja. And. (4) And then just very importantly about us and work. Tiffany. We have always, kinda. (2) Work and personal life is like this, intertwined. Now we work from home. Iggy is part of our working day. We're equally committed to work when we work as we are to our personal lives. We've always tried to do it, use the relationship to counter the stresses of the. Work.
Tiffany: Umhuh
Kelvin: (2) you know. (2) If we need to spend time together over a cup of coffee. We choose to do that. Where as someone else, who is strictly working will choose to see someone after work.
Tiffany: So you can phase out of being, like a manager of being the business, and phase into being partners.
Kelvin: Absolutely, and I mean, that's just. That's us.
Tiffany: Ok.
Kelvin: We define things differently to other people. And the only reason we do that is because it works for us.
Tiffany: Umhuh.
Kelvin: I mean you can't take a generic model and expect everyone to benefit equally.
Tiffany: I'm sure everyone couldn't work as well together as you two do.
Pam: No, I think maybe not.
Kelvin: And to be honest to tell you that its hard working together. And we drive each other totally crazy.
Tiffany: Yes.
Kelvin: We must.
Tiffany: That must be part of what you were saying, that you have to be honest with each other, and you're using that to grow together.
Kelvin: And what I think, most importantly, we have just reminded ourselves, what ever we do we do. (inaudible). no matter how much we differ in things. We have that. Especially that. We do it with respect. And we continue to do that. It's great when your partner takes you, in their confidence. (inaudible 3)
Tiffany: Could you tell me more about that. What do you mean.
Kelvin: I mean its great. That I can freely. Discuss other things with Pamela
Tiffany: Ok.
Kelvin: I can say, what do you think about this. And whatever the response is, however you might not what to hear it. I accept it because it was said truthfully, in my best interests.
Tiffany: Ok.
Kelvin: It’s all part of the growth. Factor. I mean you could ask me things. And I would give you my honest opinion. You might like it you might not like it. (5)
Tiffany: So you both value honesty and openness quite highly.
Pam: Ja.
Pam: Absolutely.
Tiffany: (2) ok. Um, to return to the photograph. Why did you choose that photograph to speak about?
Pam: First?
Tiffany: Ja, the photograph we spoke about.
Pam: Because, um. (4) I don’t know. Maybe because we look so happy in it. The other two are. (2)
Kelvin: Because it was on top.
Tiffany: (laughs)
Pam: I don’t know.
(all speak together)
Kelvin: The one at the bottom, Tiffany. That was a photograph taken. Early in our relationship.
Tiffany: Oh, that is gorgeous.
Pam: That’s at Long Street Baths.
Kelvin: Ja, we were at Long Street (3) And we were a with a friend. Did Jenny take lots of photographs that day?
Pam: I think it was, it just happened.
Kelvin: It just happened
Pam: Ja we have this friend who is a photographer.
This one?
Tiffany: You can see it’s professionally taken.
Pam: It is, ja.
Tiffany: Absolutely gorgeous.
Kelvin: And that was very spontaneous. We didn’t know that.
Pam: (3) No we did.
Did we. (3) But that was a spontaneous. I mean, she didn’t ask us to embrace did she.
She might have. I mean, Jenny does sometimes. (2) Both these photographs, were taken by photographers called Jenny.
Tiffany: (laughs 2)
Pam: Jenny Gordon. And that was Jenny Ulcheler. This one took a series of three. You’ll see in the kitchen, there’s one of just our legs.
Tiffany: Oh, lovely.
Pam: there’s some of just our hands.
Kelvin: Isn’t that her project as well.
Pam: Kind of a project she did. She took it for herself. Not for us. but we kept it, kind of like thanks.
Tiffany: Oh, that’s nice.
Pam: Ja, but. But she, she, she, she took them for herself. And this one was taken for you.
Pam: Yeah. (2) No actually.
Tiffany: Was it also.
Pam: Not it wasn’t taken for us. You know she. Jenny Ulcheler, takes her camera with her, pretty much everywhere she goes. When she is in the mood for getting images.
Tiffany: Oh, I see.
Pam: And so. She, she would have taken that for herself as well, but given her one.
Tiffany: Oh lovely.
Kelvin: The two of you should do a project. You should collaborate. Because a lot of her work. She works at City Varsity. It’s about people. The romance between people.
Pam: Ja, she’s done a theme on couples.
(All talk 3)
Tiffany: That’s really just gorgeous.
Kelvin: It’s just. One thing about Pamela is that. She’s just. She’s incredibly spontaneous. She would. (5) She would do.
Pam: (yawns)
Kelvin: If she wanted to reflect love. (2) Or passion or whatever. In public. She would. Within certain reason. Kiss or hug or eat yoghurt off my forearm.
Pam: Knee
Kelvin: Knee.
Tiffany: (laughs)
Kelvin: Ja.
Tiffany: (laughs)
Kelvin: So ja.
(laughs)
but I mean like if. (2) Also very demonstrative. (3) Certainly more than me.
Umhuh.
(4) So something like that. That’s why for me, I would have thought that was spontaneous. Because that is very Pamela.
Pam: It probably was.
Kelvin: To come up to me in the pool and embrace me.
Pam: It probably was.
Kelvin: To kiss me, passionately. And forget that there are four hundred people around us..
Tiffany: In Long Street baths. That’s gorgeous. And where are these pictures, usually. They’re all framed.
Pam: Ja, um, ja. Um. (6) They actually, they don’t have like proper nails and hanging on a wall bat. They were like too good not to, like this was too good not to frame it. Because Jenny printed it nice and big. And then this. (2) I got this framed and I got this lovely frame. And this one, we’ve got a few family. I see it doesn’t have a stand.
Kelvin: But generally they migrate.
Pam: Maybe in the kitchen.
Tiffany: Nice.
Pam: We change it.
Kelvin: The bedroom.
Tiffany: Ok. Ja. And why did you choose this one, to, speak about?
Pam: (3) To be honest I just found. As many pictures off the two of us as I could find.
Kelvin: That was in the kitchen. And we had a friend here last night. And we mentioned the interview. (3) And I remember that. (4) That’s on our kitchen counter. And there was a suggestion to use that one.
Pam: We chose it because, I knew we needed three. And I don’t think we have seventeen, to chose from. So I mean, I don’t. there is the one of us. for our wedding invitation, there are these three. And maybe a few others. So it was pretty much, nice enough, nice-ish pictures.
Tiffany: I must say, I was very surprised. When I was trying to structure this research and us thinking of using photographs, I looked at the photographs of Geoffrey and I. and I was surprised. I could only find. Two. Three actually. I eventually found a third. And I was actually quite shocked.
Pam: That there are so few. Ja, ja, one doesn't.
Tiffany: And two, one is the night before our wedding, and the other is our wedding. Obviously there are quite a few from our wedding.
Pam: Ja, all from the wedding.
Tiffany: But that is more like, just one, you know.
Pam: Ja, because they are all wedding, you know.
Tiffany: So I found that really interesting. Anyway
Pam: Ja, ja. (3) We’ve actually got a photograph of us. In a book. Jenny Ulcheler. This, this photographer. There is a book published on South African female photographers. (3) And it’s actually quite a passionate photograph. We’re in the same house as this, where we used to live. And I’m hugging Kelvin. And we’re not wearing anything, but it’s not a sexual thing, you can’t see, anything. But you can see we’re not wearing anything. And it’s been published in this like published book.

Tiffany: That’s amazing. (3) Or is it. Is it like a weird feeling?

Pam: No, no. no.

Tiffany: I actually hate photographs of myself, so I’m not sure I can imagine thousands of them out there.

Kelvin: But you don’t think of it that way. (2) Pam’s mentioning this now, because we’re talking photographs.

Pam: Its an art piece.

Kelvin: Its like, a coffee table book. Like oh, here’s this photograph of us.

Tiffany: Its like its not you any more. Its art.

Kelvin: It’s all about the moment. For what its worth. It’s a very simple, and honest comment. (3) We’re very fortunate Tiffany. I think we’re very blessed with mindsets, healthy bodies, in talents. And. So That’s how we try to live our lives. Through our blessings. We have security in our relationship. If we have issues with each other then we can work through them. (3) Ja, and its those. What I’m trying to say we enjoy (inaudible). I’d like to think I have a. As wrong as this might sound. I think I have all the status I will ever need. I’m happy, with Pam. She’s what I need. (3) That’s not such a bad thing to say.

Pam: No.

Tiffany: That’s a great blessing. Most people don’t get that.

Pam: Um

Kelvin: That’s how we choose to live our life. (3) I mean you know us through family. (inaudible) So it sounds (inaudible) With my ideas, but it serves me well, it serves us well.

Pam: Its good for us.

Kelvin: (3) Just. Be accountable for what we choose to do, you know. Far away from that, so. So. Um. (4) It’s actually a great photo.

Pam: Which one babe?

Kelvin: The one that Jenny took.

Pam: This one?

Kelvin: No, no. The one that, the one in the book.

Pam: Oh sorry.

Kelvin: There was also another lekker one, I really enjoyed. In the mosquito net. Again like a nude one (3) We’ve always slept on a futon. On the floor. (3) And this photograph was taken, in this mosquito net. It just had this lovely fullness.

Pam: You must actually come and look just now, at the one on the computer. Because when we were choosing um. Photograph for our wedding invitation, we like. True to nature we did it at the last minute. You know, like don’t send our invitations. But my friend Jenny helped create this. Emailed. Invitation, that we emailed to everybody.

Tiffany: That is an excellent idea.

Pam: Ja, it actually is. And we chose one. None of these three. I mean I thought of this one, but there is hardly any of Kelvin in it. This one didn’t seem appropriate for wedding invitation.

Tiffany: Oh, so you took one specially.

Pam: No, no.

Kelvin: It was also taken at a wedding.

Pam: At another wedding.

(2.13)

Tiffany: Can you tell me more about the day when this was taken?

Kelvin: It was four days before the war. (6) The Germans were advancing on the east.

Pam: This was probably about six years ago. And we used to spend time at Long Street swimming

Kelvin: Jenny’s got two kids. So we would take them swimming.
Tiffany: So it was just a kind of a normal day. Just a normal thing you would have done together. At that time.
Pam: Ja.
Tiffany: Ok.
Kelvin: (2) Days when she would phone and call, say we want to go for a swim and we’d say why not. It was in the afternoon.
Tiffany: (4) And then, when you look at these photographs. In what ways do you see yourself as being pretty much, like any other couple? (3) If you can think of what any other couple is like. A typical couple.
Pam: Well I think. I mean. I just noticed that we’re actually hugging each other in each of these photos. So we’re quite a demonstrative couple. So I would say we’re like any other couple that are happy and express it physically. I think we look like a very happy couple in these photographs. In the one we’re not smiling obviously, there’s a sense of calm. So I would say. Like any other happy couple who are affectionate.
Tiffany: And, and, closeness. Like physical and emotional closeness.
Tiffany: Anything else you can think of.
Kelvin: (laughs) Sorry I’m laughing because I wonder how many couples take pictures of themselves when they are far apart.
Tiffany: (3) Well, that is a good question. Why take a picture like that?
Kelvin: Well I mean Pam is right. Um, I don’t. When I look at those pictures. I don’t think of other couples.
Tiffany: (3) That’s a good point.
Kelvin: Umhuh,
Tiffany: So you think they are very much expressions of who you are as a couple. They’re are about you. (4) Well, my next question is how are you not like other couples?
(3) I think when you experience things from other couples then you know it’s either foreign to you. (2) Something you’ve. Like when I think of other couples compared to us. we will encounter people. And I’ll go. Sjoe. I’m glad Pamela is different. So I’m glad we do it different. (3) You see something you relate to them (3) It’s ja. When I look at that I don’t see other couples. (2) I think often when we see other couples, when we discuss something that we witnessed.
Tiffany: So you might compare yourself to something that you
Kelvin: Very comparative, ja.
Tiffany: And you would use this as a way of saying we do this different. We are stronger.
Kelvin: No, hallelujah.
Tiffany: Ja, we are blessed.
Kelvin: And there are times when (3) we are insensitive to each other and then we will forget how similar we are to other couples. But I think Tiffany we work hard at this and I’m happy and Pamela is happy. And this is us. Please god in twenty years time when you do another thesis and you interview us. We will be saying the same things.
Pam: That would be interesting.
Kelvin: With different energies.
Tiffany: Slightly older, slightly more subdued energies.
Kelvin: Try to talk through dentures and shit like that.
Pam: We’ll only be sixty.
Kelvin: Well you never know I could have a football accident and lose my teeth
All: (laugh 4)
Kelvin: Ah, but you can say so much. One thing I don’t want to do is pretend. (4) If you’re not happy with something say it.
Tiffany: Ok
Kelvin: And I think that’s something that is often driven by what you see in other people. We were at um. Well we were today discussing our wedding contract.
Pam: Our ante-nuptial contract.
Kelvin: And I can understand why contracts like these are drawn up. I can understand why people want to acknowledge their possessions or their assets. (3) And sometimes I can understand why (3) Hopeless romantics fall so hard, you know. ‘Cos they don’t see certain realities
Tiffany: Uhmuh.
Kelvin: And what did I say. I don’t know what I said. But I think essentially when you go down this road, you really hope for the best. (2) And I think the references we have would be our parent’s relationships, or, you know. You want to stick it out. You want to make it happen
Pam: Um.
Kelvin: You don’t just want to be another statistic. I think I wouldn’t want to be another statistic if we didn’t try hard enough. If we tried hard enough and it wasn’t going to work out, and we move on. So be it. And I think if we did that, babe. And if there were a lot of assets involved. I don’t think it would be a messy one.
Pam: Gosh, I would like to think that, but they say there is no such thing as an un-messy divorce.
Kelvin: Ja, I know, but if you know you’ve tried everything and it just isn’t working out. And you know it’s just not working out. You know both parties agree, and its just not working out. Ja I suppose it takes a particular maturing.
Pam: I’d like to think the same.
Tiffany: (2) Well Dara and I were talking the other day. We were watching this celebrity thing. And it said how this couple broke up, and they said how they were still good friends. And we were both saying, why would they still be good friends. If they’re such good friends, why aren’t they still married, you know?
(phone rings)
Kelvin: You know I believe in idealism. I really do. So what. If you believe in something and everyone around goes. Get with the programme you know,. Just because of statistics and couples say after five years, after x amount of thus and y amount of that. The following scenarios is most likely to be. Um. I think. We should. (3) Venture out and experience something to its fullest, if you have problems along the way, deal with it, you know. (4) Speaking to an old customer who has become a friend, um, he’s a very wealthy guy and he was in a relationship. This is Phillip.
Pam: Lindique.
Kelvin: With a woman,. And he’s quite a big guy, being our customer. And his partner was a beautiful woman. She ran a nursery school. And there was a big age difference. And he said for him, the sex factor wasn’t as big a factor as for her. And it became problematic.
Pam: Did he tell you this today?
Kelvin: Ja. (2) Why do you let something like that develop? Into the kind of problem it eventually becomes. When you love each other.
Tiffany: So you’re saying that they should have addressed that.
Kelvin: Well they obviously didn’t.
(phone rings)
Kelvin: Subsequently but no longer. If it was an issue, you know,
Pam: (speaks on the phone)
Tiffany: And that is part of the work of being a couple, seeing those things and working on them and working with them.
Kelvin: Ja, ja. You. You do something, if its.
Tiffany: There is always something you can do.
Kelvin: If it’s a lack of connection, oops you’ve got serious problems. You know Tiffany, there’s always something you can do. I think a lot of people live in denial. They don’t want to face up to certain realities.
Tiffany: Um.
Kelvin: I mean we know, for a fact. (2) We can assert this as the gospel, that it is so difficult to maintain all the things that we’ve mentioned to you, especially. When you. Work together
Tiffany: Um.
Kelvin: (3) You know. Times when I am just so tired, and I come home, and all that Pamela will want is a lovely embrace. And I just don’t have the energy. And. And (2) She’d be frustrated. She’d probably tell me. It would be so nice if dot-dot-dot. And suddenly realise that. Wait a
minute. Ok, this might be true of my physical. (2) Um, demands, but at work, but I can't ignore. This part, this moment.
Tiffany: So it's a negotiation that you have to go through.
Kelvin: So if it means dashing of one morning to. Meet people or do this or do that. I just choose to cancel the morning and just lie in. and that kind of intimacy is what you really, really want. And what a pleasure that we have those options of doing it. And that is what I would like to guard to fiercely. You, know, the freedom of choice. (2) um, and I suppose in our kind of. Environment the lifestyle we choose, to lead, that is. Possible.
Tiffany: Umhuh
Kelvin: And if. We (inaudible) eight fifteen you can't really cancel the morning.
Tiffany: Exactly.
Kelvin: Ja. It’s interesting. I personally believe that a lot of people lack the social skills.
Tiffany: For relationships?
Kelvin: In relationships and for relationships.
Tiffany: And what kind of skills are those?
Kelvin: (3) Well people often take communication for granted.
Tiffany: Umhuh.
Kelvin: You can’t. You know, um. (9) Often its not what we deal with but how we communicate what we deal with. That makes the difference.
Tiffany: Absolutely, yes.
Kelvin: You know, um. (4) For a lot of men, romance is a bunch of flowers and I don’t know a box of chocolates. That is only true according to advertisers. Who couldn’t give a fuck if you (laughs 4) If you see two women in your life, as long as you buy enough chocolates and flowers to meet their bottom line, then so be it
Tiffany: (laughs 3)
Kelvin: If Pamela says, listen Merv, you know. (3) I really like what you did. Then I’ll go I didn’t even know I did that. Or I didn’t like what you did. Then I think what’s the problem with that. And I say what’s the problem with that, well I have a problem with that. Then you know I have to take cognisance of that, maybe that is just the way I was. Reared, or that's my understanding of certain things which could have been wrong. Or inappropriate more than wrong. so ja. Social skills, communication skills.
Tiffany: Communication, openness, honesty, what we were talking about earlier.
Kelvin: And if you don’t know today and you learn it today then you should know tomorrow.
Tiffany: Um.
Kelvin: You can’t say I didn’t know it.
Tiffany: Yes.
Kelvin: (3) I think. (4) Also like you know, if we experience something and we think, ag, think the worst of her because, you think you’re the only one dealing with it. Whether its failure or depression. Whatever. (4) Unless you have the skills to identify it in other people or yourself, and be able to talk about it. You suddenly realise. Wait a minute. This pretty normal.
Tiffany: Uh, oh.
Kelvin: (2) So. (2) Its an interesting one, relationships.
Tiffany: Ja, aren’t they.
Kelvin: And you know what, if you look at people, how often do you see. You don’t even have to know them and you will see an elderly couple together, and they’re probably all old and rickety.
Tiffany: Ja, I saw one the other day.
Kelvin: And it’s just, something about their connection, that you go, wow, that’s so beautiful
Tiffany: Ja, this was an old rickety little couple, wobbling along together, holding hands. It was beautiful
Kelvin: And they are certainly not having wild sex. But there is something about their connection, that you think, ah, I want that. So that’s why I would like to focus. And. (3) And be preoccupied with the potential good. than to be driven. By the negativity. You know.
Tiffany: Ja.
Kelvin: (3) And let’s face it there is a lot of negativity out there. (3) So many people ding things for the wrong reasons.
Tiffany: Well one of the things I wanted to ask was, what are the things people find difficult about relationships. We spoke about some of the things, you think, people need to have good relationship. What are the things people find difficult, about relationships?
Kelvin: (3) Well. (5) I make clothing. (6) Ah, no. look. (3) I mean, one knows a bit about other people’s lives, its easy to. Be critical and reflect on other’s people’s experiences. Um. (7) but, I mean if I look at our own relationship. That question. what do other people find difficult. I can see it in little moments on our lives. You know. When you have those moments when you struggle with your own ego, your own pride.
Tiffany: Yes.
Kelvin: You know, that’s a start. And if its let. If you go and address it. Then it could become, a major catastrophe. You know, um.
Tiffany: So it’s, doing the work of being honest and open. Communicating. Those things are difficult.
Kelvin: Ja. And. (3)
Tiffany: Can be difficult.
Kelvin: Well it’s definitely difficult, even when you are working with it, and embracing it. I think why relationships break up, one can easily say its perhaps because you don’t put enough in.
Tiffany: Ok, um.
Kelvin: You know and putting enough in, is not necessarily volumes, its more the quality,
Tiffany: Ok, um.
Kelvin: Interesting. Wedding rings. I’m not a jewellery person, except the odd neck piece that I would wear. And when we had our rings made, I was quite adamant that my ring, Pamela could take and. (2) Do something with for herself. 940 And I’m sure she innocently asked, but. Don’t you want a ring so that your customers will know that you’re married.
Pam: More joking.
Kelvin: I know. And, I said well. I don’t need a ring to be. (2) Um.
Pam: Is that your wedding ring?
Tiffany: Oh no. This is just a ring. (3) This is mine.
Pam: Oh, I’m looking at the wrong hand.
Tiffany: Very, very plain.
Pam: I thought most wedding rings were just plain, and the Kelvin informed me that some people have diamonds and things on their wedding rings
Tiffany: Oh, and there are rounded ones. And that’s a flat one. And think ones. And thin ones. And wide ones.
Pam: But aren’t they normally a plain band?
Tiffany: (3) I think so, yes, but sometimes they do have patterns or shapes, or diamonds.
Kelvin: Often. Often they have.
Tiffany: And the of course there is the engagement ring.
Pam: Ja, that’s normally the baggy. We didn’t go that way.
Tiffany: No, neither did we.
Kelvin: Ja. So anyway. I don’t think that I need. That little piece of jewellery to help me toe the line. And in our relationship. even if I’m in [a city]. I could meet someone, who I find interesting. Or especially if I’m away. Be it a customer or whatever. And I could tell Pamela about her. And I could also. (6) Um. (2) If I’m going to go have a drink with her or have supper. I feel great. That I could tell her about it, because. I’m sure when I’m away babe, the one thing you’re conscious of, is that element of loneliness.
Pam: Um.
Kelvin: (2) So. (5)
Pam: No jealousy.
Kelvin: (2) You do have a problem with the gay men in my life
All: (laugh)
Kelvin: I don’t know why other people. (2) Don’t get it right. Its sad that they don’t.
Pam: Some people are by nature more jealous and possessive that other people because of their
own experiences of life.
Kelvin: (3) And insecurities.
Tiffany: And why do you think people, what is it. For what reasons do w\people go into
relationships? Why do men and women continue to...
Pam: I think its
Kelvin: The sex
All: (laugh)
Pam: I think its definitely built into your psyche. The desire for companionship. I don’t think we are
by nature loners.
Kelvin: I’d agree.
Pam: I think it’s a very natural urge. Uh, and to find your soul mate, you can have lots of friends.
But to find your one person who you share your life with is a normal, natural thing, I think its more
unusual to be single than to be in a relationship.
Tiffany: And you think its an innate thing of human beings.
Kelvin: I’d agree with you.
Pam: Almost like an instinct. (5)
Kelvin: What do you think, if I may ask.
Tiffany: I don’t know. I think its. I’m not sure its innate. But I think we definitely want to share.
Pam: Um
Tiffany: We wan to be close to somebody. We want some to tell, your stories to, how our day
went.
Pam: Um.
Tiffany: (laughs) like. I saw this great thing, someone to tell that to. Someone, I suppose the
continuity there being someone you’re supposed to spend your life with.
Pam: Um.
Tiffany: (2) someone to tell you stories to.
Pam: Um.
Tiffany: And some one who’s going to go, that’s not how you told it the last time
Pam: Ja.
Kelvin: Um.
Pam: That’s comforting
Kelvin: Ja, and uh, also I think its like a fallacy to bring. When we think of things, especially the
present and the future, how much of the future do we really contemplate. Very little. You know its
more the present that we’re preoccupied with. And its moving on from the past. And so that’s why
I say, when you see the elderly couple and there’s the particular warmth. There is something
about them that warms you up. And I think that’s so nice. That’s how I’d like to be with Pamela.
Tiffany: Ja.
Kelvin: When I’m at that age. We’re now starting to become preoccupied with family. But I don’t
know what its like. I can’t say I wish one day when I have grand children. So I think its good to
just be preoccupied with the relatively. The relative nows.
Tiffany: The way you are becoming, now. the way you are now. (3) Ok. So. I think its probably, or
time is probably almost up. I know you have to go. So. That’s all I had to ask. So thanks so much.
Really. And I just want to ask. If you have anything you want to ask.
Kelvin: No, thanks. No. really its been great. To talk to you. Its been interesting
Pam: No, I don’t have anything to ask.

**Brian and Tamara**

Tiffany: Ok, so maybe we could start. You could choose one of your photographs. So we can talk
about it.
Tamara: Any one?
Tiffany: Ja. I don't mind. (2) Any one you want.

Tamara: (4) What about his one?

Brian: Um. That's fine.

Tiffany: Um. Can I see? (4) Um. (3) This is your graduation?

Tamara: Yes. Yes.

Tiffany: You look very serious (laughs 2).

Tamara: Ja. It was serious that day. You know the clothes, and the gown. And I couldn't get the gown until the morning. And it was all quite close. I was so stressed, you know. (laughs 4). But now it's fine. You know. (3) Then, like at the time you get all stressed. But I like this photo.

Tiffany: Um. Ok. So maybe. Ja. Maybe first you could tell me about that day. What happened on the day, this photo, was taken?

Tamara: Ok, should I. Ja.

Brian: Ja.

Tamara: So I was already working. I couldn't stay in [an Eastern Cape town] to finish my thesis. I had, like a draft you know. (2) But not, not a thesis I could hand in. but then there was all the student loans, and what what. So I had to get a job, before everything was done. So I got the job, and moved to East London. And started work. And like in between. All my work, you know, at the office. I also had to write the thesis. So like at night. Weekends. All this. And. You know. It was, it was just a nightmare. (laughs 3) So when I graduated. I was so happy. I was so happy I passed. So happy I got the degree. So happy it was over.

Tiffany: It sounds really difficult. Really tough. It must have been good to know it was all over.

Brian: Ja, a relief. A huge relief. Hey?

Tamara: Ja, a relief. Really. And it was all difficult at that time. I was in East London. And Brian was in [a city]. So there was lots of travelling for us. we could see each other only on weekends. And we called on the phone.

Brian: But that's expensive hey. (2) You know, the plane flights and the phone calls. And she was also trying to do the work. The thesis she was telling about. So there was a lot, to do. And we both have careers, and trying to do the careers. I think it, it slowed us both down.

Tiffany: (3) The long distance thing?

Brian: Ja.

Tamara: Ja. I guess. (2) It was just so tiring. The new job and all that. Learning all that. Then I met him. And that was lovely. That was great. But then the travelling started. And it was just an entry-level post, my job. Then. So it didn't, didn't really support a long distance relationship. Like Brian said, it's expensive. (4) So, ja. Ja. It was a difficult time. Just difficult.

Tiffany: (2) Um, so ok. I need to go back a bit. Sorry (laughs) From the photograph. (2) Um, maybe, you could tell me how you met.

Tamara: (3) It was at that part, hey?

Brian: Ja. A party. It was, like the housewarming. I think the housewarming. Of my friend from school. Michael. (3) And she was also there. And we liked each other. We talked, laughed. Drank (laughs 2) all night. So then, after we called each other. And ja. Like that is it, you know.

Tamara: Um (3) It was, my cousin. My cousin Belinda. She was seeing Michael. At the time. They aren't together any more. (2) And I was there on business. They had me travelling. A lot. In that job, my first job. And I was in [a city]. So I called Belinda, and she said, you know, come to this party tonight. (laughs 3) So I went. And I remember thinking, this party, I feel like it is going to be good. (laughs) I don't know.

Brian: (2) Ja, it was a good party.

Tamara: So Belinda and I met. You know, like girls do. We got dressed, and the make-up. And we hadn't seen each other in ages. But we got ready, and then we went to this house. The house of her boyfriend. I hadn't met him. (2) so, ja. It was like, like any party. Lots of people. All very [a city]. You know. I wasn't used to it then, all the nice clothes, the make-up, nice wine, nice food. So we had this party. And I was drinking, talking, dancing. Dancing. Dancing (laughs). Then I see this man in a suit. (laughs 2). And I thought ja, he looks good. in that suit. A nice suit. He looks, just, just really good (laughs 2).

Tiffany: And that was Brian?

Tamara: Ja. That was him (laughs 2)
Brian: (laughs 2) Ja. I had been in a meeting. And I almost didn’t go to the party. I just wanted to go home. Like crash. It was a long week. A long day. I wanted to go home.

Tiffany: (2) So, like, so why did you go?

Brian: Michael phoned. I was on my way home. From work. And it was late. Like after the party started. And he phone. Like where am I. am I coming. And he said, no. no I must go, to the party. So I said, ok. For one drink. And I went. (3) Oh, but I didn’t go home. I didn’t change. I was in my work clothes. In my suit.

Tiffany: (2) And that was where it started.

Tamara: Ja, I saw him, and I watched him. Like I saw him with his friends. Like just chatting, chatting. And I wanted to know, how can I meet him. So I spoke to my cousin. I said yoh. That man is nice, in his suit. Like who is he, what what. And I asked my cousin to introduce me. And ja. Then we talked and we liked each other.

Tiffany: (3) So. You met. At the party. And you like spent, time, that night together. And then, what?

Tamara: Oh, ja. He lived there and I lived in East London. (2) So it was like, it was difficult. I thought. This was fun. And I like him. It’s a pity, you know, it’s a pity that nothing will happen.

Brian: (3) and I also am thinking, yoh. This girl is nice, but she’s not from here. She is from far away. Like I don’t even know where East London is (laughs 3) I’ve never been there. (2) And then, after like a week. They say, at the office, can you go. Can you go to East London. There is a meeting there. We want you to go. (laughs 2) And I haven’t, I haven’t stopped thinking about her. And then they say, can you go. So I go, and I ask Michael, what is her phone number. And he gets it. So I call her. And we see each other. And that’s that, I guess.

Tamara: Ja (laughs 3) he phoned me. And I was like, who is this. And then I remembered. And my heart. I think it stopped beating. I was like shocked. And happy. I was happy, but it was such a surprise. I also. I thought about him. And I was quite sad. Like it can’t happen, I remember. And then he phoned.

Tiffany: (4) Um. That was brave, of you to phone.

Brian: Um.

Tiffany: (4) Ok. Ja. So then what? What happened? You were still in different cities?

Tamara: (3) Ja. Different cities. (3) Well, then, then the long distance thing started. we would, usually I would go to see him. Because was working a lot. So he worked until late on Friday. Sometimes Sunday after I left. So it was better for me to go there. And the phone calls. And ja. It was difficult. But it was ok.

Tiffany: Can you, can you say what was difficult?

Tamara: (4) Yoh. Um. It’s not nice. When you love someone, you want to see them. Like see them. Everyday. When its long distance, you are always missing them. You want them. It’s hard. (3) It’s like you’re in two places. After a while. Like we did that for about a year. After a year, I felt like I didn’t have a home. I didn’t live with him. But the place where my stuff was, it was just a place to sleep after work. (4) Like that.

Tiffany: That’s hard. I also. My husband and me. We did the long distance thing. Geoff and I. I was working in Durban. And I just. I was frustrated mostly. I just wanted to hold his hand. Or have normal conversation.

Tamara: Ja. Like. Everything must be, you must use all the time. You can’t just sit. Together. In a room. And maybe, maybe read a book and he watched TV. You can’t make supper. Or, just simple things. Ja. It was like that. Ja.

Tiffany: Um. Brian, was, um. What was it like for you?

Brian: it was hard you know. I was working hard. And it was expensive. I mean more for her. It was difficult on her salary. But also for me. Its difficult the phone calls and the flights. It’s a lot of money.

Tiffany: (3) Um. Ja, ok. So, so you did that for about a year. And then?

Brian: Tamara found a job in [a city].

Tamara: Ja. I didn’t like my job so much. There was too much travelling. (4) I wasn’t home a lot. Especially with visiting him. And the people. I didn’t, I didn’t like the people there. So I tried to find work in [a city]. (3) Like we spoke. And I said, what do you think. Shall I come to [a city]? And he said ja, I could live with him. We wanted to still see each other, but we didn’t want to do the long
distance anymore. I couldn’t do it anymore. I couldn’t. so I found the job. And its better. Its better here.
Tiffany: Why, why couldn’t you do the long distance thing anymore?
Tamara: too much. I was too tired. I was getting depressed. The doctor, said. I wasn’t happy.
Tiffany: And then it was better, after you moved?
Tamara: Oh, yes. Much better.
Tiffany: How, like…
Tamara: Just not to worry. About him. About seeing him. I didn’t miss him, all the time. It takes away, your energy. To miss someone all the time. Like I lived for the weekends, and that wasn’t right. (3) I didn’t have a real life. I could start to make a life.
Tiffany: Um. So, so when you moved, you could be close and have a life. You didn’t have to worry, about seeing him, and the relationship. you could just, do what you need to?
Tamara: Ja. You can’t be close over the phone. You can’t travel all the time. You have to be together. To have a relationship. its not real, if it isn’t together.
Tiffany: Um. (3) Ok. (3) So, when was the photo taken? When was grad?
Tamara: We had, been seeing each other, long distance still. For about ten months?
Brian: Ja, something like that. Ten months, something.
Tiffany: And it was a happy day?
Tamara: I was so happy on that day. Grad. You know. But there was all these things. Brian. He had to work. He had to work that weekend. At the last moment. So I thought. He’s not going to be there. And that was horrible. You know terrible. I thought, he has to work but I want him to be here. Its so important. But then, like he got there. Just in time. He got a flight. And he changed all the times. So he could fly in. For the grad. And stay the night. And then leave in the morning. So that was ok. Like I wanted to see him. Longer you know. But that was ok. I was glad he was there.
Tiffany: It was important for you, that he be there?
Brian: (2) Ja, we spoke about it. She said, I’m graduating. Its been so hard. And we hadn’t seen each other. Like we couldn’t travel, every weekend. And we hadn’t seen each other for maybe a month. So I knew. This is important. And at the last minute, they said, at work, please be there. And I said, fine, but I need to go to [an Eastern Cape town] also. (3) So they changed the times. And we changed my flights. And I made it, just in time (laughs 3) Just in time, hey?
Tamara: Ja, I thought he wouldn’t be there. Maybe an hour before, I thought he’s not going to make it.
Tiffany: Brian, what was, how was it all for you? The graduation, and meeting her mom?
Brian: (3) It was fine. (2) I liked it. I liked to see her there, on the stage. It is important for her to have her career. To work hard. And the degree is good for her. She worked hard. I saw her. It was difficult. (2) And her mother is great. She is kind and soft. We like each other. Tamara: My mother loves him (laughs 3) If we break up, my mom will take him for her son. (laughs 2) She will leave me as a daughter.
Tiffany: (laughs 3) Um. (2) Ja. You look serious in the photo. Tamara.
Brian: She was serious about her work (laughs 2). It was a serious day.
Tamara: Ja, it was serious (3) The degree. The man. the mother (laughs 3)
Tiffany: Um, ok. (2) And Brian, you look quite happy.
Brian: I was, ja. I was proud of her. It was all work and serious for me. And thought, maybe I will let her down. And her mother. But I didn’t know her mother. So I thought, maybe I will have to let her down. Then I got there. And it was fun. I was happy to see, where she studied. Where, ja.
She had all these stories. About being a student there. And she was up on stage. (2) All that. Ja. I was happy (laughs)
Tamara: This was supposed to be a serious photo. And then, then he ran up behind me. And put his head on my shoulder. And the friend, the friend who took the picture. He knew and just took it.
Tiffany: oh. Oh. (2) Um. So why, did you choose this picture. To talk about?
Tamara: Uh (3) I don't know. It's funny. I'm serious, he's being funny, and sweet. It's nice. And I was so happy, to get the thesis away. This was the best picture, of that day. With us in it. (4) I don't take pictures often. But on grad. You know. You do.
Brian: Ja. Like, its an important day. You want to see it. To remember.
Tiffany: Mm. Ok. (3) Ja, so what do you like about the photo?
Tamara: (3) It's. I like that he got there. It felt good to have him, like, make the effort. To be there. When I see him. Being funny, in this picture. And me being serious. In my gown. I remember. I remember that day.
Tiffany: Ah (4) I see. Ok. So, maybe. Maybe we could look at another photo?
Tamara: Ok.
Tiffany: (2) You choose.
Tamara: This one?
Brian: Um, ja.
Tiffany: Um (5). You're all dressed up. That's a beautiful dress.
Tamara: Ja. (laughs 2) I love that dress.
Tiffany: Ok, so. What is happening in this photo?
Brian: (4) We're at a dinner. It was a work function. A kind of a dance, ball thing. There was one of those guys, you know. Taking photos of all the people. And then you buy them after the party. (4) And Tamara wanted this one. So I bought it, later. From the guy.
Tiffany: Um. (2) when was this function?
Tamara: Oh, um. It was few years back. (3) Like soon after I moved, moved to [a city]. It was a Christmas thing. Right?
Brian: Um, ja. (2) That's right.
Tamara: So, it was Christmas. Three years ago. 2004. Ja.
Tiffany: You look so beautiful together. Colour co-ordinated and everything (laughs 2). (2) Um, can you, tell me about the party.
Brian: Um, it was like a party. Like a good party. Good food. Lots to drink. (laughs 3) Nice people. Like I have a lot of good friends, you know, at work. We work together, but we're, we're friends. So nice people. It was good.
Tamara: Ja. And dancing. (laughs 3) Brian, doesn't like dancing. (laughs 2) But he's a really good dancer. Really good. And I love dancing. It was great party. (3) ja, like the end of the year. Time to let go. Have some fun. Have a party. It was great. (3) And it was in that first year. When we moved in together. And that was a great, you know, a fun time. For us.
Tiffany: (2) Tell me about that.
Tamara: Well, like we moved in together. And there was no more of the long distance. No more sad phone calls. No more missing each other. I got a good job. A job I liked. I felt good about myself. Again. Good to be with him. Good to have nice job. All that stuff. (3) So we just had a lot of fun. Together. We had parties at the house. You know, to meet his friends. Like that. And we went places. So I could get to know [a city]. (3) And even. Even if we just stayed home. He would cook. Or I would cook. We worked on the house. We watched TV. We made breakfast in bed. All those fun things. Couples do. And we could do. Because we were in the same city. (laughs) Finally. (3) Ja, so it was, it was a good time, for us.
Tiffany: (2) Um, so, this was a party, after you had moved in together. And that time was a, like a good time in your relationship. Because you were together, in the same place. After being apart, and doing the long distance thing.
Tamara: Ja. (2) Ja. It was a good time. Hey?
Brian: Ja. (2) I think so. (3) We did. We did a lot of things. A lot of fun things. Parties, dinners. Just time together. (2) Ja. It was a good time.
Tiffany: Did you, when you moved in together, like. (2) Um, how was that for you?
Brian: Ja. (2) Good.
Tiffany: (3) Um, was there, anything difficult about it? About moving in together?
Tamara: Um. No. I like the house. And I had some of my own things. My own furniture, that I brought with me. But, Brian, he had this house, for a while. And he had been living there. A while. How long?
Brian: Um, about a year, two years. (2) Ja.
Tiffany: So you moved into his place?
Tamara: Ja. (2) We talked about, about finding a bigger place. Before I moved. (2) Like, maybe a place with two garages. But then. It seemed like. Well, Brian had almost paid the place off. Well, not nearly, but he had paid a lot off on it. And it's a good investment. A good area. A good size. In a complex. All these things. Make it a good place, a place people like. And I really liked the house. I knew it really well. it was also, for me, another home. I felt at home there. (2) I spent a lot of time there. Over weekends, visiting. Like that. So I was happy to keep the place.
Brian: Ja. And we talked. We thought maybe, we could, we could do some work on the place. Like make it a better investment. (2) And Tamara. Tamara has been, really good. She has a good eye. She's made the place. She's made the place a great home. (laughs 3) A woman's touch. She's given the place a woman's touch. Like, I was never one of those guff bachelors. Like no washing up. No laundry. No vegetables. But Tamara has made the place really nice.
Tiffany: Um (2) So what, what have you done?
Brian: Um, we. Um, we painted. Some of the rooms. And we put in tiles.
Tamara: We did the garden. (2) I always wanted a herb garden. So we put in a small herb garden, near the kitchen. (3) And just some small things. Bathroom fittings. Light fittings. Some decorating (laughs 3) Moving around furniture, putting up paintings, pictures. New curtains. Ja. (3) Like that. (3) And we cleaned out his stuff. Brian keeps stuff. And there was, there was stuff he didn't need anymore.
Tiffany: That's a lot of work. (laughs 3) You sound, like you're really handy, DIY. That's amazing (laughs 2).
Brian: Um, ja.
Tamara: I just say, do that (laughs 2). That goes there (laughs 3). No. No, we decided about the things, together. Because, because we both have to live there.
Brian: (2) Ja, but I don't care mos, you know. As long as I can find, like my socks, and my beer, and the TV is somewhere I can see it (laughs 3)
All (laughs 3)
Tiffany: Um, Ok. So. So it was fine to move in together. (2) And, you tried, to make it a place for both of you, by changing the house. Like doing it up.
Tamara: Ja, ja. And it was fun, to work on something, like that together. We grew together, better, more. We learnt about what the other likes.
Tiffany: Um, that sounds good. Um.
Brian: Ja. It was good, you know, just good to be together.
Tamara: Ja. I think we were so happy, because we were together. No more long distance (laughs 4).
Tiffany: It was a relief, to be together?
Tamara: Definitely. Yes, definitely. I think. (3) There was no more stress. Like I said, we couldn't, I couldn't do it any longer. I just couldn't. and the move. The move to [a city], was so good for me. In so many ways.
Tiffany: (2) Um, you said, it was a better job. Um, no more travel, no more long distance.
Tamara: Yes (laughs 2)
Tiffany: So you could, just have fun, together.
Tamara: Um.
Tiffany: Um. (2) Ok. So, why did you choose this photo, to talk about?
Brian: Because she looks so good (laughs 3).
All: (laugh 2)
Tamara: You look pretty good yourself. And you're in a suit (laughs 5)
All: (laugh 5)
Tiffany: (2) You like him in a suit (laughs 2)
Tamara: Reminds me of when we first met (laughs 2)
Tamara: (3) Ja. Ja. I think. I like, the way we look. We look good hey? (laughs 3)
Brian: Ja. And it was nice party. Hey?
Tamara: Mm. Mm. It was good.
Tiffany: (4) Um, ok. (2) So. Shall we look at your last photo?
Tamara: Um, sure. (7). That's Beth. That's my daughter.
Tiffany: She is too cute. So cute. Those big eyes.
Tamara: Its, it's the day we got home. From the hospital.
Tiffany: Oh.
Tamara: So she's still, very young, you know.
Tiffany: Um. Yes. New born. (3) When was she born?
Tiffany: She's still a baby then. Now.
Tamara: Ja. Eighteen months.
Tiffany: So, (2) what, how is it for you being a mother? Being a father?
Tamara: It is such a gift. I feel so happy, just to look into her eyes. And to watch her grow. It's like a great, great gift.
Tiffany: So, you were happy, when you heard you were pregnant?
Tamara: Yes. Yes, I was. I have always, I mean always wanted to have children. (3) We didn't, like plan it. It wasn't a plan. We didn't choose to have children, like now. (2) But it isn't, she isn't. I mean I couldn't ever say that, that my daughter could be a mistake. She is just so, such a gift, in my life.
Brian: Ja. We didn't plan it. But she is, I can't imagine life without Beth.
Tiffany: (3) And this photo, the day you came home with Beth. Could you, could you tell me how you felt, that day?
Brian: (laughs 3) Ja. She was really in pain. I, I took a few days off. You know, off work, because she couldn't really. She couldn't really look after herself and Beth. (2) Ja, she just, needed to rest. To sleep. Like you don't think about it. How difficult birth is for women.
Tamara: Ja, but it was ok. I was out the entire time.
Tiffany: Brian, did you take this photo?
Brian: ja. I got this camera, a digital camera specially. Like for the baby. (laugh 2) I thought, I've got to show my family. They live, in [a city]. So, we see them, maybe once a year. So I wanted, you know, to show them my kid. I had to show them. So they could be a part of it. Like know the girl also. (2) I emailed these to my brother, so he could give them to my mother.
Tamara: Ja, like I said. We don't take photos too much. But, when I came home, and told him, told him I was pregnant, he went straight out and bought that camera (laughs 2). So there are more photos of Beth, than of me or him. Of me and him.
Tiffany: (3) What, what pictures do you take?
Brian: Oh, everything (laughs 3). When she sat up, when she crawled. Beth smiling. When she walked. Birthdays. All kinds of things.
Tamara: We even have photos of her first teeth. (laughs 3)
Tiffany: You sound like a really proud dad.
Brian: Ja, ja. That's me. A proud daddy.
Tiffany: (3) Um. So, Tamara, you, you still work, right?
Tamara: Ja.
Tiffany: How does that work, for you?
Tamara: (3) Um, its ok. Like I would, I sometimes would like to be with Beth, more. (3) I loved, loved the time we spent, when I was on maternity leave. I had a great time. We did. (2) And I, I love my work. I always wanted a career. Also. I want both. The family and the work. (3) Like I said, when I got the job in [a city], when I moved. It just felt so good to have the work. Work I liked. Work I am good at. It feels good for me, it does like my mind, and my spirit, it does me good. I love Beth. I do. And I love being a mother. (2) I, I’m also I get so much out, like out of working.
Brian: We thought, she needs. Beth needs us strong, like as people. For her. We need to show her, she can do anything. She can have a career, like her mommy, and she can have a family. Like us. So we decided, Tamara should keep working. Until she doesn’t want to. Maybe. (3) Also, in [a city], its good. to have two salaries. We want, to give her, good schools, university. (3) It was difficult for our parents. They didn’t have so much, and it was hard. So we want to give our girl all those things. (3) Um, ja. So two salaries is, ja, its important.
Tiffany: (3) Um, ok. I see. (4) Can I ask, um. Can I ask, if you would. Do you want to get married?
Tamara: (3) well, we don’t plan to.
Brian: (2) We don’t feel that we need to. You know.
Tiffany: Um, yes. Could you say, why you don’t need to?
Brian: (3) Its like, it’s like we are. Married. We, we have a child. We live together. We don’t need anything else. (2) Like, what is marriage. It doesn’t, it doesn’t mean so much.
Tiffany: Why, um, for what reasons, do you think people would get married?
Brian: (2) Well I can’t really say. I guess. I think, some people think that they have to. For children or for families. I don’t really know. It doesn’t seem to, you know, mean anything. Its for other things. Not for the people, not for the people who get married, like the couple. It’s for other things. Tamara: (2) Ja, um. Ja, like maybe you get married because you are pregnant, or because your mom and dad think you should. Or because your church thinks you should, or what what. Those kinds of things. (3) But, um, I guess it is also for, like for love. If you love someone, you marry them. You know, because, you will stay together, spend your lives together. (2) For the romance of it. Just because, like, ja. (laughs 3)
Brian: (3) Ja, but if, if you’re going to be together. Like you said, spend your life together. Then there is no reason to marry mos. Is there a reason? (4) I don’t know. (3) And its so expensive. Its expensive. The ring, the party, the dress. All that. (2) it’s like things. Those things aren’t love.
Tamara: Ja (2). Those things aren’t love. (2) They’re things.
Tiffany: (5) Um, I see. Marriage is not really meaningful to you, because you love for each other and you life together. Its those things, that are important, to you. Two.
Tamara: Ja. It’s not the piece of paper. Its not the rings. And we have lots of parties (laughs 2)
Hey?
Brian: Ja, right.
Tiffany: Um. Yes. So. The photograph. Of Beth and Tamara. For what, reasons did you chose to bring that one?
Tamara: I think. Um. You said. Pictures of things, that were important to, us. As a couple. And Beth is important. For us. like we just said. Our daughter, our being together. Those are the important things. For us.
Tiffany: Um, are there, um, are there photos of the three of you?
Tamara: (3) Um, no. I don’t think so. (laughs 3)
Brian: Ja, I always take the photo (laughs 3)
Tamara: (2) Ja. Mostly he does. But there are. There are pictures of him and Beth. (2) I thought this one. I brought this one because, it was the first, one of us home. At our house.
Tiffany: Um (2) I see. Ja. Ok. So. (2) If you think, of all these pictures. The photos you brought. How would you say, you are like the usual couple, and not like the usual couple. Like an average couple?
Tamara: (4) Um, sjoe. I. I don't know. I suppose, we’re not, we’re not married.
Brian: But not everyone gets married.
Tamara: ja. So I don’t know. We have a child. Ja. (3) I think most couples, they want children. Maybe.
Tiffany: For what reasons, do you think, people have babies. Couples have babies?
Brian: because they love each other?
Tamara: Um, ja. Its like to see him and me, together. In one person. That is special. To give life, from both of us. like Beth is both him and me. (2) She is like proof, of us being, together. (3) Like that.
Brian: ja.
Tiffany: (3) I see. Ok. Um (3) So, Are there other ways you are like, an average, a normal couple?
Brian: (4) We love each other. I don’t thin. I mean, why would people be together, if they. If they didn’t love each other?
Tamara: Ja. That’s a big one. That’s what being in a relationship is about. It doesn’t matter, are you married, have children, what what. It’s the love. There is no thing, between you, if you don’t love.
Brian: ja.
Tiffany: Ok, and are there, other ways you are not like the usual couple?
Brian: (3) No, I think we are quite, like I think we are average.
Tamara: Um, ja. We are not so different from other people. I don’t think so.
Tiffany: So, um, would you say. Would you say an average, a normal couple. Is in love. And wants to have children?
Tamara: Ja. (2) And they live in the same place (laughs 3)
Tiffany: (laughs 4) Ja, like in the same house?
Tamara: Or in the same place, like city.
Brian: And they can be married or not. It doesn’t really, matter.
Tiffany: (4) Um, I see. So then. Speaking about couples. Generally, I don’t mean only you. What would you say people think is good about being in a relationship?
Brian: I would say it is different. For each person. Each couple.
Tamara: Ja. Um. Like for us, we don’t, we’ve decided we don’t need to be married. But we are happy, that we have Bethy. (3) So it’s like, there are personal things.
Tiffany: Are there any things, most people like?
Tamara: (4) Just being with someone. Not to be lonely. To have someone. To tell how your day went. To share things with.
Brian: Some one to listen to you. Someone to care for you. (4) It feels good to have people, that are there for you.
Tiffany: Ok. I see. (4) And is there, what are the things, people. Maybe find difficult about being together?
Tamara: I think, like obstacles. Maybe you family doesn’t like him. Or your friends. (3) Or you live far apart (laughs 2). Or you are from different religions. Like those things, are difficult.
Tiffany: Ok, so, if there is some barrier, something preventing people being together. Outside of themselves.
Tamara: Ja.
Brian: (3) Ja. I think so.
Tiffany: (4) Are there, do you think, any other reasons. Maybe that people break up?
Tamara: Disagreements. He thinks one thing, she thinks another. Like that. That's kind of the same thing. (3) I can’t, I can’t think of other things.
Brian: (2) Ja, that’s what I think.
Tiffany: (4) Um (2) Ok. So I think, I’ve asked everything I wanted to. Is there, anything you want, to say. Or ask me? About the interview?
Tamara: No. no. Thanks
Brian: (5) No. um. It’s fine. Ok.

Leland and Veronica
Tiffany: Ok, so maybe, um, we could just um, start. With you choosing one of your photos, so we can speak about it.
Veronica: (3) Any one?
Tiffany: Um, ja. It doesn't matter which one we start with.
Leland: (2) Well, um, Ron. What about starting with the first one?
Veronica: Um. Uh, ok.
Leland: We took this, outside of the first house we bought. It was there in (suburb name). Not such a nice area back then. But it was all we could afford, you know.
Tiffany: (3) Ok. Um, ja. (2) So what year, was this taken in.
Leland: (2) (laughs 2) Sjoe, now you're asking something. Ron, do you remember?
Veronica: Well, we'd been married, um, three years. Is that right? I think it was three years or so. So um, 1992.
Leland: (3) Is that right. Ja, I think so. 1992. I'd been at the school, you know working, for four years. So I had saved some money, and I had a small housing allowance back then. So we could get that small place. Ja, it was four years after I started working, that's right.
Tiffany: Um, and can you tell me about it. (2) The house I mean.
Leland: Well, um. Ron and I, we had been living in this small flat, you know. Really small. But it was fine when we first got married.
Veronica: Ja, it was fine for the two of us. Just a nice small place.
Leland: Ja, but then, then we had Paul. So it was fine for a while, with the one baby. (laughs 3)
Veronica: It was fine with one baby, but then I had Sandra. So then we had like a toddler, and a newborn. So then we thought. No. we must have more space.
Leland: Ja, you must have more space if you have children. Two small children.
Veronica: Because they had to share a room. And the baby would wake the other one up. So then Paul wouldn't sleep, and he'd be grumpy and difficult in the morning. And I'd be up with both of them, and I wouldn't sleep. So we were all really tired and bad tempered. So it didn't work so well.
Leland: Ja, we always knew, you know. We knew we wanted a bigger place. We wanted a house. The flat was just for when we started out. You know when you start your life, like you're just married, you're starting work. There isn't so much money. You don't have all the things and the support. So we had to wait a while, until we could save up some money, and get a car, and I was eligible for the housing allowance. So as soon as that all happened, then we could get the house.
Veronica: Ja, and it all happened at once. The second baby and the house. So it was good timing really. Really good timing, I think.
Tiffany: Um, ja, you need space for a family I suppose. (2) How long, how long had you been married?
Leland: Um, uh. That would be three years? Ja, three years.
Veronica: Ja, three years.
Tiffany: And, uh. Sorry. Can we go back a bit, like to when you met. Can you tell me how you met?
Leland: We were at school together, you know. And I liked her at school already. So. we dated at school. (laughs 2) Even though she wasn't really supposed to be dating then. And I wasn't supposed to be seeing her either, because you know. My parents thought it was a distraction. That I must study, for school. To do well so that I could get a good job. (2) So they didn't want me to be going out with girls. (laughs 2) And I think your parents said the same thing, right?
Veronica: Ja. They didn't want me to be out, you know, after dark, with a boy. They also thought, she must get a good education. And the boys will distract her. They didn't want me out with a boy, like I might get pregnant. And we didn't live in so nice an area then. My family. So there were beatings and kidnappings and things. So my parents were scared for me.
Roland: So I remember (laughs 3) I remember, I would take my fathers car out. Because I didn't want anything to happen to her. like the car was safer, to travel in. So I would take my father's keys, and I'd roll the car out the garage. So it wouldn't make a noise. And I'd even have to roll it down the street a little way. (laughs 3) And then I'd get in a drive to her place. And she would have to sneak out, and we'd go to like, the beach, or something. Or if we had some money, maybe the movies. Ja. And then I'd have to do it all when I got back home again.
Veronica: Sjoe (laughs 3). We were bad children hey? If Paul or Sandra did that, yoh! We would be so angry (laughs 3).
Leland: Ja. Its true. And my dad knew, I think. He would like mark the place, on the floor, where he parked the car. So he knew, but he could say anything because he wasn’t sure, sure. Like he didn’t want to shout me, unless he was very very sure. He was a quiet man. my dad. He didn’t like to shout us kids. Ja, so then I had to get the car back, like back into that same place. Where had marked it. (laughs 3) So I never got caught. ?but if our kids did that, I don’t know what I’d do.

Veronica: I think its different today though, you know. Things are different. With our kids, they know, we. Leland and I have always said to them, they just have to talk to us. They must talk to us, and tell us what they need, what they want to do. And so it isn’t like our parents, hey. Our parents just said, no this, no that. Yes this, yes that. And you knew, that was just the way things had to be. There was no question.

Leland: Ja, so things are different, you’re right Ron. Different with our kids. (2) And I think we wanted it that way. For our children to be able to speak to us about things. Important things to them. The things that are happening to them and to them. So they could get help from us, I they need. I think that’s important, especially these days.

Veronica: Its important that children can get help from their parents. And you chose to do that, to be different from your parents, in that way.


Veronica: Um, so you were school sweethearts?

Leland: ja. Even in school. It’s a long time now hey?

Veronica: We’ve waited each other. Twenty five, twenty six years. But we’ve been married eighteen. Since 1989.

Leland: We waited. After school, we were going to get married straight away. But Leland wanted to study. And his parents. And my parents. They told us we should wait. So like we said, back then. You don’t really question them. The parents.

Veronica: But my parents, they wouldn’t help us. if we got married right after school they said they wouldn’t pay for the wedding. And I was so angry I remember. But they said I must have a life also. Even if I don’t study, it is too soon to just get married to a boy from school. I must first meet other people, get a job, be independent for a while.

Leland: And it makes sense. What they all said. But at the time we were angry and upset. Sjoe. It took years for me to get over how angry I was with her parents. (2) Anyway, so then we waited. It was four years. While I studied, and qualified, and found a job. Ja. (3) Then, ja. Then we, we were still together, so I just, I asked her again. And we got married. (2) then we were both much older, and our parents couldn’t say anything.

Veronica: Ja, and we also, we broke up and all that. While he was studying, you know and I was working. There were times, I was unhappy, because he was always away, and I only saw him on weekends. (2) And there were these girls at work, they wanted me to go out with them, you know, have some fun. But I always had to see him. And then sometimes, like at the last minute. Then he wouldn’t be able to come home. So then I was left standing. Just alone. No him. No friends. So I got unhappy, and we just left it for a while.

Veronica: (laughs 2) He was so romantic. He really wanted me back. (laughs 2)
missed him too. I really missed him. I was hard, but not too hard (laughs 2). Because I didn’t want him to go away again. So then we went back to seeing each other. And that was two years. Or something. I’m not sure. Then we got married.

Tiffany: Um, ok. So, you were school sweet hearts. Then you wanted to get married right after school, but both your parents said it wasn’t a good idea.

Leland: They said it was too soon. They said we needed to meet other people. They said I couldn’t be married and be a student.

Veronica: Ja, and it was good. We had to do all that.

Tiffany: Ok, so it was a good thing, that you didn’t get married right away.

Leland: Ja.

Veronica: Um.

Tiffany: And then you studied, and qualified, and then you got married. And you parents were happy then.

Leland: I got a job as well. I had a job and a salary. (2) So her parents thought that was very good. I could support her, you know. And a family.

Tiffany: (2) Um, can you. Could you tell me about your wedding?

Veronica: (3) Um, well. Ja, it was. It was just a usual wedding. Our minister, the minister at the church we went to. He married us. it was a church wedding. And there was lots of family. His and mine. And some of them came all the way from [a city]. Ja, and it was a nice day. Just a small things. A small service at the church, and a small party at a hall in (suburb name). it wasn’t a big deal, after all (laughs 2).

Leland: it was just a nice day. A beautiful day. And not too big a thing.

Tiffany: (2) Um, and why. If you don’t mind me asking. Why was it so important for you, that you get married. Like you even were going to get married just after school.

Veronica: (3) Ja, it was important. I think for our families. (2) they thought. It wasn’t right to get married so soon after school, but they wanted us to be married, to someone. And we both wanted a family. I think. Its better to have a family, when you are married. I know people, they have children. Even if they aren’t married. And that can work. But for us, it was important to be married, in the church, with our families.

Leland: Ja, its not wrong, not to be married, and maybe live together. Have the children. All that. But for us, it was what we wanted. Our families. My parents especially. They are quite religious. They would have been worried and hurt. I think. If we had just lived together. (2) and it is the right way to do things. If you want to live together, and have children a home, then you must make it a formal think. You must sign the contracts so that everything is right. In place.

Tiffany: Um, I see. Ok. And this photo. It’s taken outside your first house.

Leland: Ja.

Tiffany: You got it, the house, just after you got married. Was it four years you said?

Leland: No three.

Tiffany: Thanks, ok. I just want to make sure I know when everything happened (laughs 2).

Veronica: It was just after Sandra was born. And Paul, that’s our son. He was eighteen months or so. Almost two.

Tiffany: Right. (2) And you said that it was good to have more space.

Veronica: Ja, the flat was very small. Too small for two adults and two babies. Even though. I mean Paul wasn’t a baby. He was walking and things. But he was still very young. And it’s a lot of work to have two young children.

Tiffany: I can imagine (laughs 2). All the washing and the cooking. Ja. (2) So, um, can you describe the house for me.

Leland: It was just a small place. A small front yard. And bigger back yard. But not too big. When we moved in there was nothing there. Just grass. But I put in, some trees, and some flowers. But there wasn’t much. Not a lots of space. Enough for the kids to play in. when they were small it was fine. For a few years after we moved in, it was nice. (3) Ja. And there was a family room. A main bedroom and room each for the kids. A small room. One for each of them. And only one bathroom. But that was ok. You know, when the children were young, so there weren’t like queues. To get to the bathroom. It was just a small place. And it worked for us, for those few years we were there.
Veronica: Ja. Um. (2) It was a small place. But it was nice you know. It was nice to have a place to live, that was bigger. And there was the yard for the kids. And the neighbourhood. You know it wasn’t so bad back then, but it wasn’t so safe. But the people were nice. I like our neighbours. And there were some women from the church around there. And it was close to the church, so that was good. But the kitchen was too small, and it was a bit bigger than the flat. You know, inside. With the yard it was bigger. So we needed more. But while the kids were small, and we didn’t really have to share the bathroom. It was ok. It worked.

Tiffany: Ok, so you eventually moved. Um, to a bigger place?

Leland: Ja. We were there maybe five years. Then Paul went to school. I think. Is that right?

Veronica: (2) Uh, ja. He was six, seven. Sandra wasn’t in school yet. I think Paul just started.

Leland: So then I, uh. I got another job, and it paid better. So, uh, we decided. We’d move to a place, closer to the school we wanted Paul to go to. And we also got a bigger place. It has a bigger garden. And there is another bedroom. And extra one. So when people. I have family in [a city]. And sometimes my brother or my sister.

Veronica: Or my aunt. Aunt Sarah.

Leland: Ja, sometimes people will visit. And then. We have this other room so they can stay with us.

Veronica: Ja, and we like to have people over. To visit. To stay. Then the kids also get to know their aunts and uncles, from [a city] and [a city].

Leland: And there are two bathrooms. And a bigger living room.

Veronica: A bigger kitchen. A better kitchen.

Tiffany: Oh. (2) So, you. You still live there, in this other house?

Leland: That’s right.

Tiffany: Ok (2). And the first house. This one in the picture. It was a bit, too small. (2) It was ok for you, when you the kids were small, and when you were younger.

Leland: Ja.

Veronica: That was right.

Tiffany: And the next house, the house you moved to. It's a bit bigger. And its was better for you?

Leland: Um.

Veronica: Ja.

Tiffany: Ok. So um. (3) Alright. So um, why did you choose this, this photograph? To talk about?

Veronica: Um, I like looking back. To see where we came from. And this was our first house. We were so proud, and happy of it.

Leland: Yes. It was a big thing, that house. To get that house. It was good to have the space. For the family. And it was like a milestone. Because had the family, and we were married. So it was like another step, along that road. The house and the children.

Veronica: um. (2) The house was sort of, like for the children. So it was about us, getting better, bigger better things for the family. And we felt like everything was working out for us. then. I remember feeling very positive and strong.

Leland: Like and adult. I felt like an adult. My first house, my wife, my family, my children. Like I'd arrived somewhere.

Tiffany: Um, that's nice. (2) You do both look, just so happy. Like bursting. In this photo.

Leland: (laughs 2)

Veronica: (laughs 2)

Tiffany: (3) Um, ja. Ok. Can we, can we talk about another picture. Of yours. Could you choose, another picture. For me. Then.


Veronica: Ok.

Leland: Shall we, take the next one, like go in order?

Veronica. Ok. (2) So, this one.

Tiffany: (4) Um, so, this looks later. (2) Are these your children?

Veronica: (2) that’s right. Right.

Tiffany: (3) And they’re older in this one.

Veronica: Ja. This one. This is Christmas.
Leland: Ja, we went on a holiday. To the family in [a city]. My brother and her aunt. They stay in [a city]. (2) Well. Joseph. My brother, his in (suburb name). And Sarah. Aunt Sarah, she’s in. In, that place outside of [a city]. Um, uh. Worcester.
Tiffany: Ok. (4) So, you went, to [a city]. For Christmas.
Leland: Ja.
Tiffany: And was, was this taken on Christmas day?
Leland: That’s right. (2) Correct.
Veronica: (3) Ja. We all. We got the kids to wear their best, you know. For the family. For the day. And we’re all in our best. (3) I think. I think this was taken just before, we hadn’t eaten yet. Like the big Christmas meal. It was before. And the kids had opened their presents. (2) They had been playing with, or using. Just their presents. They had opened their presents and they had been with them all morning. And then we went. To the family. The family all arrived. And then we did the whole Christmas thing.
Tiffany: Um, I see. (3) So is, is Christmas a big, um, celebration in your family?
Leland: Ja, you know. Its difficult, not to be big. When you have the young children. They want the things, the presents from Father Christmas. And they get all excited. So um, we, as parents want them. They should have fun and be excited, but we also want them to know the real Christmas.
Veronica: Ja, that’s important for us.
Leland: (2) So we, we do all the gifts. But we try not to. I don’t want to say spoil the, but you know. We don’t want them to think, that’s all of it. That is all Christmas is. We go to the church, and we the carol services. All of that.
Veronica: We wanted them to know the meaning of Christmas.
Leland: ja, the meaning of Christmas. We help at the Christmas soup kitchens the church runs. And some of those things. We try to get involved. And the children.
Veronica: (2) Um, this one. In. this Christmas in the photo. The children were older.
Leland: Ja, older.
Veronica: They were just getting to teenager, you know. So they didn’t have all the Father Christmas and that. And we went to [a city], because they, we don’t see Paul to much, their uncle. Leland’s older brother.
Leland: Ja, they saw their cousins, and they saw [a city]. You know a bit of the place.
Tiffany: How much of your family is there? (2) Is it Veronica’s aunt and your brother?
Leland: Ja. That’s mostly it. (3) There are some. Some friends. And some cousins, I think. Hey?
Veronica: There are some cousins, and like great aunts. Extended family. They aren’t so close. (2) But there are some others.
Tiffany: So you went to see them, your aunt and your brother. And you had a Christmas.
Leland: That’s right.
Veronica: Um.
Tiffany: (2) Ja. Um, so. Ok. I wanted to ask. It sounds like, you are quite involved, with your church. (3)
Leland: Yes.
Tiffany: Um, so can you tell me, about your involvement, with the church?
Leland: (3) Well. we all go to church on Sunday. All of us, as a family. (2) And I enjoy that. Doing something, and being blessed in that way. All together. (3) We go every Sunday, and the kids have groups. You know, youth groups, that they go to.
Tiffany: What kind of things do they do at the youth groups?
Veronica: Oh, uh. They, they talk. About the Bible. They learn from the Bible. There is a youth leader. He’s a minister, a studying minister, and he leads the groups. (2) So they learn about the Bible, read the Bible. Sometimes they go to camps, and play games, swim, dance. Sometimes they have dances. Socials. (3) That sort of thing. Ja.
Tiffany: Ok, and do you two…
Leland: And I do things, do the collections, or I go and usher at meetings. Sometimes the readings. (2) We help at fetes and meetings.
Veronica: (2) And I’m on, I work with the women. I help, when they arrange the bake sales, or dances, or fun runs. And I have Bible group. (2) Its mostly women, you know. And we try to learn, more, more about the Bible, and the work of Jesus. (3) So its, for us all, the church is important for us.

Leland: And at home also. It is. We tried to get the children to learn the word of God, and to be Godly. To be good Christians.

Veronica: (2) And we had to teach by example. We had to try to be good Christians too. Help people out. Do charitable works. Help our family and people who need us. and all of those things.

Tiffany: Ok. (2) Um, so you would say, that being Christian. That’s important, a big part of who you are, as a family?

Leland: Definitely. (2) And it is our duty, as parents. To bring these children up in the word of God.

Veronica: Ja. Um.

Tiffany: Um, ok. Thank you, ja. (2) So, um, Leland, you said you enjoy going to church, as a family.

Leland: Ja. It makes my heart feel good, to see my Ron and my Paul and my Sandra in the church. To be listening and learning, and being good Christians.

Tiffany: (2) Um. So, um, are there other things, that you do, as a family. (3) What things do you do together?

Veronica: (2) Um, well, we eat together. Every night. (2) Its for us. we always sit down and eat. At the dinner table. Set the table and cook a meal. And we say grace and thank the Lord. And we all sit and eat the meal I prepare. (2) So that is family time. for me that’s real family time.

Leland: So maybe we won't sit down every night. Like some nights we want to watch the rugby or something. Maybe on the weekend. Or Ron wants a break from cooking. But ja. (2) That is family time for us. (2) Ja.

Tiffany: (2) Um, ja. And do you, is that time you all talk about your days and ask each other things and discuss things. Also?

Leland: ja, I would say so.

Veronica: um, ja.

Tiffany: (2) Ja. Ok, ja. (2) Could you, tell me about a usual day?. Like what happens in the morning and the afternoon. At your house?

Leland: (4) Well I wake up, and get dressed. Brush my teeth. Ron will sometimes cook breakfast. Especially on weekends. But may, um. Ron gets the breakfast ready. The cereals or toast and fruit. For all of us. the kids and me.

Veronica: And I have to wake the kids up. (laughs 2). That’s always difficult. Paul at least. (laughs) He always wants to sleep longer.

Leland: (laughs 2)

Tiffany: (laughs 2) I was like that too. My mother could never get me up.

Leland: So then we eat breakfast, ja. Do you mean like this?

Tiffany: Ja. Um, exactly. Just the kinds of things you, you all usually, do. On a normal day.

Leland: Ok. So. (2) Ja. We eat breakfast, and then I take the kids to school. Drop them off. And then I go to work. Work, work, work. Um. I’ll usually have a meeting in the morning, um, with a supplier or with a client. (2) And um, I don’t know. Its different every day. I think. Ja. I do a lot of admin. So I’ll try and do that. Get through the piles of paper on the desk.

Tiffany: Oh, no.

Leland: ja, a lot of that (laughs 2). Have lunch. Maybe go down to the factory floor. (2) Sjoe, it just all depends. Like on what work we have, and what clients. Sometimes, if there is a lot, a lot of clients. Then it gets quite crazy. (laughs 2). Ja. Ja.

Tiffany: Um, ok. Thanks. That's fine. (2) And you, um, Veronica. What do you do?

Veronica: (2) Um, well Leland said, about breakfast. So then I clear the breakfast things up. And then I just do the housework. Maybe do the washing. The clothes. Or ironing. (2) The floors. The bathrooms. (2) Just the usual housecleaning. And I have the Bible group. Some days. And some days, maybe once a month, they might need me, to help out. With some, something, the other things they do at the church. Ja. Or I have to go shopping. Ja. Ja.

Tiffany: (2) Um, and that’s in the morning right?
Veronica: Ja, right.
Tiffany: And in the afternoon, and the evening?
Veronica: Well. (2) Usually, ja. The children come home from school. And maybe they watch TV
for an hour and relax. So then I start thinking, what can I make for supper. Or maybe I will do the
shopping or the ironing in the afternoon. (2) Sometimes I’ll bake a cake. For a treat. For
everyone.
Leland: (laughs 2) Ja, we like that. She bakes a great chocolate cake. (laughs)
Tiffany: Um wow. My favourite (laughs 2)
Leland: (3) Um, then, maybe I come home, so like. At about 6 o’clock. It depends on traffic.
Veronica: Then we have tea together. Leland and I. We sit in the kitchen. Or if the children don’t
have friends, or if they’re not watching the TV.
Leland: (laughs 2) They are always watching the TV. They watch too much TV (laughs 2).
Veronica: So we sit and drink some tea. And Leland will tell me about his day. And I’ll tell him
about my day. Or if, maybe we need to talk about the children’s school, their marks, or something
they need. (2)
Leland: Ja, it’s a good time. its just a bit of quite for us both. And time together. We catch up, and
we decide about things. Like Ron said, just things that need to be decided. The school, or things
the children need, or want, or we want.
Veronica: Sometimes we gossip (laughs 2)
Leland: (laughs 2) We don’t.
Tiffany: (laughs 2)
Leland: We shouldn’t, but we do. (laughs 2)
Veronica: (laughs)
Leland: Then we have supper. And we all talk, about whatever is happening to us, the family. (3)
Veronica: Then the children clean up. They clear the table. They do the dishes.
Leland: And we watch TV (laughs 2)
Veronica: (laughs 2) Ja.
Leland: We get to choose. (laughs) While the kids clean up after dinner, we choose what to
watch. We have our things we like (laughs 2).
Veronica: And then the children do their home work. And we maybe read. Do Bible study
homework. Whatever. Leland maybe has some work.
Leland: And then we go to bed. Quite early. Usually. (2) Sometimes the children. Usually Paul.
He stays up, to watch wrestling or whatever it is he watches.
Tiffany: (2) Ja, so um, are weekends any, I mean are they different?
Leland: (2) On Sundays we go to church. But its mostly the same. We’re all home though. And
we sleep late.
Veronica: The children see friends. Or friends visit. (2) And I see friends, or they visit. And the
same for Leland. Maybe we’ll both visit friends. (2) Maybe see some family. Or if there is a church
function, we’re involved with that. Usually.
Tiffany: (2) Um, you have busy lives. It seems. Ja.
Veronica: Yes, but I don’t think. I mean. I think we take it quite easy. We don’t get stressed about
things. Usually.
Leland: We try not to. No.
Tiffany: (3) Ok, so, I know we’re sort of, moving away from the photograph. But I just want to go
back to it. Just quickly. Um, for what reason, um, did you choose this, photograph to talk about?
Leland: (2) I suppose. Sjoe. Well because, its one of the only photos we have of all of us.
Veronica: Ja, we wanted one of all of us.
Leland: (2) Its funny. We found a lot of the kids, and a few of one of us. Either me, or Ron. Maybe
with family or whatever. But there weren’t so many of just Ron and I, and there weren’t many of
the four of us.
Tiffany: (2) Ok, um. I wonder why that is? Um, for what reason…
Leland: Um, I always take the photos. (laughs 2) I think. Or there always has to be someone
taking the photo. You know. (2)
Veronica: (2) And I hate having my photo taken. I really don’t like it.
Tiffany: (laughs 2) Me too. I avoid it. At all costs.

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Veronica: Ja, like that.

Tiffany: Ok, so its just that someone needs to take the picture and Veronica hates photographs. Why doesn't Veronica take the photos then? (laughs 2)

Leland: (laughs 2) She always chops off the heads.

Veronica: (laughs 2) I do. It's terrible. I just don't get it right. (2) He's much better at taking photographs than me.

Tiffany: Um, ok. So, shall we, can we look at the last photo?

Veronica: Ok. (2)

Tiffany: This looks, it looks more recent. Than the last one. (4) And you both look so happy, and in love, and all dressed up. Can you tell me about it?

Veronica: Its our fifteenth wedding anniversary party.

Tiffany: oh, wow.

Leland: Ja, so there were just lots of people. Family, and people from work, and people from the church. Just lots of people. (2) And there was good food. A little bit of champagne (laughs 3) You know, we don't drink so much, Ron and I. But what is an anniversary without a bit of champagne.

Veronica: Yoh! And dancing. What is an anniversary without dancing. (laughs 2) I hadn't danced like that in years.

Leland: Ja, it was a great party. (2) Just a really good, fun, happy, party. We partied like eighteen year olds, you know. (2) And it was nice, just so nice, to celebrate. Being married for fifteen years isn't always easy. You know. Our lives have been very blessed. We're healthy, our children are healthy. We have a home. I have a good job. We are very blessed. But its not always easy.

Tiffany: (4) What, I mean how is it not easy?

Leland: There is always something. Not enough money for everything, so maybe fights about what to do with the money. (2) Or something with the children. Maybe we don't agree, about what to do, about the children. Ag, I don't know. I don't know. It's not easy, to have some one else you live your life with and that you have to answer to. (3) Its not. Ron is not. She's never been controlling, or difficult. Like some wives. We don't make each other do things, like we can make our own decisions and make up our own minds. Veronica: (2) Ja, that has always been. It's something we try to do for each other. Let the other one make up their own mind and have their own things.

Tiffany: Like what things?

Veronica: We have our own friends. We see them on our own. I have the Bible study group. And I have hobbies. He has his hobbies and his friends. (2) Sometimes we do things together. Go to movies or dinner or friends. But sometimes we do things on our own. Movies, or friends.

Tiffany: Um, um, if you could, could you tell me about a time, when things were maybe hard. For you.

Leland: (4) Um, what do you think?

Veronica: (3) Sjoe. Um. (2) Well. It was difficult, for us, when. Just before we moved to the house, that we were telling you about. (3) Hey?

Leland: (2) Ja. That was difficult, ja.

Tiffany: What was difficult about it?

Leland: (2) Well, like we said. The space. The flat. There wasn't much space there. And two little children. Paul was a difficult toddler. And he was two then. He really was a terrible two, or how do they say.

Veronica: Ja, it was having the two children. They were quite close. Twenty months. Apart. (2) So Sandra was very small, and very needy. She was a good baby. Quiet. Paul was noisy, and loud (laughs 2).

Leland: No baby could scream like Paul. (laughs 2).

Veronica: But Sandra was quiet. Not so much of a problem. But a baby. So not much sleep, all the feeds, nappy changes. That whole routine. (3) Sjoe. And Paul starting to run around. And you know, they need a lot more of you. The two year olds. (3) So we got it all over, the screaming, crying nappy part. Got it over pretty quickly. You know, without a break. But it was a lot of work.

Leland: (3) Ja, so it was more, being tired all the time. Not having so much money, because we were just starting out. So it was, um, it was the situation. we weren't angry, or like fighting, or
upset with each other. Not really. Sometimes we would fight. But it would be because we were just so tired.

Tiffany: Um, I see. That does sound difficult. Two small children. And did moving help?

Veronica: Uh. (laughs 2) Not really.

Leland: A little. A little more space. So Paul could sleep. And he could fall down stairs or anything. So he didn’t need to be watched so much.

Veronica: It helped a little. (2) But it was just a time, we had to get through.

Leland: Ja, they got older. (laughs 2)

Veronica: Ja, it just passed. That difficult time. I suppose.

Tiffany: (2) Ok. (3) So you were telling me about the anniversary party.

Leland: ja, it was a celebration. And it's been difficult. Marriage is not easy. You have to work at it. Every time there’s a problem, you can’t just run away. You know. (2) Young people today, they do that. I think there is a lot of that. They don't stay and work things out. Its just, there's a problem, and a fight. Maybe things get bad. And they leave.

Veronica: You can’t do that.

Leland: No. And I think we, we knew that. We were young, but we knew that it was work. It wasn’t all easy. (2) And it was good to have that time, that we weren’t together. That we could see other, people, know what other people are like. So we knew, uh, um. I knew. This woman is the one.

Veronica: Ja, and also. We have the church. The church will help us. If there is any problem, anything we don't agree on. (laughs 3) like if we can’t agree over tea, then we can ask the pastor, or a minister, or a counsellor.

Leland: Or just a friend.

Veronica: And they will help. They will always help. (3) But we don’t. we don’t often disagree. On things, big things I mean. And when we do, it's usually ok, ok, to disagree. So we don’t fight, so much.

Leland: Ja, we do argue, disagree. On things. But we talk about it. Even if we’re angry, we try to talk about it.

Tiffany: So your anniversary, the party was a celebration of making it work? All the difficult times, you made it through them, and stayed together?

Leland: Ja, we just thought. Its not often you can have big party for yourselves. Not really on a birthday. Not as an adult (laughs 2). So we thought, we can do this, for ourselves, and each other. We must just, you know, have a good old jol. (2) We’re still young, we still like a party. And it’s a good time, just to celebrate, us, like. Being together.

Tiffany: How many people were there?


Veronica: It was close people. (2) People who have seen us through the years.

Leland: Ja, like we said, church people, friends, some family. (4) It was fun.

Tiffany: Um, ja. Ok. (3) So why, um did you choose this photograph? For the interview?

Leland: (2) Because it was a celebration of us.

Veronica: (2) We thought of it, as a gift to ourselves.

Leland: ja, we were kind of rewarding ourselves. For working hard. For doing good together. (2) And I think I have been very blessed. In having Veronica in my life. I feel like we believe the same things. We want the same things. We care about the same things. She is such a kind, generous and loving woman. And I am, just so happy to have. with me. (3) And that party was about that happiness. And about the happiness we will still have. (2) God willing we will live another hundred years, together (laughs 2). And we will have more of that happiness. Just more and more.

Veronica: We wanted to share the happiness as well. With those people, who were there for us. its like, its fine for us to love each other, and our children. (2) But we must show people. And we must be with people and show them how happy we are. I am also very lucky, very blessed, with Leland in my life. (2) But that’s nothing if I just keep it to myself.

Leland: We wanted also to share that, with people. To show them. Ja. (2) Its almost, a promise. To each other (3) Hey? That we will stay together, and be happy, and keep working to be together.

Veronica: Ja. That’s it.
Tiffany: That is very beautiful. (2) lovely that you wanted to share your happiness, and lovely that you see it as a promise to each other, to work for your happiness. (2) Um. Thanks. For sharing that story. With me.
Leland: Our pleasure (laughs).
Veronica: Ja.
Tiffany: ja. So. Um. I just need to ask a few more questions. And then that’s it. So we’ve talked about your photographs. And I want to ask. (2) How do you see yourselves being like any other couple.
Leland: (3) You mean, how are we the same a other couples? Tiffany: (2) ja. Like, how are just a normal couple?
Veronica: (4) Sjoe. Well, um, we’re married.
Leland: Ja.
Veronica: We have kids.
Leland: We have two kids. I think people have smaller families these days.
Veronica: ja. That’s right.
Leland: And I think our family is important to us. They are at the centre, of our lives. The children. (2) So in a way, I work, and Ron takes care of us, and them, and it’s for them. For the family. It think that is something a lot of people want. (3) Like I said. I think we are very blessed. Not everyone gets all these blessings we have. But I guess, I think it’s what most people want.
Veronica: And our children are so wonderful. (2) They work hard, at school. They are good to their friends. They don’t do bad things. The drugs, and the crime. Nothing like that. They make the right decisions. (2) They make us proud. So that is a blessing also.
Leland: But I think. I mean, every one is different. Every couple, they decide for themselves, and they make the best of what they have. So, um, we are like that. But that doesn’t mean we are the same as other couples.
Veronica: Ja, some couples, they want holidays and houses, and clothes. (2) Maybe not children and happiness. I think we want things that are simple. (2) We want the things that the Lord has kept for us. Not so much worldly things.
Leland: Ja, its true. (2) These days, they make so much of all the things, the flowers and the holidays and the cell phones. The clothes. The things to show you are in love. (2) And we don’t want that so much.
Tiffany: Ja, ok. So my next question is, how are you different from other couples? (3) So you are saying you don’t like to go for all those, um, sort of products and like gimmicks. Like Valentines Day I guess.
Leland: Um, ja. I guess so. We don’t want to have our love and our relationship only about the things we buy and the things we want. (2) Our relationship, our family is about what we can do together. What can we make happen for ourselves, and the children. How can we bring ourselves closer to God, and to what will make us happy. Just happy. Without all the stuff.
Veronica: Valentines Day is nice though (laughs 2).
Leland: Ja, it is. But that’s not the only day that we are married, and in love and have children.
Veronica: Ja, and we have tried to teach the children, about loving a person, for who they are. About accepting that person. We try to tell them, that they can love whoever they want, as long as that person can help them and support them and grow with them. (2) In life and in God.
Leland: And we do that. We have grown together. (3) that is so important.
Veronica: And I don’t think people think that. (2) They think. What can I get from this person. How does this person make me look. What do people think of this person. And that isn’t really about either of the people. That’s all about, the things people, I mean its all about other people. What society thinks.
Leland: You can’t have a marriage like that. (2) It just won’t work. It can’t.
Tiffany: Can you think of any other ways that you’re like other couples, or not like other couples?
Leland: (4) I think, because we work so much, with the church. Or family and or relationship rests in the hands of the Lord. And there are many couples, at our church, like that. So again, its not that we are so different. From them.
Veronica: But from most couples. (2) From a lot of couples. Like in the world. (laughs 2)
Leland: Ja.
Tiffany: Ok.
Leland: And I just think. We’ve been so blessed. So lucky.
Veronica: We really are.
Leland: Ja.
Tiffany: (4) Ok. So, um, maybe you want to ask me some questions. About the interview or the research.
Leland: (4) Um, no. not really.
Veronica: Thank you. I think, I mean I enjoyed speaking to you.
Tiffany: And do you want to say anything more. Anything that we haven’t mentioned in the interview?
Leland: no, no. (2) I can’t think of anything now.
Veronica: No, thank you. (3)
Tiffany: Ok, so I don’t have anything else I want to ask. Just thank you so much. For taking part. In my research.
Leland: Yes. Oh sure.
Veronica: (2) And best of luck, with the project.

Zureida and Saleem
Tiffany: So, um, maybe we can start. If we could look at the photograph that your um, brought with you.
Zureida: Um, ja. Well we only have the one photograph.
Tiffany: That’s fine. (4) Ok, so, well. You look like you’re on holiday
Saleem: (2) It’s our honeymoon.
Tiffany: (4) Can you tell me about, um, your honeymoon?
Zureida: (laughs 2) Um, it was wonderful. Really fun. And, I suppose. (2) A time for us, like to um, get acquainted. You know. We didn’t know each other, very well. We’d met. Obviously (laughs 2). But only a few times, before the wedding.
Saleem: Our, um, our marriage. Was arranged, by our parents. (2) Because that is the way, marriage happens, in our culture. (2) So we had met, but not many times. It was, four, five time, I think. Hey? Before the wedding.
Zureida: Ja, um. Four or five. We just met, like to see if we liked each other. (2) Our parents. Both our parents, they wanted to arrange out marriage, but they didn’t want us to marry someone that we didn’t like. At all. So we met, some times, before it was official. Just to see if we liked each other.
Tiffany: So you, you had a choice?
Zureida: Ja, we did. Hey?
Saleem: Ja. Its, it’s the traditional way. But it’s changing now, a bit. So some parents like to give their children some choice.
Zureida: And I, I um. I met some other guys, before Saleem. And some of them, I just didn’t really like, you know. I didn’t feel like we connected really. But with Saleem. I did feel that. A connection.
Tiffany: (2) Can you say more, um what you mean by a connection?
Zureida: (3) Um, well, I guess. It was that I could talk to him. He was easy to talk to. I felt like he and I had things in common that we made it easy for us just to, you know. Talk.
Saleem: It wasn’t. With some of the women I met. You know, it was awkward. You feel you don’t know hat to say. But with Zureida, it was also. Ja, we just talked, and it was comfortable. We laughed also. I thought that was important. That was good.
Zureida: Ja, his sense of humour. (4) Just, being comfortable.
Tiffany: (2) Um, maybe you could, first um. Tell me more about, how marriages are arranged. In your culture.
Saleem: (3) Well, sometimes, two families, they plan. They plan for their children to marry, even when they are children. And that maybe because the family want to be connected, for some reason. Like wealth or business. Something like that.
Zureida: But that, it doesn't happen so much. Anymore. That it is planned from when you are a child. Nowadays, its more. Its more like with us. The parents will give their children a choice. Not total choice (laughs 2).
Saleem: Ja. Just some choice.
Tiffany: (2) And how, does that happen?
Zureida: Well, the parents will put the word out, to friends and family. You know, that they are looking for a husband for their daughter. Or a wife for their son. So like, with us, my parents, they went and visited our family, in India. And they still have connections there. Some friends and family. And they spoke to them, and they found some men that they thought were suitable. (2) That came from good families, and had education. And were from the Hindu faith. And then they met with them, my mom and dad. (2) And like, I think they know me, quite well. my parents. So they met with the men, and they talked with them first. And their families. And then they chose the ones, the ones they thought were best. For me, and for them. (2) Because, for us, this way, it is about the family that you marry. Its not just about being in love, and those two people. It’s also about the families, and your faith and all those things.
Saleem: Ja, its not, its not just about the couple, getting married. And you know, you can make a mistake. So many people today, they get divorced. My friends, my Western friends. They think this is strange. That they can make the choice for themselves. But if you think about it. We’re twenty eight. (laughs 2) What do we know about marriage. We haven’t been married. (laughs) We’re too young. But our parents, they can help us. They can help by saying, this woman, or this woman, she will be good to you, for you. So then it just, it makes it easier. To make that choice. And it has to be for the rest of your life, that you’re married. Like no one plans to get divorced (laughs 2). The want to stay married. So it helps to make that really, you know, really important choice.
Tiffany: Ok, so, um. You seem to be saying that. For you two, your parents have helped you, by finding men and women that might be, right for you. And they are right because, because, um, they share your faith, and their family likes your family, and they are educated and all that. So your parents like them and all that, and then you get to choose, which of all those people you like most.
Zureida: Ja.
Tiffany: That sounds, to me, that sounds really good. Because you're right. What do we know, at this age, about marriage. And it is a difficult, important choice. Maybe people don’t see it that way, enough. (3) So, ja. Can you tell me, what it was like, when you met, before the marriage?
Zureida: It’s um, its exciting. And its, its also nerve wrecking, you know (laughs 2)
Saleem: (laughs 2)
Zureida: Because you know, you’re meeting some one, someone you might spend the rest of your life with. So you want, you want to like them, and you want them to like you. But sometimes you don’t you just don’t.
Saleem: Ja, but for us, when we met, I think. We just knew. It was different. It was just better. We felt so much more comfortable. It was different.
Tiffany: (3) Ok, so you met a few times, and you decided that you liked each other. (2) What happens then?
Zureida: Well, we first, we decided together, that we wanted, um, we wanted to get married. That we thought we liked each other. And then we spoke, each of us spoke to our parents. (2) Then the parents, they get together again, and if everyone agrees, then you can get married. (2) And out parents, agreed. So then we could get married.
Tiffany: (2) Um, how long, does this, all take? The looking for partner, and then choosing?
Saleem: For me, my family had been looking for me, for um, two years. I think. They started before I was ready to graduate. So that I could get married after I was qualified. Like then I could get a job, and um, support a family.
Zureida: It was, about the same. The same for me. And they also timed it, my family for after I was qualified.
Tiffany: So um, do you both plan to work?
Zureida: (3) Ja, we both do. We both are well qualified, and I like, I like my work. I want to carry on for a while. But then, um. (2) When we have a family, I might stop, for a few years, you know.
Tiffany: I see, ok. (2) And how long, have you known each other?
Zureida: Well, we’ve been married just over six months. A little longer, nearly seven months. And we met, um, six month before that.
Saleem: A bit more, a bit more than year. I think.
Tiffany: (2) Can you tell me, what it has been like. For you both, to be together, now that you’re married?
Saleem: We know each other better (laughs 2)
Zureida: Ja, (laughs 2). We’ve gotten to know each other really well. You know, living together, we’ve spent a lot of time together, and we know each other more, than we did.
Saleem: (2) There is still a lot, like a lot to learn I think. Hey? Like about each other. It’s still not such a long time. To be together.
Zureida: But I like, having Saleem with me. It’s like, there is always someone who you can talk to. You know, I’m a person who like, to have someone to share things with. I like to be around people. So it’s been really great, having Saleem with me, to talk to and to share things with. And obviously, you know. (2) We get into fights or we will fight. We don’t fight so much now. (2) Its more like misunderstandings, and then we try to explain, to each other. (2) So that we understand what happened, or what we meant. Then we can like, oh. It that, so then there isn’t any reason to be angry.
Saleem: Ja, its more like disagreements, misunderstandings. Not fighting so much. (2) Ja, its nice. To be married (laughs 2). To have wife. With me. Someone to talk to and say ah, like I had a really bad day. Or there was this funny thing. And to go to movies and do things with. (2) Even just going shopping. It’s fun, with Zureida. Because we have fun, we laugh. And we get to know each other, more and more. By doing things together.
Tiffany: (2) Ok, so for you two, it been a good time. being married and getting to know each other. And even, those misunderstandings, they help you to get to know each other more.
Zureida: Ja, I hadn’t thought of that. Ja.
Saleem: Ja, exactly.
Tiffany: Can I ask, um, has there been anything really difficult for you, about being married, or the process that got married by?
Zureida: (3) Um, not really. Um, some of my friends. The South African ones (laughs 2). The ones who aren’t used to arranged marriages. They sometimes get all difficult. Like why are you doing this. Its such a mistake. You don’t even know this man and you’re going to marry. Him. And that’s hard, but like um. (2) Only because I have to keep explaining. I keep saying I am happy. I’m not being forced to do this. This is what I want to do, for my family and for myself. To me its right. (2) And some of them don’t believe it. They think I’ve been brainwashed (laughs 2) or something like that. (2) But there are some, some of my friends, who really get it. And they even think that. Like they wish they could have marriage arranged for them, I think (laughs 2).
Tiffany: Ok, and for you, um Saleem?
Saleem: (2) Um, ja. Not really. It was difficult, when I was meeting the other women. With them it was difficult, you know, to make small talk and like try, to um, get to know them. So that I could decide. I thought. This is going to be difficult. Because it felt like, we’d just sit there, for an hour, and not say very much. And then you don’t really feel, you don’t feel like you got to know them really. (2) So that was difficult. (2) And I felt like maybe, maybe I don’t need to get married (laughs 2).
Tiffany: Um, did you meet many other women?
Saleem: Um, ja. Maybe three or four. But only for a short time. I spent the most time getting to know Zureida. Because I like her, like I said, right away.
Tiffany: (2) So is that, when you’re getting to know each other, is that like dating?
Saleem: I guess. Um, sort of. First, at first you usually just meet at her house, um her parent’s house. And there will be someone there. Maybe her mother and your mother. Something like that. (2) but then, they slowly, if you seem to like each other, they let you have more and more time on your own.
Tiffany: (2) Can you, I mean do you, ever go out somewhere?
Saleem: Like to the movies, or a restaurant?
Tiffany: Ja.
Saleem. Um, sometimes. But there will usually, there will usually be someone there.
Zureida: Maybe at the table next to you. Like that (laughs 2).
Saleem: (laughs 2)
Tiffany: So you get some time alone, but not a lot.
Zureida: Ja.
Saleem: Ja.
Tiffany: Ok, so um, can we go back, to your, um your photograph? (3) Was this. Was this the first time you were really alone together?
Zureida: Ja, I suppose so. (laughs 2)
Saleem: (2) I hadn't thought of that really.
Tiffany. Oh. Um…
Saleem: It was so much, so busy, just before the wedding. And then we went away. It was just for a short time. but it was so peaceful, and nice to be away. I just thought of it like that.
Tiffany: I see.
Zureida: (2) I don’t know, there was that. But I was also, like scared (laughs 2). I suppose, because I haven’t travelled so much. On my own. And I wasn’t on my own (laughs 2), but we didn’t know each other so much then. And I think, my friends, they put a lot of pressure on me. They made me scared, of the honeymoon.
Tiffany: How is that?
Zureida: Well, the typical honeymoon thing, you know. It’s supposed to be like fireworks, and all special. And if it isn’t then maybe this is the wrong man for you. (laughs 2) They said that kind of thing.
Tiffany: So you felt, kind of pressurised to have a good time?
Zureida: Ja. (2) But actually it was lots of fun. It was nice to be alone with Saleem. (2) Like we said. We were usually with someone, or someone was close. So even though. Even if we had wanted to kiss or something. There was someone close. So we couldn’t. And actually, the honeymoon was very romantic. It was very special.
Saleem: (2) And we can’t tell you about all of it (laughs 3). I think that would be rude.
Zureida: (laughs 2) Ja I guess. It’s private. (laughs 2).
Tiffany: (laughs 2) I understand. (3) Um, where did you go?
Zureida: Well, we had two weddings. One in South Africa. And because Saleem has so much family in India, we had one there as well. (3) ja, so we were in India, and Saleem took me to Goa. (2) It is so beautiful there. If you ever go to India, you must try to go to Goa.
Tiffany: I’ve heard. (laughs 2) I definitely will try. Um, so the honeymoon was Saleem’s idea?
Saleem: Ja. That’s right. (2) Not all couples go on a honeymoon. It isn’t traditional, really. But I just. I wanted to do something special for her. for us. because it was a special time, and because we hadn’t been together that much. (2) It was like our time. and then after, after that we could go back to our everyday lives. You know. Back to usual.
Zureida: And it was really nice, to start our married life that way. I think. It was a good idea (laughs 2).
Tiffany: Can you tell me why?
Zureida: Um, because of what Saleem said. It gave us time away from our everyday lives. And I mean, when we got back here, back to South Africa. There was a lot to do. I mean we both started working. Because we had our degrees. And everything. We were finished studying. (2) And Saleem’s parents. They had bought us a house. As a wedding present.
Tiffany: Wow, nice present.
Zureida: Ja, it was (laughs 2). We were very fortunate. They were very good to us.
Saleem: Ja, it has been wonderful.
Zureida: So um, we didn’t have to find a house, but we have had to get furniture, and decorate it. All those things. (2) And Saleem. Saleem always lived with his parents. When he was studying.
Saleem: Ja, so I’ve had to learn how to do housework (laughs 2). And cook. (laughs 2).
Zureida: ja, he’s been so great. Um, we have a woman come in, once a week, to clean. But we still need to cook, and do some cleaning ourselves. (2) And we both work. So its been a lot to do. A lot to get used to I guess. Ja, and it was nice just to. To have that time when we relaxed and had fun together, before it got all work, work, work, you know.
Tiffany: I see. Ok. Um, can you just, um, tell me a bit more about the photograph. Where are you?
Zureida: We're on the beach, in Goa. And we're drinking one of the kulfi you get there. Just on the beach, from a vendor.
Saleem: It was really hot. Really, really hot. And we had been out all day. We went to a few shrines, and I think we went shopping.
Zureida: They have the most gorgeous clothes in India. Gorgeous stuff. And I just bought way too much. But it was fun.
Saleem: And I bought us each a kulfi. It's this kind of fruit and dairy, and ice drink. (laughs) But Zureida really didn't like hers.
Zureida: (laughs) I really didn't. (laughs) They are not my favourite. But I tried. And I know now.
Saleem: Ja, we know now. (laughs). You gave it away right?
Zureida: Ja, you didn't want two. So I gave it to beggar man, there on the beach. He liked it. (laughs). I like other Indian food. The food you get from vendors is amazingly good. really, really good. I miss it.
Saleem: Ja, so do I. (2) We'll have to go back sometime soon. Hey?
Zureida: Ja, definitely. And to see your family of course. (laughs).
Tiffany: Um so. (2) Ok, um for what reason did you decide to bring this photograph to speak about?
Zureida: Well, like I said, its kind of the only one we have.
Saleem: We have other ones, from the honeymoon. We have quite a few.
Zureida: But none from before that. Um, obviously (laughs).
Saleem: Ja, there really wasn’t any, like occasion. Before. (2) Also, we, um, in Hindi culture, you don’t really take photographs of a couple, until after they are married.
Tiffany: Oh. Why is that?
Saleem: Ja, I’m not sure really. I think, um. Something to do with it being a permanent thing. You don’t take photographs of a couple unless you know it will last. And um, you only really know if they are married.
Zureida: Ja, that’s what I understood.
Tiffany: (2) Oh, ok. Ja. There are some photos of me with guys I would rather not remember (laughs). So that makes sense. (2) Um, so why this photo? I mean of all the ones you took on honeymoon?
Zureida: We have other photos of the honeymoon, but only really this one of us together. The others, you know, one of us took the photo, the other was in the picture. (2) like that.
Tiffany: (2) Oh, ja. That makes sense.
Saleem: (2) But also, I like the look on Zureida's face (laughs). She's trying to smile, but she really hated the taste of the kulfi. (laughs) It's funny.
Zureida: Ja, he finds it funny (laughs). (2) Ja, I think, that was a really nice day. We felt, I mean I felt really happy, and comfortable. And I remember thinking. This is great. I really like being married.
Saleem: Ja, like I can do this. The rest of my life (laughs). This is great.
Zureida: (laughs)
Tiffany: (laughs) That's great. (2) Um, who took the photograph?
Saleem: Just some man. he was with his family. And we told him we had just been married, and we wanted a photograph of both of us. and he took it for us.
Zureida: Ja, his wife was so sweet. She wanted to buy us lunch and take us home. She really liked us. And they had these beautiful children. So well behaved, and polite.
Tiffany: Ok, so now. not really talking about you specifically. But more about relationships, in general. Why do you think, that men and women want to be in relationships?
Saleem: (4) Um, I think its just. Its just natural.
Zureida: Ja, its kind of like a the thing, that you do.
Tiffany: You mean like all human beings, just like, um, genetically or something, they all want to be in relationships? Like that?
Zureida: I’m not sure about genetically. (2) Something like that. I think humans just are that way. (2) Its unconscious. Eventually, you know, you just find yourself, wanting to be with someone. Like said, to care for and to share things with.
Saleem: Ja, and if you want to have children, then you have to have a partner (laughs 2). Maybe they don’t, I mean for some people, they don’t need to get married. But you do need someone, else, like if you’re a woman you need the man. and if you’re a man you need the woman. To have children.
Tiffany: (2) Ok, um. (2) Are there any other reasons?
Zureida: I guess its also, a little, its what people say. I mean I think for me. Probably for both of us. it was something my family, my mom and dad have always told us. their children. We will arrange your marriage, you will get married one day. And its not like they forced me. I actually went to them, and asked, when they would do it. I wanted to get married. But it was always, I guess, assumed. They always, I always assumed it.
Tiffany: (3) Ok. And um, why, do you think relationships end? Why do people break up, get divorced, that sort of thing?
Saleem: Like I said, I think its because they don’t always know. They don’t realise, how serious getting married is. That it is for the rest of your life. I mean why do it otherwise. And the don’t think of it that way. (2) I think people get caught up in the romance and being swept off their feet, like that. Especially women. And they don’t really think.
Zureida: Ja, and then they find out, maybe they don’t really like that person so much. (2) After all the romance has worn off. And I mean, it can’t really last, can it? That first like heart pounding, nervous, giggly kind of romance. It doesn’t last. (2) So that is why I feel, the way we, Saleem and I have gotten married. Its better. Because we got married because our live are compatible. We know that we can work together, and our parents, who know more about this, helped us find each other. (2) And there is romance. I mean there definitely is. (2) It like, it grows, from that nervousness, I was telling you about. Will he like me, won’t he. And then you find you like him.
Saleem: And also, I think I wanted, I wanted the honeymoon to be romantic. (2) I had flowers and nice meals and special things to do.
Zureida: Ja, it was so romantic. He was so romantic. (laughs 2) It was lovely. Really lovely.
Tiffany: Wow, that’s so amazing. Ah. (laughs 2)
Zureida: (laughs 2)
Saleem: (laughs 2)
Tiffany: (2) Ok, then. Um, how would you say, that you are like every other couple?
Zureida: (3) How do you mean?
Tiffany: Well, if you think of what other relationship are like, other couples you know, the couples on TV, that kind of thing. How are you like them?
Zureida: (2) Um, we live together. We’re married.
Saleem: (2) We plan to have a family. Like that?
Tiffany: Ja, I guess. Like that. (2) Um, what do you think of as a usual couple?
Zureida: I suppose two people, a man and a woman, who are in love, get married, move in, have kids. And kind of grow old together. I suppose like my parents.
Saleem: And my parents.
Tiffany: Ok. (2) And how would you say, you’re not like a usual couple?
Zureida: (2) Well, for my friends, its not usual that we had an arranged marriage. But for my family, that’s a totally usual thing. (2) I guess it just depends on what you’re used to.
Saleem: Ja, I would say, that is usual. For me. I mean.
Zureida: (4) I’m not sure. (2) I mean, I think all couples are the same really. They are like we said. They love each other, they want to be together. Those kinds of things.
Saleem: But at the same. Every couple is different. I mean. We all have our things. The things we do together. The things we don’t do. There isn’t one way of being a couple. There isn’t one way to be married. I mean, we are similar to our parents, but I think we’ll also be quite different. You know what I mean.
Zureida: Ja, it’s true. And I mean. (laughs 2) I think everyone thinks this, but I think what we have, the way we are is quite, um, I mean, special.
Saleem: Ja.
Zureida: (2) Ja, so, I don't know really. What more to say.
Tiffany: Ok, well. thanks so much. This has been really, really great for me. (2) And I just want to know, is there anything you want to say or ask, that we haven’t talked about yet.
Zureida: Um, no. thanks.
Saleem: No. Thanks.
Chapter one: I definitely know what I’ll do with my summer
Laurent: And I met her brother there. So we were talking. And at a certain moment I saw a girl sitting at a little table there. Ah this is my sister from [an Eastern Cape town]. So we started talking, she said she was an artist, so there was this automatically. You know we, start to communicate about art. We have this common interest.
Adrianna: And we both like to party.
Laurent: She came to the house, and I show her my art. And there was the first kiss. And that was it.
Adrianna: It was summer holidays, and I remember I had just finished quite a hectic year. Been recovering from another break-up, you know, a month earlier. Studying a course, in politics, working, just working hard. And I pretty much just wanted to go (woosh), you know, have a really good summer. And my family wasn’t too impressed with my behaviour. Because I was partying. And they heard Adrianna is with a much older guy. And dah dah dah. So I went, ok. I definitely know what I’m going to be doing with my summer then. I’m going to be spending it with him (laughs 2). We met and the on Monday he said to me, oh, there’s an opening of a little art gallery in Bathurst. And it was the first time I’d been asked to exhibit work, outside of university. And we went and we met. And there were our art pieces, exhibited next to each other. It was very romantic. Ja. Although his was very big. And mine was very small (laughs). And I stayed and had dinner with him that night. And then I went to Cape Town. But we just stayed in touch all that time. He gave me lovely phone calls. Charmed me (3). You know. Filled my head with wonderful ideas and dreams (laughs 2). So then I came back here. And he had friends to stay, so I kind of just moved in.

Chapter two: They talk and I drink
Adrianna: (2) In those dinner parties. They talk and I drink (laughs). No really. It was difficult. But we have been together over two years. Off and on sometimes (laughs 2). Ja, I feel a lot more secure. In the beginning I feel like, everyone was looking at me, at some strange young girl, not doing what a normal girl my age should be doing. So I think I had a lot of insecurities. But I think meeting Europeans are a lot more open minded, they are a lot more used to cross-culture or cross age group relationships there. So I’m really comfortable. It was difficult for a while at the beginning. It’s just sometimes it’s just too many nights in a row (laughs 2).
Laurent: (laughs)
Adrianna: And Laurent is very good at that. And I’m not so good at that. So I sit there and try to be polite and not get too drunk. And embarrass myself. It’s just like work. But it is all lovely people. Laurent: Well, I like to go out with young people, but I meet with a lot of people of my age group. Also because of the art, the business we’re in. Because they are the buyers not the young people. And sometimes, for her it is not always so easy. Because we have dinners, sometimes. With a lot of people, older and we’re missing out sometimes on the younger people.
Adrianna: And they’re all people with multiple homes, kids who’ve grown up, travelled the world. Very different to me.
Laurent: They have another life. They don’t work anymore. They’re retired. They just have money. They spend it. They travel more. So that is a difference. And there is sometimes Lin has a problem, because she doesn’t meet enough of people of her age group. What I like that too, but sometimes with business I have to take priority and first go out with those who will buy, who are interested and that.
Adrianna: But I must say, when he says age group. I think it’s less about his age group and more about the European community. I think our mutual friends, in Port Alfred, small town, are all age groups.
Laurent: And that is hard for her. And sometimes the communication, six people sitting around a table. And they are all speaking French, Flemish. And it’s annoying. You know. She’s missing out. And here and there someone will think to talk in English, so she can understand. Of course three minutes later they forget.
Adrianna: It’s not fun. I mean it can be fun. It’s not my kind of fun. Sometimes that is Laurent’s idea of a perfect evening. But they are not the kind of evening I can just let go, and show my true colours, be rude, and crass and lower class. Like I am. So I think there is a mixture of culture, class, age group, all that. (2) But I must say, on the other hand. I probably also seek, mature company. To learn, to gain I think a lot of the things I need to do, Laurent has already done. Working through feelings and insecurities and problems I had at my age, he’s already been through them. And although he is sympathetic to them, I don’t think he necessarily has the patience to endure them with me. (laughs) Again (laughs)
Laurent: (laughs)
Adrianna: So that can be where maybe I need to go and seek some younger people to go and bitch and moan to sometimes. Some girlfriends. Or some poor people at my level who are struggling a bit more. Instead of expecting Laurent to the only one to have to, deal with it all. And on the other hand I think it’s incredibly fortunate that I am getting exposed, that I get to mix with this crow from Europe.
And Laurent is introducing me to all these people from all around the world. And they are obviously the art buyers, bug supporters of art in this country. Just for education. I’ve learnt how to really drink expensive wine now.

Chapter three: Artists in love
Adrianna: And I guess Laurent does get frustrated with me. Because I see, like normal couples, walking hand in hand along the beach. And I think ooh, I want that. In fact, it’s just a dream, because. I wouldn’t choose that anyway. I can’t date an artist and then have a banker, stockbroker one moment, and then have whatever the next moment. But I think we are very similar in our natures, in our drive in our enthusiasm. When my work is not going well, I think I am a nightmare for everyone around me. Because I’m frustrated. Then I’m a bitch. Ja, and I don’t know where to turn all that energy, so I probably dump it all on him
Laurent: And the dustbin. (laughs)
Adrianna: Ja, Laurent has been an artist a lot longer than me, so I’m still learning.
Laurent: There is more security.
Adrianna: And I think the first year I met him, I had a really good income. And I drove back and forth. And that was good for me, because I had a lot of money coming in.
Laurent: And that is gone.
Adrianna: And then suddenly. I moved here. And I had to struggle incredibly. And I think. It did put a lot of pressure on our relationship I was struggling. I wasn’t really happy. It’s a lot better this year. But in terms of struggling, with my character. I was insecure, I was terrified. You just have to keep working and, kind of hope that it will work out. Ja, I think I gave Laurent hell when he was having fun and partying. I just couldn’t do it. Just relax and have fun. But I’ve made some money this year. And I feel better about myself. That’s all about balance.

Chapter four: A normal path
Adrianna: I must say, I think in some normal relationships. People have this. We’re going to move in, we’re going to have kids, we’re going to get married. Then the career. There is kind of like a normal path that you see most of the people around you doing. And we don’t have that, because of the age gap and the difference. So we, I think to have, things like this to look forward to. Whereas some couples are planning a family, we’re planning a lovely trip. You can’t compare. Because he travels every year. About three times, he’s left me alone for about six weeks. Which has been difficult. But again it’s given me time to be on my own and make friends, and build myself again. And it kind of stabilises you. But time apart. It keeps you balanced. That’s because we love each other. (3) But I think having a trip to look forward to it’s definitely a wonderful shared goal, a shared excitement.

Chapter five: Roles and expectations
Laurent: Like every couple I think, it is a question of what you like. And I think also it is a question of compromises, and, and, balance. So I don’t think it’s so much different, from a normal couple. Except to that I don’t think we want to go in our relationships for kids. And a few other things that we decided.
Adrianna: I don’t know. When I think traditional. I see like, when people move in, and get the white picket fence. And the dogs. The kids and dah dah dah. Then people start playing roles. The woman starts playing the role of the wife, the mother. Or the breadwinner. It’s more like you have expectations, you know. It’s almost an unspoken set of rules, its marriage or something. Whereas I think we, as much as I sometimes wanted more, and then realise it’s not me. We are very independent.
And we probably end up helping each other more than most people. A lot more than a lot of people who do. But I think, because we are running around doing things for our selves, we have a lot more to give each other. We’re not dependent, you know. I think because, we, we are both, very insisting on freedom. We always say free to be free.

Chapter seven: Life and art
Adrianna: And I tell you something. I can’t separate life from art. For me life and art is one and the same. I think about this often as I work. As I am problem solving in my work, it is much the same process as in life. And I think like, taken as, as the big step into the unknown into the art world. There is no one to draw benchmarks from, compare to. I have a lot of art friends who have done a lot, and very well, are successful, but they have had to find their art thing. It is finding individuality that makes your art. There is no conformist way to do art. It is the same as this relationship. There is no set path. There is no like a normal career. Ja I do this and this. I get promotion, I get leave, I get my gold watch. And then normally you have some one probably my age, you know that’s the plan. We buy a house, we move in. First we get two dogs together and we have kids. Get married. Dah, dah dah. It’s a formula almost. And I think with me giving up my normal career. We were together. And what I like is that we are discovering for myself. We are figuring it out for ourselves. And I do battle with it. You know then suddenly taking a step onto the other foot. Thinking I should be doing this, I should be experiencing that. But that is pressure form others around you. Or seeing friends very happy in the normal things, and then thinking oh gosh, am I doing the wrong thing. I get insecure. Because it is an unknown territory. But every lesson I learn makes me stronger and makes me grow and makes us better. And you know, I am trying to be better about it all, I think.
Chapter one: Life is mundane

Frieda: When we met in Berlin, I wrote Fernando a note. Something about our words finding one another in the tiny streets. With reference to Porto's maze-like little streets in the old part of the city, which Fernando had then told me about. (3) It sounded very romantic. And not get trapped in dead-end silences. And then, the first e-mails we sent to each other, after I was back in South Africa and he in Portugal, was about a bridge and meeting in-between. And so our words met. Like a mirror-ing, also kaleidoscope-like and in this virtual in-between space. We could play and imagine. Together. I've always believed that I express myself better in writing. And I guess in this way, Fernando got really close to me. In spite of the distance. (3) Though after a while it was not enough. Anymore. And we wanted a closer closeness.

Fernando: But also distance, and lack of mundane. Mundane is good. Life is all about it, and mostly around it (3). But we had nice stories going while we wrote to each other. Remember the waiter Frieda? (2) And it was good and creative. It created at least the possibility of today, I guess. There's always more story, but maybe this is already something.

Frieda: I remember the waiter (laughs) And the postman and the taxi driver (3) Who used to wait on us, in the imaginary, virtual cafe we would meet. And in a way, this was maybe trying to create a day-to-day 'real'. Togetherness. What Fernando calls 'the mundane'. I'm not so okay with the mundane. Whereas, before (3) In the romantic in-between times. I would happily watch him sleep (2) For hours. (2) And having meals together, is still simply wonderful and we love to go shopping. But sometimes. I miss the romantic stuff. Even cheesily so. In love. In words (sighs). Yes. And that was what was good about the old days.

Chapter two: You start the day with breakfast

Frieda: That was after a year of distance. And it was really the first time we were alone. Together. Still it felt like we already knew each other. Well I suppose we did. I guess it was a bit like being on honeymoon. We had one before we got married instead of after (laughs 3). But also we had to become acquainted with each other's rhythms. Didn't we, Fernando? (laughs 2) I was amazed at how much and how easily he could sleep. Like he could fall asleep anywhere, in our room not in public that is. Anytime. Kind of like a cat. (2) He was, is very catlike. And he was so, lovingly caring. (4) Even though after this great picture I got an attack of blisters and did not look too good in subsequent photos. (2)

Fernando: Like Frieda said, it was a bit like a honeymoon before the wedding. It was really blue. Everything. (laughs 3). And I guess you start the day with breakfast. So did we. (3) It was like the nice Mediterranean fresh breakfast of our relationship to be.

Frieda: It was really blue. (laughs 3).
Chapter three: Wedded and weddings

Fernando: Wedding couple in the garden of Praça da República. The day had come. It was morning, but not too much anymore. (3) We had said to ourselves, before that day had come, or the need for it. That we’d never get married. (3) The day had come though and came with irony. I was happy about it. I was happier even after the wine we had by the river that same day. (laughs 2). It meant that we would not be forced to be apart. And that is a lot. It was just about us. And I liked that. The ironic simplicity of that. That is supposed to be an institution.

Frieda: It was in Portuguese. So I just agreed with whatever Fernando said (laughs 3). (2) The ceremony itself was just about 10 or 15 minutes long. Although the process leading up to it was very long, cumbersome. Lots of paperwork. Getting my birth certificate from South Africa. Twice. Translating everything into Portuguese. Convincing the authorities that I was not already married, and that Fernando was not forcing me into marriage. That it was not a sham. Though we both never thought we'd get married. To anyone. I was very, very happy that we did, that moment. But more like I was surprised how happy that moment, of being wed, made me. It gave a sense of future and security. Not for the conventional reasons. It was just an important step in managing the process of being together. In the same place. Afterwards more paperwork and red-tape would follow, but right then I wasn’t thinking about all that.

Fernando: (2) I don’t know if I can say a lot about being wed. It is a nice struggle. Although not against, but for, each other. And oneself. (3) There's nothing natural about it. It is somehow a violence. To ourselves and each other. That we prefer, or see as good, as making more. (3) It doesn't have to be complicated because it doesn't have to be anything.

Frieda: Although. Here in Portugal. Being able to say ‘my husband is Portuguese’, is sometimes like a magic key to acceptance, to being in place. With these words, I get two-in-one. Being a proper, read married, woman and the wife of a proper, read Portuguese man. And then there's the institution. The license you get. The seal of authenticity, you receive only upon marriage. But I also missed a wedding in the traditional sense. With a wedding dress. Something old something new, etcetera and bridesmaids. And I missed the presence of my mom, and my sisters, and my friends. And even the complicated rituals. I wrote my own wedding vows that I read to Fernando one morning in South Africa, when everything was still uncertain. We had planned to get married there. But the bureaucratic things yet again were too complicated. (3) Though we found a willing, wonderful reverend. An intelligent sensitive one whom I knew. (3) Just then when it came to the vows the whole ‘until God separates us by death’ was just too heavy. In a way I am also relieved we could skip those trappings. The forever-ness of it. The fixed man and wife-ness of it. The pressure of arranging everything to please everyone.
Chapter four: That is a personal thing
Fernando: I do think we are special but that is a personal thing. And not a social thing. I don't think we are a special case. Trying to be together, and live like that, makes us a couple, to build togetherness negotiating an other so, to make it possible, finding space beyond convention, finding traps old and new. I guess everyone has to go there sometimes.
Frieda: I think we are a special case socially too. At lease I used to. In that I moved from South Africa to Portugal and that before we had this virtual very long, long distance relationship. But since being here I've come across similar 'cases'. I do still also think we're special like that. Though I suppose more in the personal sense. Socially still, also, in the sense of him being "white, European". And me being "of colour, African". I think maybe because of being South African. Here, in Portugal, there's a history of so-called mixed relationships though.
Fernando: I also don't know what a normal couple is. One would expect the normal couple to be one without. Transgression, of rules, times, bodies
Frieda: Boy meets girl. No big age, cultural difference. He courts her. She falls for him. They get married. A white wedding, dress, cake, vows. They have a honeymoon. Move into their new house. Have a baby. That kind of thing. Though I know there are so many variations on the theme that are also more or less normal these days.

Lungisile and Ayanda
A good man and a good woman

Chapter one: A better life for her
Ayanda: Oh. I am so happy. It is the school of my daughter, and they make the graduation. When I am a child, I did not, did not have this chance. I know it is good for my daughter with the school. For the children to go to the school. I did not go to preschool.
Lungisile: I am also happy, Madam. I also did not go to school. She can go to the school. And it is my daughter. She can have the chance I did not have. It is important for her, for her to have a life. It is good for her.
Ayanda: Yes she goes to the school. So it is the money for the school. But she must have it.
Chapter two: I feel so angry
Ayanda: (3) Oh, I feel so angry. I am angry that I have this baby, this daughter. And then I go to him I say, now I have this baby. What must we do now? And he says, you must do the abort. I am so angry. I think, I can't have this baby. I think, to tell the doctor it must be to abort. I even go to the doctor, the hospital. I don't want the child. My mother is angry. She says there must be the money, and the man. And the man is not there. And there is no money. My father, my mother must tell my father, and I am scared. But she tells my father, and he says that a child is a child. I must look for the child. And then I am happy. I don't want to abort. So I go to him and say, this is what my father say. And so I keep the child. Yes, it is hard. There must be money for the hospital. For the food. For the clothes. For the school. (3) And this man, he was not working then. It was difficult to find the work.
Lungisile: (2) Oh, it is so hard. I am stuck, I don't know what to say. I think she cannot have the baby. She must take it to the hospital. Have it to the hospital. She must abort.
Ayanda: But then my father speaks, to him and he say we can keep it.
Lungisile: Then I am happy. I am happy with this daughter, for this daughter. It is good to have the children. And I must pick myself. I must pick myself up. I have this wife, and this daughter. I must look after. I find the work.

Chapter three: Proud to be a man
Lungisile: It is for my brother. They say he becomes a man. It is for my brother. There is a big ceremony. We must buy the meat, and the things to drink and the tobacco. There are lots of people here to this house. I am so proud of my brother. It is good for him to become the man and I can do this for him. There are people and they say we need this. Or we need this. They ask for beer or meat or things. (3) And I must get these things. And I am working. I get the money. So I can give the people things. So it is happy. I am proud.
Ayanda: I must do all the work. I am happy. I am proud for the brother. It is a big day, to become the man. (2) So I must get the food. Make the things. I am here and I must do the work. All the work.

Chapter four: Good woman, good man
Lungisile: I see her, at the friend's house. I think she is a good woman. She is a student. She has good things. I like her. So I want to know her. And I ask the friend, to show her to me. And I say, can we be together. I say I like her. And (3) she says doesn't want to. Then she comes back to me, and she says yes. Then we can. We can see each other. Then we get the baby. And then I get the work. So now we stay here to this house.
Ayanda: I am young. I am to the school. I think. I can't go with the boys. I don't want to go with the boys. When I see him at my friends house I say no. it is hard to go with the boys. I must to the school. But then I think. I go away and I think. I am thinking, the boy is not so bad. He is, he looks nice. But I must check. So I ask the people. I ask about him. And they say it is ok. He is fine, he is not a bad man. And so I go to him and say it is alright. I want to see him. He will not hurt me. He does not beat his girlfriends. He is good to them. He will look after me. He can get the work. He does some of the work. He does not do the crime. He does not steal. Yes, he is a good man. He
brings the money. Everything I need, I can say to him I need these things. I can phone and tell him. And he will get the money for me. All the things I need.

Chapter five: On marriage and money
Bongani: He says it is right. If the man and the woman, they know this is the person they will live with. Like he knows, she is a woman, he can spend his life with. And she know he is good to spend my life with. So they know, they will be together, in all things. They can have the child, they can live together, die together. All that. It is all through their life and they know to do these things. If it is serious. If it is not just casual there must be these things to happen. And also, for us, it is the lobola thing. There is the money to pay to the parents. Or not money, not only money. The woman must have the new clothes. Those certain clothes, that even a person on the street will know this woman is a married woman. There is a lot of money that is involved.
Lungisile: It is good for the man to have the woman. She can help him. She does all the things for the house.
Ayanda: It is for the babies. To look for the babies. It is better for the child to have a man and a woman. For them it is better and the man he can get the money and the things. The man can do the work, and she can be with the children.
Chapter one: A usual day
Nombulelo: He is cooking sometimes. Cooking (laughs) sometimes. And playing the music, and dancing together. (laughs 3) The music. He is a music man. He likes the music too much. And I like the music that he likes. Because I want him to be happy. So you see (3). I love this man. I think this was the man that God has kept for me. He keeps this man for me. I love him very much (2) I want to die with him. He is good. He is very, very good to me.

Chapter two: Disappointments
Makhaya: It is not easy to be married these days. (2) You can trust someone, but it ends up that they. (3) They disappoint you.
Nombulelo: Ja, he was disappointed by the woman he was married to.
Makhaya: The girlfriends as well. Some girlfriends disappointed me. Most of the time I stay on my own. I don't have a problem. I just listen to music, watch TV.

Chapter three: He is an angel
Nombulelo: I wanted to be close to him. I wanted to feel that I owned him. (laughs 3) He is not going to get anyone. He is mine. You see? Yes, it is different when you live with someone. You feel you can see him, all the time. I want to see him, at the time I want to see him. Even at night. I just put the light on. I can look at him (laughs). Oh, he is not a fighter. He is not a fighter (laugh 3) He is a sweet man, really. He is an angel. He is an angel.

Chapter four: Don't stay if you're not happy
Nombulelo: Because you can't stay in a relationship that you are not happy. It is not good to stay in a relationship like that that (4). You know in my, in my marriage my husband was abusing me, beating me and the children. In Xhosa tradition the old people said, you must stay at your husband's house. You see? Because you are married. So, we can't do anything, go back to your husband. So but now I am happy. Because my children. Talking with [Makhaya]. Chatting, about everything with him. (3) They love him. They love him. If I can break up with him, my children will be cross with me. Because they love him. If I stay a long time in town they say, mom, go back. Because they don't want him to stay a long time, on his own. We are all happy. And we didn't fight. If you know, these years. We didn't fight. So I am happy because he. Just drive me to, to have a nice, a better future. You see? (7) My, marriage was very, very bad. Because I nearly been killed, by my husband. He wanted to kill me and the kids. He's got girlfriends. He stays with the girlfriend and he loves her. She loves him. So he didn't love me now. Because I've got children, then he loved the new girl. See? Then he wanted to kill me and the kids. He didn't want me, to go back to [a small Eastern Cape town]. He wanted to kill me [at home]. So then he hanged me with electric wire. See? So he wanted to go to the kids and, he wanted to slaughter them. Then the kids when I cried, the kids heard that I am crying in the bathroom. Then the kids go to the neighbours. And tell the neighbours Mom is crying in the bathroom, and she was with our father there. Then he goes up, out and looks for the kids. Then he didn't find the house where
the kids were. (3) The he goes to the neighbours, the other neighbours and look for the kids. Then we ran away. That is what happened. Then the neighbours, I wasn't got even a cent. The neighbours give me money to go back to [a small Eastern Cape town] with the kids. Because they say. If you stay then you will die. I don't want him and I divorced him. After the divorce he died. Ja. So that is what I like. I am happy. I am coming from a bad relationship. You see? That was a bad relationship for my kids too.

Chapter five: You need to be in someone's hands

Nombulelo: (sighs) (4) Me, to me. You need someone, you need to be loved by someone. You see? You need to be in someone's hands, and feel that, this person loves you. You see? You know our parents loves us, but they didn't love us like our boyfriends and husbands love us. You see? So, it is different. So you need a man to love you. There are things that you can't, talk to your mother and you can't do with your father and your mother. And the sex. You see? Sex is a very, very important thing to the relationship. See?

Indira and Haroun
We are different to them

Chapter one: Neither of us drink

Indira: (2) Well. It was at a birthday. Of our, of Haroun's friend.

Haroun: (2) Ja, lots of friends. It was one of those, like student, [university town] parties - lots of drinking. And neither of us drink. (3)

Indira: I shouldn't drink because of my religion. But I don't. I don't practise those things any more. My parents do a little but not strictly. It's like I'm not used to it. I don't know it. For me, you know, I don't like it.

Haroun: It is kind of the same for me. It's not a big thing, in my life. I just learnt, you know, from my parents. That alcohol is not a good thing. And when I came, when I came to Rhodes I did try.

Indira: Like before we met, we did it on our own, you know. He went out with his friends. Did things with his friends. And I had mine. So it was like that. (2) But now, it's like we have friends, who know us, know we don't drink. And even if everyone else is drinking. Then at least it both of us, like him and me, who, isn't drinking.

Chapter two: Dancing lessons

Indira: Usually I just dance.

Haroun: Sometimes I do. I also dance. But she's good. I mean Indira is a good dancer. (laughs 2) I'm sort of clumsy (laughs 2) I suppose.

Indira: He thinks he's no good. But he's (2) not that bad. You think you can't dance. So you're like, self conscious. So it doesn't work. (2) It's fun. It's nice to move together. It's nice when it feels like we can make our bodies do the same things, co-ordinated. (2) And I like the feeling of being so close. It's romantic, ok. (laugh 2) It's just romantic. There is nothing so romantic as dancing with someone.

Haroun: I'm too busy trying not to step on her feet. Like hurt her. (laugh 3) I'm really, really bad.

Indira: No you're not. You're not.

Haroun: Maybe we should go for lessons?

Indira: Maybe.

Chapter three: We share a room

Indira: It's two years. It was a year, last year. So third year. This year we thought we could stay together. Also then it's less rent.

Haroun: We share a room, in the digs of a friend. Like a friend of mine. (2) His parent's they have a house so we rent it from his parent's.

Indira: And we share the rent, for the room. (3) So, that helps. It really helps me. My parent's. we're from Zim, and I have a bursary. And I think it's good, for us. We get on well, together (laughs 2) Otherwise we'd break up (laughs 2). So it's fine for us. They know about him. (2) But they think we live in separate places. For us, in our culture, it's not right to live together. (2) But we don't we don't sleep together. We don't have sex. (laughs 3) We just share the room (laughs

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2). My friends, they laugh. They don’t believe me. That we don’t have sex (laughs 2) But a guy and a girl can just share a bed. You don’t have to have sex.

Haroun: My friends, they also don’t, they don’t believe me. (3) They say, she’s so pretty. Well, I just say. We don’t have to have sex. We don’t need to do that. I don’t think they get it. (laugh 2) It works for us. Right?

Indira: Ja, its for us, not for them. It works for us. People think, oh, I have to drink to be cool. Everyone drinks, I have to drink. I can’t have fun if I don’t drink. (2) And the same for sex. But it isn’t true.

Haroun: It’s what I’m used to in my family, my parents, that kind of thing. (3) So that is just how it works. And then about the sex. That’s for Indira. It’s for her, really.

Indira: They aren’t strict, my parents. But they wouldn’t want that. So I want to be with the man, to marry the man I have sex with. It’s not religion. I want to respect them. Respect the way they live their life, and the things, they have taught me. For my parents it is religious. They aren’t strict, but they do believe.

Haroun: It’s hard. (laughs 3) It’s difficult. I guess. You know. (2) But we are together, and I, we will do the things, make things work.

Chapter four: we’re different

Haroun: We’re non-drinking, non-meat-eating, non-sexual (laugh 2). In [this town] guys and girls have sex. They drink together, and then have sex (laughs 4).

Indira: (2) And we don’t do that. We’re a little different, ja.

Haroun: Well, it works, for us.

Indira: It’s frustrating. Maybe irritating. (2) Some people we know, having sex, and drinking. They can do that. It’s what they want. (2) Like we can be nice, be friends with them anyway. (3) They think we’re crazy. They think there’s something wrong with us. (2) Like they can’t really accept us. And that hurts, sometimes.

Haroun: (2) Ja, but Ind, we’re happy. It’s what we want. (3) They can just do what they want to do. (3) We do what we want.

Indira: Ja, Haroun, but sometimes, they look at us. They’re unkind. It hurts. I scream in a pillow. (laughs 3)

Haroun: (laughs 2) She does.

Indira: No, it’s like Haroun says. I know I’ve made the choices I need to. I’m happy. I have Haroun. And he’s very good to me, for me. (3) I watch TV, I make myself cheesecake, or pizza, or comfort food. (3) Like I phase out.

Haroun: (4) I give her a hug. But, like I’m a guy. I have other ways, to be a guy. And I’m not the rugby playing type anyway. (3) So I’m used, to being - different. (2) I’ve always been I suppose a nerd, a geek. But I have other, geek friends (laughs 2). And we’re fine together, us geeks. (4) I’m also happy to have Indira, to be with her. (5) That means a lot.

Indira: For support. (3) For sharing ideas and support. To help each other see, how can we do things in a better way. I think, friends can do that. But friends aren’t always there. I live with Haroun. I know him well. He knows me. He can see the things I need to see. Sometimes I can’t. It’s nice just to have another person there. Like I know Haroun will be home, around this time. Then I can get a hug. Then we can have tea. Then we can watch Smallville. These kinds of things. On Friday we can watch a movie. He’s there. For me. (4) I like that.

Haroun: I like having a person around. And it’s someone who cares, about me. Who wants the best, for me. Like that.

Chapter five: Compromise

Indira: I think if you don’t listen to each other. (5) If you don’t understand what each other needs. Then you start to get irritated.

Haroun: Like you have to compromise. You have to be able to say, she wants that. I want this. How can we both be happy? And if you can’t find a way for both to be happy then you’re both unhappy. Or one is happy and the other is unhappy. (2) And that’s no good. That’s not a real relationship. It doesn’t work.
Indira: People are selfish. People want their own way. (3) But if you’re two people. You can’t always have that. You can’t always have your way.

**Dara and Michael**

**One day we will laugh about it**

**Chapter one: Sharing a space**

Michael: So I would say the last year or so we lived together.
Dara: Yes. Before then we lived in separate flats but we did we were definitely together.
Michael: Ja, for sure. I mean, for most of the week I stayed at your house.
Dara: Ja, I mean, I didn’t share a bedroom.
Michael: (laughs)
Dara: (laughs) He shared a bedroom. I didn’t share a bedroom.
Michael: (2) Um. Yeah, ag. I started to get used to it. I mean after a while I thought it was just normal to wake up next to her. And when I didn’t spend the night it was sort of like where is she? We just thought, you know, why should you travel all the way from Tai Chung? And I felt comfortable, it felt right.
Dara: And we also felt we weren’t risking all that much because we had been together so long. But it did feel weird the first few weeks.
Michael: Because that place was mine.
Dara: (3) For the first time sharing a space. And my things being. (2) Having to take up space in his space.
Michael: Well you were moving into a male dominated area.
Dara: I mean it’s not only that. It’s like, is it ok if I put that there?
Michael: That didn’t take long to change though. There were fewer beer cans.
Dara: We cleaned up more regularly. Or I cleaned more regularly.

**Chapter two: Love and work**

Michael: We did work together. At the same school. Yeah
Dara: Well he was kind of my boss. You were kind of my boss. (2) Frustrating in the beginning, I think. Because I had issues with Maggie, and I always thought you know I wish he would stand up for me. But I think if you had I also would have hated that. You were screwed either way. That was what made those first few months at TLC very difficult I think.
Michael: Yeah, nothing was really going on between the two of us. We just said fuck it.
Dara: Ja. I think in the end what, what basically happened is that you and I, either unconsciously or consciously, decided that work would be work.
Michael: It worried you a lot more than it worried me.
Dara: It worried me more.
Michael: You got upset about it.
Dara: I took it personally. I took everything that Maggie did to us personally.
Michael: Yeah, because I knew, we wouldn’t stay there for ever. Basically they would say, ah, Dara is fired and I’d say no big deal. Let’s go. I mean I had a lot of ties there. All in all, I would say our stay at TLC was pleasant.
Dara: I loved it. We had a good life there.
Michael: No responsibility. Which is a terrible thing. No responsibility
Dara: It wasn’t really, responsibility. I mean we had responsibility but we didn’t have accountability
Michael: Nothing would have stopped us just leaving one day, I mean a lot of people did just get on a plane one day and not come back.
Dara: We went from having no responsibility or accountability to complete responsibility and accountability- with the pub.
Michael: Yeah but it was also an eye opener. It also tested our relationship to the max. Yeah, but I mean we got through it. It shows something. A resolve. Running a business together is a lot different from working together. Yeah, but when you’re both running a business together it’s not just yourself you’re worrying about. It’s your employees, your customers.

Dara: It was running the business that took up every waking moment. Because it was basically open almost twenty four hours a day.

Michael: Yeah I mean, its also dealing with people, you also get the feeling like they can’t do it so fuck I have to be there twenty four hours a day. It has to get done. And that also put friction at work. And also when we got home, we would talk about the pub.

Dara: We didn’t talk about anything else. So it was that you would feel like I wasn’t pulling my weight, and I would feel you were blaming me. And that would set the tone for it. We started assigning blame to one another. And that, that’s when things go pear shaped. But we went through patches, and then the blame started.

Michael: I don’t think it was just the pub. I think it was any business we would have owned together. So now she works and I work. And when we came home, we’re not talking about the same thing. We’re talking about different days.

Dara: I mean the low times we went through were about as low as you possibly could get. I mean the way we felt about each other at some times was.

Michael: Yeah, the silent treatment.

Dara: Ah, oh. (2) We were awful to each other sometimes. I mean really awful Michael: (laughs 2)

Dara: (laughs 2). The fact that we got through it is very good though. (laughs 2)

Michael: I’m sure there will be much worse ahead.

Dara: Absolutely. But hopefully we’ll feel like if we got through, we will also be able to laugh about that a couple of years down the line as well.

Michael: No relationship is perfect.

Dara: I mean God knows what is going to happen after the baby.

Michael: (3) Ag.

Dara: Who knows. I mean, that’s the next hurdle. The next. (3) Interesting chapter.

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**Chapter three: A beautiful day**

Dara: It was a beautiful day.

Michael: Don’t remember a lot actually.

Dara: I remember being very nervous.

Michael: I cried when I saw Dara walk in.

Dara: I was in tears when I reached the front. Ja. Very emotional day. Very, very emotional.

Michael: Yeah it was good. It was a blur. From the morning it was blur. And it just went smoothly. It just went shwum. It went quickly. We wanted family and friends. I didn’t want people there who… (2) didn’t mean anything to me, like someone I hadn’t seen in ten years to invite.

Dara: It wouldn’t have made any sense.

Michael: I didn’t want that.

Dara: It’s also the people that introduced us and were around there when we first got together. And also people we hadn’t seen in a long time. And people came from all over the world to be there. Which was fabulous.

Michael: Part of our life from when we met onwards to that point.

Dara: Yeah (2). And hopefully onwards into the future as well. Because it’s important I think. These are the people who were there for us on our wedding day who hopefully will be there for us
when we have trouble in our relationship or when we have trouble in the future or when we need a shoulder to cry on. I don’t think any relationship can survive without that.

Michael: A support network.

Dara: (2) And also examples, to be followed. Lots of good examples in that photo… (3) of good relationships.

Michael: Everyone has their own opinion of what makes a good relationship. I think it’s just important that you talk. We’ve been through the stage where you don’t talk and it’s better if you talk. To know what’s bothering you.

Dara: Avoidance techniques.

Michael: I don’t know. You learn as you go what makes a relationship.

Dara: Yes.

Michael: No one can tell you what makes it work a how to.

Dara: Yes. I don’t think I’ve ever had a relationship I can compare to ours.

Michael: You make a relationship as you go. There’s no written laws.

Dara: (2) I think what the relationships in the photo have taught us, I mean we have so many couples that have been together for a long time but not necessarily. We’ve also in that photo got lots of examples of, like Felicity and Joseph, couples who have gotten married late in life. And Aunty Erica and Uncle Pete. It’s like a don’t-give-up kind of thing. (3) You’ll find happiness, and be together you know, as long as you both struggle to keep each other going I think.

Michael: Keeping up. You know there are better times ahead. There are better times to aim for. If you give up at the first hurdle what’s the point. But when you find someone you care about its worth fighting for.

Dara: And I think also that we had, such an easy, a wonderful. Not an easy, I don’t want to say easy because I don’t necessarily think our relationship was easy from the start. But just such a happy-go-lucky time in Taiwan. You know. It’s always a fun thing to look back. And say gee we were like that then. And we could be like that in the future. And fight to have. To have back again

Michael: Not that we don’t have it now. (2) Not as happy and lucky.

Chapter four: like your first fart

Dara: (6) To share your life with someone. To share your hopes and your happiness. And your failures.

Michael: I think it’s just natural. That’s why you have fifty friends when you’re twelve and maybe five friends when you’re forty. And then there is someone special inside of that niches who is yours as well. Someone you share with. Not that you don’t share.

Dara: But you do.

Michael: Yeah, yeah. I know. Not share in a physical way.

All: (laughs)

Michael: We’re going down that street. But also you don’t share everything with everyone. In a couple you share private moments that you don’t share with others.

Dara: But it’s also cool that you’re comparing it to friendship. I mean I think that’s a big part of it as well.

Michael: I mean you must be comfortable with that person. To be able to sit in a room together and not have to talk

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Dara: That’s what I think. I first thought this is someone I will spend the rest of my life with when you do feel that comfortable with that person. When you feel comfortable with those kinds of silences.

Michael: Yeah. You know. Like your first fart.

All: (laugh)

Michael: You know you’re going down the right street when there is a fart.

All: (laughs 3)

Michael: Or the woman farts.

Dara: There you go. There you go.

All: (laughs 4)

Dara: I know it’s true.


Dara: (2) And you don’t feel sort of skam in front of them.

Michael: And it’s also putting up with your friends’ persecution that you are ready to stay with this girl. Well your friends are part of your life. And all of a sudden you have to put up with someone else, in your life. They have this thing of saying. Why are you spending so much time with her? You should spend more time with us. And that’s when you make the decision. Is this the woman I want to be with? And lose the friendships. Or if they are my friends then they will stay with me through this.

Dara: (2) My friends loved you. All my friends loved you but you’ve not necessarily liked all my friends.

Michael: Ah, well (laughs) that’s the way it goes.

Dara: But now it’s good we have friends in common. I mean the friends who have only known us as us.

Chapter five: Fighting for the bigger picture

Michael: (3) As I said earlier I think they break up because they haven’t found the right person and they don’t think it’s a big deal to break up. I mean we’ve all been in relationships. Broken up. Gotten back together. Broken up.

Dara: But to have that feeling like this is someone, I never ever want to lose. This is someone I never want to be with out.

Michael: And to feel, just to say ag.

Dara: To fight for it. You’re not just going to give it up. (2)

Michael: I mean couples break up. They have to learn.

Dara: Balancing things.

Michael: I mean learn the person. Learn the person’s personality. What they like. What they don’t. And I mean if you’re willing to go through all that and keep going. And love this person.

Dara: Exactly.

Michael: Just because of a little hiccup along the way for something bigger and better.

Dara: They don’t see the bigger picture.

Michael: They don’t feel it’s worth it.

Pam and Kelvin
The work of relationships

Chapter one: Love and work

Kelvin: Well, we do. Work together. I tend to be accused of being a control freak.

Pam: What is difficult is. Work is such a dominant part of our lives. The conversations are dominated by work. Instead of how are you? How as your day? But its sort of work comes first. And I do that because there are just so many things that have to be sorted out.

Kelvin: But I think a big part of being lovers (3) Being a couple and then having to work together - is boundaries. That is if you have a business decision, I mean you will always have a difference of opinion. I mean, initially it was hectic. I would say something and Pamela would assume it’s a personal attack. But it was I don’t like the way that was done, why don’t we do it this way. That tends to be my way. (3) So boundaries. We’ve gotten a lot better.
Chapter two: His is mine
Pam: When I say it’s difficult. I don’t say it’s negative, because there are a lot of great things about it. It’s not like he’ll come home, and I’m consumed with this and he’s consumed with that, and there’s no meeting point. Like I think some couples might have. We are working towards the same dreams. We want the same things. So our lives are very enmeshed. So if for example we go out somewhere, and, we buy coffee and a meal and it comes to say R80 and I pull out R100, and a twenty comes back. Whether he takes the twenty or I take the twenty it’s immaterial. You know, his is mine. I quite enjoy that. And I know it’s not the case with some couples.

Chapter three: On going work
Kelvin: I think the brutal honestly that comes with the work environment. If there is a real stress you’ve got deal with it. We’ve had to confront, and address certain aspects of our relationship. And I think I’ve always been… (3) supremely confident about our relationship. I see relationships as a working, ongoing workshop. And there have been times that I’ve been pissed off with Pamela. And I’ll say babe I’m pissed off with you. And she’ll say, why. And ok. My thoughts weren’t good at the time. And a bit of introspection has been done, and I’ll come back and say I’m sorry about being insensitive yesterday, even though I felt I was right. Depending on how you’re seeing it, we think that’s positive about working together.

Chapter four: Personal space
Kelvin: Not only in the work place. But also personal space. I play football on a Thursday, and Thursdays. It’s really important for her that I’m happy with soccer. If she goes out with her friends I know it’s really important for her so I’m happy for her. (4) So it’s a process. Like, why fuck around. We’re in this relationship. We’ve been here for eight years. We want to start a family. We’re secure in this relationship. We’re secure with each other. (2) And, that’s warts and all.

Chapter five: The baby thing
Kelvin: But, the decision to get married now. (3) Was prompted more by. Ok, the baby thing was big thing.
Pam: Ja, but that was afterwards. We decided to get married before we knew about that.
Kelvin: Babe, we always mentioned, you know if the baby comes.
Pam: We’ll get married.
Kelvin: You know if Pamela walks down the isle with a big tummy that would be fantastic. We have come to realise how stress, effects, the whole process, of pregnancy. Initially we weren’t going to do it but our moms. Our respective moms, prompted us. But I think the baby thing is an important thing. Because Pamela is already, x amount years older this year.
Pam: 43
Kelvin: 43. And I just turned 40 this year. So we’ve got to be sensitive. To those conditions.

Chapter six: It took a while
Pam: There was a home for, a youth centre. And Kelvin was doing full time voluntary work. And I was involved and then I subsequently also did some voluntary work But we met, we met there. (2) And I fell in love. (5) It was really, I mean one of those things, like sjoe. Who’s that? But it took a while. I was twenty four and Kelvin was twenty two. (3) Well you can tell about Michelle.
Kelvin: We also had a lot of other things happening. Music. Acting. Over and above the work that we did. And I suppose it was just one more friendship that had potential to go further. You know, at the time. It wasn’t going to be. (2) And we went our separate ways. Both had very similar experiences with our respective partners. I got married. My wife had a terminal illness. Pam’s partner also had a terminal illness. And both subsequently passed on.
Pam: Well actually we didn’t really see each other. It wasn’t the kind of friendship where we would phone and meet for coffee. I would say if we saw each other in the street I would say oh hi Merv, but if it happened three times in nine years that was a lot. And then when I did sort of meet up with Merv again. We saw each other in passing and he said this is what’s happening. You know my wife is really ill, and I felt really bad for him. We can be friends and have coffee together. And then the friendship developed. After she passed away. He took a year just to mourn. When that year was up, then we could start spending more time.
Chapter seven: Why don’t we start together
Pam: Ok. I was working in a business with my mom. Which I wasn’t really happy with, and it wasn’t really going anywhere. And she subsequently sold that business. So I had taken a year off, after. He was always in clothing. He had his own clothing business. And when his wife was ill, the business. (3)
Kelvin: I lost a lot. I had two businesses at the time, and then one drained the other.
Pam: So when we got together, I was ready for something different. He said look you know, I’ve been in the clothing industry, I had my own business. Why don’t we start together? We can build something up something. It wasn’t like, ja, I love clothing. It didn’t feel like a new relationship. It felt like resuming an old one. Interesting.

Chapter eight: Us and work
Kelvin: And then just very importantly about us and work. Tiffany. Work and personal life is like this, intertwined. Now we work from home. Iggy [the dog] is part of our working day. We’re equally committed to work when we work as we are to our personal lives. We’ve always tried to do it, use the relationship to counter the stresses of the work. If we need to spend time together over a cup of coffee we choose to do that. Where as someone else, who is strictly working will choose to see someone after work. We define things differently to other people. And the only reason we do that is because it works for us.

Brian and Tamara
Those things aren’t love

Chapter one: It’s not real if it isn’t together
Tamara: It’s not nice. When you love someone, you want to see them. When its long distance, you are always missing them. It’s like you’re in two places. After a year, I felt like I didn’t have a home. I didn’t live with him. But the place where my stuff was, it was just a place to sleep after work.
Brian: It was hard you know. I was working hard. And it was expensive. I mean more for her. It was difficult on her salary. But also for me. It’s difficult the phone calls and the flights. It’s a lot of money. Tamara found a job in Jo’burg.
Tamara: I didn’t like my job so much. There was too much travelling. (4) I wasn’t home a lot, especially with visiting him. I didn’t like the people there. So I tried to find work in Johannesburg. (3) Like we spoke. We wanted to still see each other, but we didn’t want to do the long distance anymore. I couldn’t do it anymore. I was too tired. I was getting depressed the doctor, said. I wasn’t happy. It takes away your energy to miss someone all the time. Like I lived for the weekends, and that wasn’t right. (3) I didn’t have a real life. I could start to make a life. You can’t be close over the phone. You can’t travel all the time. You have to be together to have a relationship. It’s not real, if it isn’t together.

Chapter two: We just had a lot of fun
Tamara: And it was in that first year. When we moved in together. Like we moved in together. And there was no more of the long distance. No more sad phone calls. No more missing each other. I got a good job. A job I liked. I felt good about myself again. (3) So we just had a lot of fun together. We had parties at the house. You know, to meet his friends. And we went places so I could get to know Jo’burg. (3) Even if we just stayed home. He would cook. Or I would cook. We worked on the house. We watched TV. We made breakfast in bed. All those fun things couples do. And we could do because we were in the same city. (laughs) Finally. (3)

Chapter three: On making a home
Tamara: We talked about finding a bigger place. Like, maybe a place with two garages. Brian had almost paid the place off. And it’s a good investment. A good area. A good size. In a complex. All these things make it a good place, a place people like. And I really liked the house. I knew it really well. I felt at home there. (2) I spent a lot of time there over weekends, visiting.
Brian: Ja. And we talked. We thought maybe, we could do some work on the place. Like make it a better investment. (2) Tamara has been, really good. She has a good eye. She's made the place a great home. (laughs 3) She’s given the place a woman’s touch. Like, I was never one of those skommie bachelors. Like no washing up. No laundry. No vegetables. We painted. Some of the rooms. And we put in tiles.

Tamara: We did the garden. (2) I always wanted a herb garden. So we put in a small herb garden, near the kitchen. (3) And just some small things: bathroom fittings, light fittings, some decorating (laughs 3) Moving around furniture, putting up paintings, pictures, new curtains. And we cleaned out his stuff. I just say, do that (laughs 2). That goes there (laughs 3). No, we decided about the things, together. Because, because we both have to live there.

Brian: (2) Ja, but I don't care mos, you know. As long as I can find, like my socks, and my beer, and the TV is somewhere I can see it (laughs 3)

Tamara: And it was fun, to work on something, like that together. We learnt about what the other likes.

Chapter four: Family

Tamara: I have always, wanted to have children. (3) We didn’t choose to have children, like now. (2) But I couldn’t ever say that, that my daughter could be a mistake. She is just so, such a gift, in my life.

Brian: We didn’t plan it. But I can’t imagine life without Beth. I got this camera, a digital camera specially. Like for the baby. (laugh 2) I thought I've got to show my family. They live in Cape Town. So I wanted, you know, to show them my kid. So they could be a part of it. (2) I emailed [photographs] to my brother, so he could give them to my mother.

Tamara: We don't take photos too much. But, when I came home, and told him, told him I was pregnant, he went straight out and bought that camera (laughs 2). So there are more photos of Beth, than of me or him. Of me and him.

Brian: That’s me. A proud daddy.

Tamara: I sometimes would like to be with Beth, more. (3) I always wanted a career. I want both: the family and the work. (3) When I got the job in Jo'burg, when I moved it just felt so good to have the work. It feels good for me, it does like my mind, and my spirit, it does me good. I love Beth. And I love being a mother. (2) I’m also I get so much out, like out of working.

Brian: Beth needs us strong, like as people. We need to show her, she can do anything. She can have a career, like her mommy, and she can have a family. Like us. Also, in Jo'burg, it's good to have two salaries. We want to give her, good schools, university. (3) It was difficult for our parents. They didn't have so much, and it was hard. So we want to give our girl all those things. (3)

Chapter five: Marriage

Brian: (3) Its like, we are married. We have a child. We live together. We don't need anything else. (2) Like, what is marriage? It doesn’t mean so much. I think, some people think that they have to. For children or for families. I don’t really know. It doesn’t seem to, you know, mean anything. It’s for other things. Not for the people, who get married.

Tamara: Ja, like maybe you get married because you are pregnant, or because your mom and dad think you should. Or because your church thinks you should. But, I guess it is also for love. If you love someone, you marry them. You will stay together, spend your lives together. (2) For the romance of it.

Brian: (3) Ja, but if, if you’re going to be together. Like you said, spend your life together. Then there is no reason to marry mos. Is there a reason? (4) I don’t know. (3) And it’s so expensive. It’s expensive. The ring, the party, the dress. All that. (2) Its like things. Those things aren’t love.

Tamara: Those things aren’t love. (2) They’re things.

Leland and Veronica

A blessed family

Chapter One: I would take my father's car
Leland: (laughs 3) I remember, I would take my father’s car out. Because I didn’t want anything to happen to her. Like the car was safer, to travel in. So I would take my father’s keys, and I’d roll the car out the garage so it wouldn’t make a noise. And I’d even have to roll it down the street a little way (laughs 3). And then I’d get in a drive to her place. And she would have to sneak out, and we’d go to the beach or something. Or if we had some money, maybe the movies. And then I’d have to do it all when I got back home again.

Veronica: Sjoe (laughs 3). We were bad children hey? If Paul or Sandra did that, yoh! We would be so angry (laughs 3).

Leland: Ja. It’s true. And my dad knew, I think. He would like mark the place on the floor, where he parked the car. So he knew, but he couldn’t say anything because he wasn’t sure, sure. Like he didn’t want to shout me, unless he was very, very sure. Ja, so then I had to get the car back, like back into that same place. Where had marked it. (laughs 3) So I never got caught.

Chapter two: We waited to get married
Leland: Ja, we’ve known each other. Twenty five, twenty six years. But we’ve been married eighteen since 1989.

Veronica: (2) We waited. After school, we were going to get married straight away. But Leland wanted to study and his parents and my parents, they told us we should wait.

Leland: But they said if I’m studying, I mustn’t be married, as a student. I must be more free, in my time. Free to spend my time studying or whatever. And we thought, you know how teenagers think: they can’t tell me what to do know, so we thought we can just get married.

Veronica: But my parents, they wouldn’t help us. If we got married right after school they said they wouldn’t pay for the wedding. And I was so angry I remember. But they said I must have a life also. Even if I don’t study, it is too soon to just get married to a boy from school. I must first meet other people, get a job, be independent for a while.

Leland: (2) And it makes sense what they all said. Anyway, so then we waited. It was four years. And we got married. (2) Then we were both much older, and our parents couldn’t say anything.

Chapter Three: Just a small place
Leland: It was just a small place. A small front yard. And bigger back yard. When we moved in there was nothing there, just grass. But I put in some trees and some flowers. But there wasn’t much not a lot of space. Enough for the kids to play in. And there was a family room. A main bedroom and room each for the kids. A small room. One for each of them. And only one bathroom. But that was ok. You know, when the children were young, so there weren’t like queues to get to the bathroom.

Veronica: (2) It was a small place. But it was nice you know. It was nice to have a place to live, that was bigger. And there was the yard for the kids, and the neighbourhood. You know it wasn’t so bad back then, but it wasn’t so safe. But the people were nice. I liked our neighbours. And there were some women from the church around there. And it was close to the church, so that was good. But the kitchen was too small, and it was a bit bigger than the flat. And this was our first house. We were so proud, and happy of it.

Leland: Yes. It was a big thing, that house. To get that house. It was good to have the space for the family. And it was like a milestone. Because we had the family, and we were married. So it was like another step, along that road. The house and the children.

Veronica: (2) The house was sort of like, for the children. So it was about us, getting better, bigger better things for the family. And we felt like everything was working out for us. I remember feeling very positive and strong.

Leland: Like and adult. I felt like an adult. My first house, my wife, my family, my children. Like I’d arrived somewhere.

Chapter four: We go to church on Sunday
Leland: (3) Well. We all go to church on Sunday. All of us, as a family. (2) And I enjoy that. Doing something, and being blessed in that way. All together. Veronica: So its, for us all, the church is important for us.

Leland: And at home also. We tried to get the children to learn the word of God, and to be Godly, to be good Christians.
Veronica: (2) And we had to teach by example. We had to try to be good Christians too. Help people out, do charitable works.
Leland: And it is our duty, as parents. To bring these children up in the word of God. It makes my heart feel good, to see my Ron and my Paul and my Sandra in the church. To be listening and learning, and being good Christians.

Chapter five: A usual day
Leland: (4) Well I wake up, and get dressed. Brush my teeth. Ron gets the breakfast ready. The cereals or toast and fruit.
Veronica: And I have to wake the kids up. (laughs 2). That’s always difficult. Leland: (laughs 2) We eat breakfast, and then I take the kids to school. And then I go to work: work, work, work.
Veronica: (2) So then I clear the breakfast things up. And then I just do the housework. Maybe do the washing. The clothes. Or ironing. (2) The floors. The bathrooms. (2) Just the usual housecleaning. And I have the Bible group. And some days, maybe once a month, they might need me, to help out. Or I have to go shopping. The children come home from school. So then I start thinking, what can I make for supper. Or maybe I will do the shopping or the ironing in the afternoon.
Leland: Um, then, maybe I come home. At about 6 o’clock.
Veronica: Then we have tea together, Leland and I. We sit in the kitchen. Or if the children don’t have friends, or if they’re not watching the TV.
Leland: (laughs 2) They are always watching the TV. They watch too much TV (laughs 2).
Veronica: So we sit and drink some tea. And Leland will tell me about his day. And I’ll tell him about my day. Or if, maybe we need to talk about the children’s school, their marks, or something they need. (2)
Leland: Ja, it’s a good time. It’s just a bit of quite for us both. And time together. We catch up, and we decide about things. Then we have supper. And we all talk, about whatever is happening to us, the family. (3)
Veronica: Then the children clean up. They clear the table. They do the dishes.
Leland: And we watch TV (laughs 2)
Veronica: (laughs 2) Ja.
Leland: We get to choose. (laughs) While the kids clean up after dinner, we choose what to watch. We have our things we like (laughs 2).
Veronica: And then the children do their home work. And we maybe read. Do Bible study homework. Whatever. Leland maybe has some work.
Leland: And then we go to bed. Quite early. Usually. (2)

Chapter six: A time we had to get through
Leland: Our lives have been very blessed. We’re healthy, our children are healthy. We have a home. I have a good job. We are very blessed. But it’s not always easy. Ag, I don’t know. I don’t know. It’s not easy, to have some one else you live your life with and that you have to answer to.
Veronica: Well. It was difficult, for us, when. Just before we moved to the house, that we were telling you about. (3) Hey?
Leland: (2) Ja. That was difficult, ja. The flat. There wasn’t much space there.
Veronica: Ja, it was having the two children. They were quite close, twenty months apart. (2) So we got it all over, the screaming, crying nappy part. Got it over pretty quickly, you know, without a break. But it was a lot of work.
Leland: (3)Ja, so it was more, being tired all the time. Not having so much money, because we were just starting out. So it was the situation. We weren’t angry, or like fighting, or upset with each other. Not really. Sometimes we would fight. But it would be because we were just so tired.
Veronica: But it was just a time, we had to get through.
Leland: Ja, they got older. (laughs 2)
Veronica: Ja, it just passed. That difficult time. I suppose.

Chapter seven: Tenth anniversary party
Leland: Ja, we just thought. Its not often you can have big party for yourselves. So we thought, we can do this, for ourselves, and each other. We must just, you know, have a good old jol. (2) We're still young, we still like a party. And it's a good time, just to celebrate, us, being together. Veronica: It was close people. (2) People who have seen us through the years. Leland: Ja, like we said, church people, friends, some family. (4) It was fun. Veronica: (2) We thought of it, as a gift to ourselves. Leland: Ja, we were kind of rewarding ourselves. For working hard. For doing good together. (2) And I think I have been very blessed in having Veronica in my life. And that party was about that happiness. And about the happiness we will still have. (2) God willing we will live another hundred years, together (laughs 2). And we will have more of that happiness. Just more and more. Veronica: We wanted to share the happiness as well. With those people, who were there for us. It's fine for us to love each other, and our children. (2) And we must be with people and show them how happy we are. I am also very lucky, very blessed, with Leland in my life. (2) But that's nothing if I just keep it to myself. Leland: Ja. (2) Its almost, a promise. To each other (3) Hey? That we will stay together, and be happy, and keep working to be together. Veronica: Ja. That's it.

Chapter eight: We've been so blessed
Leland: But I think. I mean, every one is different. Every couple, they decide for themselves, and they make the best of what they have. Veronica: I think we want things that are simple. (2) We want the things that the Lord has kept for us. Not so much worldly things. Leland: We don't want to have our love and our relationship only about the things we buy and the things we want. (2) Our relationship, our family is about what we can do together. How can we bring ourselves closer to God, and to what will make us happy without all the stuff. Veronica: Ja, and we have tried to teach the children. We try to tell them, that they can love whoever they want, as long as that person can help them and support them and grow with them. (2) In life and in God. And I don't think people think that. (2) They think. What can I get from this person? How does this person make me look? What do people think of this person? And that isn't really about either of the people. I mean its all about other people. What society thinks. Leland: You can't have a marriage like that. (2) It just won't work. It can't. (4) I think, because we work so much, with the church. Or family and or relationship rests in the hands of the Lord. And there are many couples, at our church, like that. So again, its not that we are so different from them. Veronica: But from most couples. (2) From a lot of couples. Like in the world. (laughs 2) Leland: And I just think. We've been so blessed. So lucky. Veronica: We really are.

Zureida and Saleem
A really important choice
Chapter One: A connection
Saleem: Our marriage was arranged, by our parents. (2) Because that is the way, marriage happens in our culture. (2) So we had met, but not many times. It was, four, five time, I think. Zureida: We just met, like to see if we liked each other. (2) Both our parents, they wanted to arrange our marriage, but they didn't want us to marry someone that we didn't like at all. So we met, some times, before it was official. Just to see if we liked each other. Saleem: It's the traditional way. But it's changing now, a bit. So some parents like to give their children some choice. Zureida: I met some other guys, before Saleem. I didn't feel like we connected really. But with Saleem I did feel that, a connection. It was that I could talk to him. He was easy to talk to. I felt like he and I had things in common that we made it easy for us just to, you know. Talk. Saleem: It wasn't. With some of the women I met. You know, it was awkward. You feel you don't know what to say. But with Zureida, we just talked, and it was comfortable. We laughed also. I thought that was important. That was good.
Zureida: Ja, his sense of humour. (4) Just, being comfortable.

Chapter two: It makes it easier
Zureida: Well, the parents will put the word out, to friends and family. You know, that they are looking for a husband for their daughter. Or a wife for their son. So like, with us, my parents, they went and visited our family, in India. And they found some men that they thought were suitable. (2) That came from good families, and had education, and were from the Hindu faith. And then they met with them, my mom and dad. (2) And I think they know me, quite well. And then they chose the ones, the ones they thought were best for me, and for them. (2) It’s not just about being in love, and those two people. It’s also about the families, and your faith.
Saleem: And you know, you can make a mistake. So many people today, they get divorced. My friends, my Western friends they think this is strange that they can make the choice for themselves. But if you think about it we’re twenty eight. (laughs 2) What do we know about marriage? We haven’t been married. (laughs) We’re too young. But our parents, they can help us. So then it just, it makes it easier to make that choice. And it has to be for the rest of your life, that you’re married. Like no one plans to get divorced (laughs 2). So it helps to make that really, you know, really important choice.
Zureida: It’s um, its exciting. And its, its also nerve wrecking, you know (laughs 2)
Saleem: (laughs 2)
Zureida: Because you know, you’re meeting some one, someone you might spend the rest of your life with. So you want to like them, and you want them to like you. But sometimes you don’t. You just don’t. Well, we first decided together, that we wanted to get married. That we thought we liked each other. And then we spoke, each of us spoke to our parents. (2) Then the parents, they get together again, and if everyone agrees, then you can get married. (2) And our parents, agreed. So then we could get married.
Saleem: For me, my family had been looking for me for two years. They started before I was ready to graduate. So that I could get married after I was qualified. Like then I could get a job, and um, support a family.
Zureida: It was, about the same for me. And they also timed it, my family for after I was qualified.

Chapter three: Getting to know each other
Saleem: We know each other better (laughs 2)
Zureida: Ja, (laughs 2). We’ve gotten to know each other really well. You know, living together, we’ve spent a lot of time together, and we know each other more, than we did.
Saleem: (2) There is still a lot, like a lot to learn I think. Hey? Like about each other. It’s still not such a long time.
Zureida: But I like, having Saleem with me. There is always someone who you can talk to. You know, I’m a person who likes, to have someone to share things with. I like to be around people. So it’s been really great, having Saleem with me, to talk to and to share things with. And obviously, you know...(2) we get into fights or we will fight. It’s more like misunderstandings, and then we try to explain, to each other. (2) So that we understand what happened, or what we meant. So then there isn’t any reason to be angry.
Saleem: Ja, its more like disagreements, misunderstandings. Not fighting so much. (2) Ja, it’s nice to be married (laughs 2). To have wife with me. Someone to talk to and say ah, like I had a really bad day. Or there was this funny thing. And to go to movies and do things with. (2) Even just going shopping. It’s fun, with Zureida because we have fun, we laugh. And we get to know each other, more and more by doing things together.

Chapter four: Some of them want a marriage arranged
Zureida: Some of my friends, the ones who aren’t used to arranged marriages they sometimes get all difficult. Like why are you doing this? It’s such a mistake. You don’t even know this man and you’re going to marry him. And that’s hard. Only because I have to keep explaining. I keep saying I am happy. I’m not being forced to do this. This is what I want to do, for my family and for myself. To me it’s right. (2) And some of them don’t believe it. They think I’ve been brainwashed (laughs 2) or something like that. (2) But there are some, some of my friends, who really get it. Like they wish they could have marriage arranged for them, I think (laughs 2).
Chapter five: The honeymoon
Saleem: It was so much, so busy, just before the wedding. And then we went away. It was just for a short time. But it was so peaceful, and nice to be away.
Zureida: (2) I don’t know, there was that. But I was also, like scared (laughs 2). I think, my friends, they put a lot of pressure on me. They made me scared, of the honeymoon. Well, the typical honeymoon thing, you know. It’s supposed to be like fireworks, and all special. And if it isn’t then maybe this is the wrong man for you. (laughs 2) They said that kind of thing. But actually it was lots of fun. It was nice to be alone with Saleem. (2) Like we said. We were usually with someone, or someone was close. Even if we had wanted to kiss or something. There was someone close. So we couldn’t. And actually, the honeymoon was very romantic. It was very special.
Saleem: (2) And we can’t tell you about all of it (laughs 3). I think that would be rude.
Zureida: (laughs 2) Ja I guess. It’s private. (laughs 2). Well, we had two weddings. One in South Africa. And because Saleem has so much family in India, we had one there as well. (3) Ja, so we were in India, and Saleem took me to Goa.
Saleem: Not all couples go on a honeymoon. It isn’t traditional, really. I wanted to do something special for her. For us. Because it was a special time, and because we hadn’t been together that much. (2) It was like our time. And then after, after that we could go back to our everyday lives.
Zureida: And it was really nice, to start our married life that way. I think. It was a good idea (laughs 2). It gave us time away from our everyday lives. And I mean, when we got back here, back to South Africa. There was a lot to do. I mean we both started working. Because we had our degrees. We were finished studying. (2) And Saleem’s parents had bought us a house as a wedding present. So we didn’t have to find a house, but we have had to get furniture, and decorate it. And Saleem always lived with his parents when he was studying.
Saleem: Ja, so I’ve had to learn how to do housework (laughs 2). And cook. (laughs 2).

Chapter six: I can do this
Zureida: We’re on the beach, in Goa. And we’re drinking one of the kulfi you get there. Just on the beach, from a vendor.
Saleem: It was really hot. Really, really hot. And we had been out all day. We went to a few shrines, and I think we went shopping. And I bought us each a kulfi. It’s this kind of fruit and dairy, and ice drink. (laughs 2) But Zureida really didn’t like hers.
Zureida: (laughs 2) I really didn’t. (laughs 2) They are not my favourite. But I tried. And I know now.
Saleem: Ja, we know now. (laughs 2). You gave it away right?
Zureida: Ja, you didn’t want two. So I gave it to beggar man, there on the beach. He liked it. (laughs 2).
Saleem: We have other [photographs], from the honeymoon. We have quite a few.
Zureida: But none from before that. Obviously (laughs).
Saleem: Ja, there really wasn’t any, like occasion. Before. (2) Also, in Hindi culture, you don’t really take photographs of a couple, until after they are married. You don’t take photographs of a couple unless you know it will last. And you only really know if they are married.
Zureida: Ja, that’s what I understood. We have other photos of the honeymoon, but only really this one of us together. The others, you know, one of us took the photo, the other was in the picture.
Saleem: (2) But also, I like the look on Zureida’s face (laughs 2). She’s trying to smile, but she really hated the taste of the kulfi. (laughs 2) It’s funny.
Zureida: Ja, he finds it funny (laughs 2). (2) Ja, I think, that was a really nice day. We felt, I mean I felt really happy, and comfortable. And I remember thinking. This is great. I really like being married.
Saleem: Ja, like I can do this. The rest of my life (laughs 2). This is great.
Zureida: (laughs 2)

Chapter seven: It’s natural
Saleem: It’s just natural.
Zureida: Ja, its kind of like a the thing, that you do. I’m not sure about genetically. I think humans just are that way. (2) Its unconscious. Eventually, you know, you just find yourself, wanting to be with someone. Like said, to care for and to share things with.

Saleem: Ja, and if you want to have children, then you have to have a partner (laughs 2). Maybe they don’t, I mean for some people, they don’t need to get married. But you do need someone, else, like if you’re a woman you need the man. And if you’re a man you need the woman. To have children.