

trasts these models, while placing them in the current sociopolitical landscape, and illustrating each movement with examples of literature supporting each.

Notes

1. Brace (1971), Graves (2001), and many others have looked at biological markers and social behaviors within groups and between groups. They determined that there is as much variation within groups as between them, making distinctive race groups a concept in mind only as opposed to biological reality.

2. Henriques, Fernando, *Children of Conflict: A Study of Interracial Sex and Marriage* (New York: E.F. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1974), 134.

3. Johnston, James Hugo, *Race Relations in Virginia and Miscegenation in the South, 1776-1860* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1970), vi.

4. Highlights from the Census 2000 Demographic Profiles. Retrieved on April 19, 2004, from <http://factfinder.census.gov/>.

5. Testimony given by various individuals and groups opposing the option to allow interracial people to choose more than one race is documented in House Committee on Government Reform. *Federal Measures of Race and Ethnicity and the Implications for the 2000 Census*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Information Service, Inc., April 23, May 22, July 25, 1997.

6. Connerly, the University of California regent who supported Proposition 209 (which took away the state's ability to use race as a consideration for public hiring, contracting, and university admissions), uses the growing multiracial population as proof of his point that collecting race data should be abolished.

6 Interracial Dating and Marriage

Alysse Jordan

With few notable exceptions, critical explorations of interracial romantic relationships have emerged predominantly from the social and behavioral sciences. From the social structuralist theories of sociologists such as Robert K. Merton to examinations of identity and interpersonal development by psychologists like Maria P.P. Root, the contributions of social science researchers to the body of literature has far surpassed that of other fields. This chapter is therefore intended to provide a review of the literature on the legal and social history of intermarriage in the United States by focusing on research in the areas of cultural anthropology, law and policy, psychology, sociology, and social work. Research that involves couples outside the United States has been excluded, as have biographical, fictional, and sensationalized accounts of interracial relationships.

The literature dealing with the topic of interracial dating and marriage can be divided into a few basic themes: incidence of and legislation surrounding interracial relationships; causal factors and implications of interracial relationships (e.g., social and psychological effects on children; the perceived role of romantic interracial relationships on the Black family and on the dating and marriage prospects of Black women); public opinion of interracial dating and marriage; and the need for a better understanding of the nature of interracial couples among mental health practitioners, clinicians, and society at large. Analysis of selected literature is divided into these four general categories.

Theories of Interracial Dating and Marriage

Perhaps because interracial relationships have confounded researchers and the general public throughout history, the largest body of literature on interracial dating and marriage in the United States is that which deals with the causal factors influencing individuals to become romantically involved with someone of another race. Drawing upon already existing theories from social psychology and social structuralism, this

area of research explores the rationale and implications behind endogamy (marriage between members of the same race, ethnicity, and/or class) and exogamy (marriage between members of different races, ethnicities, or classes), and either confirms or refutes outdated (and arguably, sexist and racist) theories of hypergamy (intermarriage into a higher social class) and hypogamy (intermarriage into a lower social class).

Aldridge, Delores P. "Interracial Marriages: Empirical and Theoretical Considerations." *Journal of Black Studies* 8, no. 3 (March 1978): 355-368.

Aldridge provides an overview of the literature on interracial romantic relationships prior to the 1980s, citing research on causal factors and individual characteristics. She suggests that while the research has concentrated on these areas, more research is needed on the impact of interracial marriage upon Black racial identity and a collective sense of Black consciousness.

Baber, Ray. "A Study of 325 Mixed Marriages." *American Sociological Review* 2 (October 1937): 705-716.

Though he addresses interfaith and interethnic marriages as well, Baber's study is a must-read for any scholar of interracial marriage. Using terms considered racist or otherwise offensive by today's standards (e.g., "yellow" describing Asian Americans, "Jewess" describing American Jewish women), this article provides contemporary research with an insight into public opinion and prevailing intellectual thought regarding interracial unions in the first half of twentieth-century America. Most likely representing the author's own preconceived notions about intermarried couples, the study found that on average, the happiness rating measurements for such couples was low and inferred that many couples did not feel that they should have children. The author further finds that the children of interracial marriages are "particularly handicapped, for they literally have no race, frequently being rejected by both the races from which they come." For Baber, the question of what would motivate a couple to choose to enter into a relationship so reviled by society is an important one, which he answers by citing case studies of couples who exemplify myths of Black sexual superiority held by the White partner, the perception of the prestige of "marrying up" for the Black partner married to a White spouse, and the myth of Asian Americans as being ideal marriage partners because they are more passive or subservient, when discussing Asian-White unions.

Blau, Peter M., Carolyn Becker, and Kevin M. Fitzpatrick. "Intersecting Social Affiliations and Intermarriage." *Social Forces* 62, no. 3 (Fall 1984): 585-606.

The authors, interested in the motivations of interracially married persons, seek to explain whether mate selection has more to do with racial preferences or opportunity structures (defined by exposure to and interactions with persons of different races, most often facilitated through residentially or occupationally integrated environments). Their findings show that social affiliations are the single most determining factor in influencing an individual's chances for and desirability of intermarriage.

Cerroni-Long, E. Liza. "Marrying Out: Socio-Cultural and Psychological Implications of Intermarriage." *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 25-46.

The author explores factors that influence individuals to outmarry, considering the assumed parameters of social expectations from the presumed and stereotypical to the normalized, and discusses challenges interracial couples face. Implications for maintaining individual identity are discussed.

Crowder, Kyle D., and Stewart E. Tolnay. "A New Marriage Squeeze for Black Women: The Role of Racial Intermarriage by Black Men." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 62 (August 2000): 792-807.

This article addresses one of the current controversies in interracial marriage: the impact of interracial marriage on the marriage opportunity structure for Black women. Research has shown that Black men of high educational attainment and socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to marry interracially than Black women of similar backgrounds, having a negative impact on the pool of eligible, heterosexual, and economically attractive marriage partners for Black women. Crowder and Tolnay show a strong correlation between the increasing levels of intermarried Black men and the decreasing rate of marriage among Black women, who are less likely to seek romantic relationships with men of other races.

Davidson, Jeanette R. "Theories about Black-White Interracial Marriage: A Clinical Perspective." *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development* 20, no. 4 (October 1992): 150-157.

Davidson discusses theories of what motivates individuals to marry outside their race. Several controversial theories abound, causing many in the mental health profession to assume that interracially married individuals have ulterior motives for their romantic involvement with someone of another race, including the desire to rebel against their families or to "marry up" by marrying a member

of a more prestigious racial/ethnic group or class. Davidson points out the need for practitioners to recognize their own biases when treating interracial couples, and provides suggestions for treating clients who are interracially married.

Fang, Carolyn Y., Jim Sidanius, and Felicia Pratto. "Romance Across the Social Status Continuum: Interracial Marriage and the Ideological Asymmetry Effect." *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 29, no. 2 (March 1998): 290-305.

This study shows a correlation between social dominance orientation (associated with racial and socioeconomical "high-status" identification and measured by variables such as educational level, income, and number of years living in the United States) and opposition to interracial marriage across groups. "High status" individuals (European Americans) were found to have a higher opposition to interracial marriage than "low status" individuals (Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, African Americans, and Native Americans).

Fu, Vincent Kang. "Racial Intermarriage Pairings." *Demography* 38, no. 2 (May 2001): 147-159.

Fu's study seeks to explore socioeconomic characteristics of intermarried couples. He finds some evidence consistent with status exchange theories supported by such researchers as Merton and Kalmijn.

Gurak, Douglas T., and Joseph P. Fitzpatrick. "Intermarriage among Hispanic Ethnic Groups in New York City." *American Journal of Sociology* 87, no. 4 (1982): 921-934.

Gurak and Fitzpatrick lay the groundwork for later research which shows a strong correlation between the level of cultural assimilation or acculturation experienced particularly by Asian and Hispanic ethnic groups and their rate of intermarriage. Using data from New York City marriage records in 1975, the authors compare out-group marriage rates among Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, South Americans, and Central Americans, and Cubans. Not surprisingly, Puerto Ricans, the largest Hispanic ethnic group in New York City at the time of the study, had the lowest rates of intermarriage. This seems to confirm Blau's theory of composition, where group size is inversely related to a particular group's rate of intermarriage.

Hwang, Sean-Shong, Rogelio Saenz, and Benigno E. Aguirre. "The SES Selectivity of Interracially Married Asians." *International Migration Review* 29, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 469-491.

Focusing on intermarried Asian Americans, the authors seek to re-examine previous studies of interracial marriage which were based on theories of exchange and assimilation. Hwang, Saenz, and Aguirre pick up where previous research left off and examine gender differences within these frameworks. They found a tendency for Asian American women of lower educational levels and class status to intermarry more frequently with someone from a higher class status, whereas the inverse was found to be true for Asian American men.

—. "Structural and Assimilationist Explanations of Asian American Intermarriage." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 59, no. 3 (August 1997): 758-772.

The authors discuss the occurrence of Asian American intermarriage within the context of overall status attainment among this population. They found evidence to generally support the previously held assumption that there is a strong correlation between the degree of interracial marriage among Asian American groups and the level at which they have assimilated into mainstream American society.

Kitano, Harry H.L., Diane C. Fujino, and Jane Takahashi Sato. "Interracial Marriage." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 46, no. 1 (February 1984): 179-190.

Drawing upon marriage data on Asian American ethnic groups in Los Angeles, the authors compare the rates of outmarriage for Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Korean, and Vietnamese individuals in that region. Their findings support previous studies of Asian American intermarriage, showing a strong correlation between the degree of overall acculturation of a particular ethnic group and that group's rate of outmarriage. It is not surprising, therefore, that Japanese Americans, primarily third-generation, possess the highest rate of intermarriage, while Korean Americans, with relatively less exposure to American culture, account for the lowest rate of intermarriage among Asian ethnic groups.

Lewis, Richard, Jr., George Yancey, and Siri S. Bletzer. "Racial and Nonracial Factors That Influence Spouse Choice in Black/White Marriages." *Journal of Black Studies* 28, no. 1 (September 1997): 60-78.

Negating the popularly held "jungle fever" myth regarding the motivations of interracial romantic partners, the authors find that non-racial factors are more important than racial factors in Black-White

marriage. Among the most important deciding factors for Black-White couples were common interests and personal attractiveness, proving that the motivations of interracial couples are no different from those of racially similar couples when it comes to mate selection.

Little, George. "Analytic Reflections on Mixed Marriages." *Psychoanalytic Review* 29, no. 113 (January 1942): 20-25.

Little's analysis of interracial marriages between Blacks and Whites is troubling for the modern day reader, though quite illustrative of the thinking of psychoanalysts in the early part of the twentieth century. Acknowledging that interracial marriage is only of consequence in geographic areas where White supremacist attitudes and ideologies prevail, Little focuses on the nature of intermarriage between Blacks and Whites in the United States. In doing so, he relies upon racist characterizations of men and women, both Black and White, who engage in intimate relations with members of another race. He dismisses the validity of interracial marriages by suggesting that the marriage partners are only motivated by sexual desire for the exotic "other."

Merton, Robert K. "Intermarriage and the Social Structure: Fact and Theory." *Psychiatry* 4, no. 3 (August 1941): 361-374.

Merton asserts that Blacks and Whites are at opposite ends of the racial status continuum. He applies the theory of hypogamy to discuss romantic relations between these two groups. This theory holds that as Blacks occupy a lower status in American society, in order to be perceived as attractive marriage partners to Whites, they must possess another outstanding quality such as a high level of physical attractiveness, income, or educational attainment. Conversely, this theory assumes that Blacks are willing to accept a less wealthy or physically attractive White partner in order to benefit from the status associated with being involved with someone from a higher social class. Most contemporary research negates Merton's theories, finding that, in fact, the majority of interracially married couples come from similar socioeconomic and educational backgrounds.

Porterfield, Ernest. "Black-American Intermarriage in the United States." *Marriage and Family Review* 5, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 17-34.

Porterfield explores demographic trends in outmarriage among African Americans. He ultimately argues in support of Merton's theory of hypogamy and related theories that attempt to dismiss interracial marriage as being motivated by the desire to "marry up," or by lack of suitable same-race marriage partners.

Qian, Zhenchao. "Breaking the Racial Barriers: Variations in Interracial Marriage Between 1980 and 1990." *Demography* 34, no. 2 (May 1997): 263-276.

Qian's findings support the findings of other studies showing a strong correlation between educational attainment and interracial marriage. Using census data from 1980 and 1990, this study finds that Asian Americans are more likely to intermarry with Whites, followed by Hispanic Americans/Latinos, with African Americans being the least likely to marry a White partner. While most individuals in interracial couples were found to have comparable levels of educational attainment as their partners, those who did not were married to a spouse of a "higher status" racial group.

———. "Who Intermarries? Education, Nativity, Region, and Interracial Marriage, 1980 and 1990." *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 30, no. 4 (Autumn 1999): 579-597.

Qian's study supports Blau's theory of composition, which holds that the prevalence of interracial marriage across racial groups differs by region and is dependent upon the racial distribution within a particular region.¹ Thus, the smaller the group size, the higher the prevalence of intermarriage, due to a decrease in opportunities for meeting partners of the same race. Qian's research validates contemporary theories of social and opportunity structure and negates Merton's theory of hypogamy as related to mate selection.

South, Scott J., and Steven F. Messner. "Structural Determinants of Intergroup Association: Interracial Marriage and Crime." *American Journal of Sociology* 91, no. 6 (May 1986): 1409-1430.

South and Messner use Blau's theory of social structure to derive and test their hypothesis that there is a strong correlation between the two seemingly non-related occurrences of interracial marriage and interracial crime. The authors find a positive correlation between the rate of interracial marriage, the degree of socioeconomic parity among the races, and the rate of interracial crime (i.e., crimes wherein the victim and perpetrator are of different races). These factors are strongly related to the degree of residential segregation, concluding that socioeconomic disparities between Whites and people of color breeds distrust, resentment, and negative associations, whereas positive interracial associations increase when there is less of a socioeconomic gap between races.

Spickard, Paul R. *Mixed Blood: Intermarriage and Ethnic Identity in Twentieth-Century America*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989.

Focusing on the marriage patterns among African American, Japanese, and Jewish communities, Spickard confirms that individuals

are more likely to intermarry in geographic areas where there are fewer opportunities for members of ethnic and racial minority groups to interact socially with people of similar backgrounds. Spickard is therefore critical of Merton's hypogamy theory, arguing that intermarriage occurs most often among middle and upper class individuals of similar socioeconomic status. He also speaks to gender and generational influences, suggesting that with the exception of African Americans, whose rate of intermarriage has traditionally been lower than that of Japanese Americans and American Jews, acceptance of intermarriage is growing with each new generation.

Yancey, George. "Who Interracially Dates: An Examination of the Characteristics of Those Who Have Interracially Dated." *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 33, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 179-190.

Yancey, who has written extensively on interracial relationships, reexamines the topic, discussing the level of interracial romantic relationships as a measure of the state of race relations in American society. Contemporary singles, argues Yancey, have more opportunities to come into contact with potential dating partners of other races due to increasingly integrated workplaces, neighborhoods, schools, and social environments. In exploring whether a greater degree of interracial social contact has caused people to take a more positive view of interracial dating and marriage, he concludes that European Americans (Whites) are the least likely to date interracially, and that men of all races are more likely to date interracially than women. A strong correlation between integrated schools and interracial dating is also discussed.

Yancey, George A., and Sherelyn W. Yancey. "Black-White Differences in the Use of Personal Advertisements for Individuals Seeking Interracial Relationships." *Journal of Black Studies* 27, no. 5 (May 1997): 650-667.

Using a sample of 439 individuals obtained from *Interrace* magazine's personal ads, the authors discuss characteristics individuals interested in interracial relationships seek in a potential dating partner. Using the frameworks of Robert K. Merton's theory of hypogamy and P.M. Blau's social exchange theory, the authors hypothesize that Whites would be less likely to describe their positive assets and more likely to seek a partner with expressed physical or socioeconomic assets (income, job status, or educational attainment) and that Blacks would be more likely to articulate such assets in order to compensate for their perceived lower social status. The results proved that, to the contrary, Merton's theory of hypogamy cannot be applied to those seeking interracial relation-

ships and that the motivations for individuals to seek out such relationships are complex and do not differ that dramatically from those seeking out relationships with members of the same race.

History and Prevalence of Interracial Relationships

W.E.B. DuBois predicted one hundred years ago that the most salient issue in the twentieth century would be the "problem of the color-line." Indeed, it was not until well after the 1967 *Loving v. Virginia* decision overturning the ban on interracial marriages that interracial marriage became legal in every state in the nation (Alabama was the last state to overturn its ban on interracial marriage in the year 2000 despite the fact that 40 percent of its electorate supported the ban). With the U.S. Supreme Court ruling anti-miscegenation laws unconstitutional came an interracial baby boom and a threefold increase in the proportion of interethnic and interracial marriages in the United States,² not surprisingly coinciding with the Civil Rights movement. The following resources provide historical and statistical overviews of interracial relationships throughout American history.

Annella, Sister M. "Some Aspects of Interracial Marriage in Washington, D.C." *Journal of Negro Education* 25, no. 4 (Autumn 1956): 380-391.

Annella examines trends in interracial marriage in Washington, D.C. from 1940 to 1947, using data collected from the D.C. Marriage License Bureau. Upon contacting many of the interracially married individuals listed in the records for the corresponding years, Annella was granted personal interviews, during which she found that the majority of couples were happily married and experienced a very low rate of divorce. Annella's study also provides useful background data and case studies on interracial marriage prior to *Loving v. Virginia*.

Heer, David M. "The Prevalence of Black-White Marriage in the United States, 1960 and 1970." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 36, no. 2 (May 1974): 246-258.

Heer uses data from the 1960 and 1970 decennial censuses of the United States to analyze patterns in marriage between Blacks and Whites, finding a significant increase during this decade, the height of the Civil Rights era. Interestingly, this decade brought an increase in interracial marriages in the regions of the North and the West, yet a decline in the South. As contemporary trends in inter-

racial marriage also reflect, there were more Black men married to White women than Black women married to White men. An important finding of Heer's research is that it does not support Merton's theory of hypogamy, which held that Blacks and Whites are only motivated to marry interracially when there is a financial advantage, perception of status, or other benefit involved.

Hodes, Martha. *White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex in the Nineteenth-Century South*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997.

Relying primarily upon legal documents and testimonies, Martha Hodes provides an adept re-examination of the origins of the "rape myth" concerning sexual relations between Black men and White women. In doing so, she suggests that interracial relationships in the South were often tolerated and rarely met with violent opposition prior to the Civil War. It was the Civil War, she argues, that served as the primary catalyst for the sexual stereotyping and lynching of Black men by White southerners, and which helped to shape the social and political order of the post-Reconstruction South.

Kalmijn, Matthijs. "Trends in Black/White Intermarriage." *Social Forces* 72, no. 1 (September 1993): 119-146.

Kalmijn's is among the many studies that re-examined interracial marriage as an indicator of race relations in the early 1990s, after a period where little attention was paid to the topic. Analyzing data drawn from marriage licenses in thirty-three states from 1968 to 1986 (when race data was still collected in these states), Kalmijn found an unsurprising increase in the number of Black/White interracial marriages once the ban on interracial marriage was overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1967. The study also seems to confirm Merton's controversial theory of hypogamy, finding a significant trend in intermarriage between a member of a "high status" racial group (White) and a "low status" racial group (Black) when the Black partner is of a higher socioeconomic status.

Kennedy, Randall. *Interracial Intimacies: Sex, Marriage, Identity, and Adoption*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2003.

The follow-up to his controversial book, *Nigger*, Kennedy's *Interracial Intimacies* provides a sophisticated critique of American culture through the lens of interracial romantic relationships. Tracing the history of such relationships through an exploration of case law and popular culture mythologies, Kennedy argues that despite the stereotypes and heated social debates surrounding interracial dating and marriage, the fact that the rate of intermarriage continues to grow is a positive outgrowth of our increasingly multicultural society.

Kitano, Harry H.L., Wai-Tsang Yeung, Lynn Chai, and Herbert Hatanaka. "Asian-American Interracial Marriage." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 46, no. 1 (February 1984): 179-190.

The authors provide a historical overview of the patterns of intermarriage among various Asian American ethnic groups, concentrating on Korean Americans, Chinese Americans, and Japanese Americans in Hawaii and Los Angeles. Though they found that the ethnic group with the highest proportion of intermarried individuals has shifted through time, the fact that Asian American women tend to intermarry at a higher rate than that of their male counterparts has remained consistent. Factors influencing the rate of intermarriage among Asian Americans include historical factors (i.e., how long a particular ethnic group has been in the United States and under what circumstances), cultural factors (i.e., the level of perceived acculturation of a particular ethnic group), and the receptivity of the dominant group (i.e., how favorably a particular group is viewed).

Liang, Zai, and Naomi Ito. "Intermarriage of Asian Americans in the New York City Region: Contemporary Patterns and Future Prospects." *International Migration Review* 33, no. 4. (Winter 1999): 876-900.

Data from the 1990 Census is used to examine the prevalence of interracial marriage among Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, Korean Americans, Filipino Americans, and Indian Americans. Though focused on New York City, this is among the broadest studies of intermarriage among Asian Americans due to its comparative nature, acknowledging that intermarriage patterns vary significantly between Asian ethnic groups. The authors do find some commonalities across ethnicities, however. Not surprisingly, U.S.-born Asians of all ethnicities tend to marry interracially at a higher rate than the foreign-born and immigrant populations, and intermarriage is more prevalent among Asian American women than their male counterparts. It is also important to note that Zai and Ito's findings negate Merton's theory of hypogamy, showing that similar socioeconomic and educational backgrounds are a stronger correlate of interracial marriage.

Model, Suzanne, and Gene Fisher. "Black-White Unions: West Indians and African Americans Compared." *Demography* 38, no. 2 (May 2001): 177-185.

Although other studies have explored ethnic differences in interracial marriage among Hispanic and Asian Americans, few studies have explored ethnic differences in Blacks. Model and Fisher use 1990 Census data to compare the prevalence of intermarriage with

Whites among African Americans and Caribbean Americans of British West Indian descent. Interestingly, though studies of Hispanic and Asian Americans have shown substantial differences in the rates of interracial marriage between ethnic groups, this study shows no significant differences between West Indians and African Americans, though there is some evidence presented for gender-based variations.

Monahan, Thomas P. "An Overview of Statistics on Interracial Marriage in the United States, with Data on Its Extent from 1963-1970." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 38, no. 2 (May 1976): 223-231.

Monahan's analysis of marriage records for the period from 1963 to 1970 shows that the proportion of intermarried males to females varies by state and by race/ethnicity. He finds that states in the North and West have the highest proportion of interracial marriages, and marriages between Blacks and Whites are the most frequently occurring.

Moran, Rachel F. *Interracial Intimacy: The Regulation of Race and Romance*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.

Focusing on the notion that racial identity and perceptions of interracial relationships shape one another, Moran provides an overview of two distinct eras in the history of anti-miscegenation legislation in the United States: before and after *Loving v. Virginia*. Arguing that legal and social sanctions on interracial relationships have served to reinforce racial stereotypes and hierarchies over time, Moran sees social problems such as residential and occupational segregation as having a residual impact on the rate of intermarriage in the United States. Herself the daughter of a Mexican mother and Irish father, Moran's historical analysis seems motivated by her own agenda at times. To her credit, however, she provides a broader discussion of race-based legislation than do previous works on the topic. She addresses the rationale behind the disparate treatment of Native Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, and African Americans throughout history with regard to marriage law.

Rosenblatt, Paul C., Terri A. Karis, and Richard Powell. *Multiracial Couples: Black and White Voices*. Walnut Creek, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1995.

The authors, two of whom are themselves an interracial couple, use narratives from interviews with twenty-one Midwestern couples to explore the impact of race and racism upon interracially married individuals and their relationships. Though strictly qualitative in nature, and therefore not especially interested in critical analysis of

the couples' responses or looking at the experiences within any particular theoretical framework, this work is enlightening nonetheless. Unlike more scholarly works that address the nature of interracial romance within the context of external forces that affect the relationship as an entity, this study indeed gives voice to the individuals, allowing them to explore how their involvement in an interracial relationship affects their own racial identities.

Sollors, Werner, ed. *Interracialism: Black-White Intermarriage in American History, Literature, and Law*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

A professor of English Literature and American History at Harvard University, Sollors places the American legal and cultural history of interracial romantic relationships into the larger context of American social progress over time. This volume of critical essays provides a historical overview of real-life and literary portrayals of intermarriage between African Americans and Whites in the United States, arguing that the legislation and taboo surrounding these unions is strictly an American phenomenon.

Suro, Roberto. "Mixed Doubles." *American Demographics* 21, no. 11 (November 1999): 57-62.

Suro discusses new trends among interracially married couples. In contrast to previous studies, current census data shows that interracial couples are increasingly young, well educated, and upwardly mobile. The author attributes this shift to an overall shift in ideas about marriage in the general population, where nontraditional families, relationships, and lifestyles are just as commonplace as the nuclear family household was in the 1950s.

Tucker, M. Belinda, and Claudia Mitchell-Kernan. "New Trends in Black American Interracial Marriage: The Social Structural Context." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 52, no. 1 (February 1990): 209-218.

Acknowledging that national statistics on intermarriage can be misleading, this study finds significant regional differences in the rates of interracial marriage, and examines the underlying structural correlates of outmarriage, specifically among African-Americans. While this study agrees with previous studies which have found that Black men intermarry at a higher rate than Black women, the authors find that demographic factors associated with intermarriage among Blacks, such as education, income, and occupation, are equal for both genders.

Wallenstein, Peter. *Tell the Court I Love My Wife: Race, Marriage, and Law. An American History*. New York: Palgrave, 2002.

Quite possibly the best history of interracial marriage in the United States to date, Wallenstein's book adeptly explores the intersections of sex and race in American case law. Rather than provide the reader with another look at *Loving v. Virginia*, he uses the Loving case as a foundation for exploring shifting attitudes and public opinion about race and intimacy in a segregated society. Appealing to academics and general readers alike, Wallenstein delivers a work that is well researched and as impassioned and moving as its title.

Racial Attitudes and Public Opinion

White authors often explored issues pertaining to Black/White unions, almost completely to the exclusion of other interracial and interethnic pairings in order to address the nature of what was thought of as the societal problem of miscegenation. For this reason, much of the early literature focused on unions between individuals of African and European descent, and discussed such relationships mostly in a negative context, in terms that have come to be identified as racist or White supremacist, such as "miscegenation" and "race mixing." Later research still focused on interactions between these two groups, reasoning that persons of African descent and European descent still represent polar opposites along the race continuum as well as within the social hierarchy in the minds of most Americans. Indeed, according to Ernest Porterfield, "No other mixture touches off such widespread condemnation as Black/White mixing."³ The following resources discuss attitudes toward interracial relationships from both in-group and out-group perspectives.

Fears, Darryl, and Claudia Deane. "Biracial Couples Report Tolerance." *Washington Post*, July 5, 2001.

The findings of a national survey on interracial marriage and dating sponsored by the *Washington Post*, the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, and Harvard University are discussed. Participants in the survey were 540 adults married to or living with someone of another race. Included also are results from a companion survey of racial attitudes from interviews with 1,709 randomly selected adults. Overall, the former survey finds that approval of interracial marriages is increasing, with disapproval the highest in White communities. Two-thirds of couples in Black-White partnerships

reported that a set of parents initially objected, and a half of Black-White couples reported that interracial union "makes marriage harder." The survey of racial attitudes found that acceptance of interracial marriages is more likely to be found in Black families than White families.

Gaines, Stanley O., Jr., and William Ickes. "Perspectives on Interracial Relationships." In *Handbook of Personal Relationships: Theory, Research, and Interventions*, edited by Steve Duck. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1997.

The focus of this chapter is an important addition to the body of literature on interpersonal relationships. Gaines and Ickes examine the distinction between in-group and out-group perceptions of race and racism with regard to interracial relationships, finding that while those involved in interracial relationships view their differences as primarily cultural, from the outside, others are quick to define their differences as color or race-based.

Garcia, Stella D., and Semilla M. Rivera. "Perceptions of Hispanic and African-American Couples at the Friendship or Engagement State of a Relationship." *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 16, no. 1 (1999): 65-86.

Garcia and Rivera's study speaks to the complexities surrounding perceptions and public opinion about interracial couples. Comparing perceptions of romantically involved interracial couples and interracial couples who are friends, the researchers found that perceptions varied between men and women and were based on the perceived level of intimacy between the couple, with romantically involved couples being perceived more negatively than interracial pairs of friends.

Johnson, Walton R., and Dennis M. Warren. *Inside the Mixed Marriage: Accounts of Changing Attitudes, Patterns, and Perceptions of Cross-Cultural and Interracial Marriages*. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1994.

The authors present the personal accounts of interracially married couples from a broad range of socioeconomic backgrounds. The couples surveyed, primarily consisting of a Black partner and a White partner, discuss the challenges they confronted prior to getting married, as well as the external forces that continue to shape their relationship as a married couple. Johnson and Warren are careful in their presentation of the narratives to make a clear distinction between how interracial couples view themselves, and how those outside their relationship view them.

McNamara, Robert P., Maria Tempenis, and Beth Walton. *Crossing the Line: Interracial Couples in the South*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1999.

Much like *Multiracial Couples* (Rosenblatt, et al.), *Crossing the Line* derives its qualitative analysis from interviews with a small group of Black/White interracial couples. Though the couples in this study candidly express similar experiences with racism and hostility as do those in Rosenblatt's study, McNamara, Tempenis, and Walton attempt to highlight the geographic differences in attitudes toward interracial relationships by focusing on interracially married couples in the South. Interestingly, the authors specifically choose to conduct interviews in South Carolina, one of two states that continued to prohibit interracial marriage well after the *Loving v. Virginia* decision. Not surprisingly, the authors discover that these couples face more overt opposition than do their northern counterparts, and are more likely to be employed by the military and turn to religion as a coping mechanism.

Mills, Jon K., Jennifer Daly, Amy Longmore, and Gina Kilbride. "A Note on Family Acceptance Involving Interracial Friendships and Romantic Relationships." *Journal of Psychology* 129, no. 3 (May 1995): 349.

Based on responses to their Assessment Scale of Interracial Relationships from a mixed group of 142 undergraduate students at a small Midwestern university, the authors found that there was no significant gender or racial difference in the overall perception of interracial relationships. The results showed that men and women, as well as Blacks and Whites, held equally negative views toward interracial relationships and indicated that their families would not support their involvement in such relationships. These findings conflict with other studies that have found interracial marriage approval ratings were higher among White females. The small sample size, median age of respondents, and the racially homogenous environment in which this study took place may provide an explanation for the attitudes of the respondents.

Root, Maria P.P. *Love's Revolution: Interracial Marriage*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001.

Root discusses the attitudes of the post-Civil Rights generation toward interracial marriage. She examines this group, which holds the highest approval rating for interracial marriage, and how this newfound tolerance still conflicts with the ideas of many American families who don't share in their desire to welcome an individual of another race into their inner circle. Perhaps the most striking distinction between Root's work and other similar explorations of

interracial marriage is that Root includes heterosexual as well as same-sex couples in her discussions.

Snowden, Lonnie R., and Alice M. Hines. "A Scale to Assess African American Acculturation." *Journal of Black Psychology* 25, no. 1 (February 1999): 36-47.

Though not specifically focused on the topic of interracial marriage, this study finds that the desirability of interracial marriage and positive attitudes toward such unions are among the most reliable measures used to assess the level of acculturation among Blacks.

St. Jean, Yanick. "Let People Speak for Themselves: Interracial Unions and the General Social Survey." *Journal of Black Studies* 28, no. 3 (January 1998): 398-414.

St. Jean asserts that previous findings regarding attitudes toward intermarriage (which relied upon data from the General Social Survey) are problematic due to the limited nature of the survey, which only asks two questions addressing the topic. St. Jean proposes, therefore, that the focus group approach is a more appropriate method of collecting information on such a complex issue. Focus groups allow people to describe their attitudes in their own words, rather than answering simple yes or no questions written in the language of the researcher.

Zebroski, Sheryline A. "Black-White Intermarriages: The Racial and Gender Dynamics of Support and Opposition." *Journal of Black Studies* 30, no. 1 (September 1999): 123-132.

Whereas public opinion of racially mixed couples was mostly negative in the pre-Civil Rights period due to ideas of White racial superiority and the negative effects of miscegenation with Blacks, contemporary ideas about such unions differ by race and gender and the combination of these two characteristics. Current negative perceptions of interracial couples often have less to do with the notion of a racial hierarchy and more to do with perceptions of what someone else's interracial marriage means for others' chances for dating and marriage. Zebroski finds that support for interracial marriage differed not as much by race as by gender, with White women being the most tolerant and White men being the least tolerant. Not surprisingly, she also found that individuals who were interracially married felt the most opposition from persons of the same race and opposite gender as themselves.

Psychology and Interpersonal Development

Given that interracial relationships were not assumed to be "natural," before the civil rights era, the early research often centered on questioning the motivations of individuals in such relationships. Researchers often hypothesized that the primary reasons a person would have for making what was then thought of as a poor social decision, often with legal and even deadly consequences, included mental illness, lack of identification with one's own ethnic group, a desire to rebel against one's family or society, a strong curiosity or desire to engage in taboo, and other negative personal attributes. While it is impossible to deny that some interracially paired persons do, in fact, match one or more of these descriptions, current research finds that Americans who are interracially married or partnered are healthy, productive individuals, who possess strong senses of individual ethnic and racial identities. The following resources represent a growing body of literature that recognizes the normalcy of interracial relationships and seeks to provide tools for understanding the strengths and challenges involved with interracial intimacy.

Biever, Joan L., Monte Bobele, and Mary Wales-North. "Therapy with Intercultural Couples: A Postmodern Approach." *Counseling Psychology Quarterly* 11, no. 2 (June 1998): 181-188.

The authors discuss the impact of cultural differences and societal disapproval on the stability of interracial marriages, acknowledging that external pressures and opinions often compound already existing marital difficulties. Although much has been written by social and behavioral scientists about counseling and therapy with multicultural clients (i.e., clients whose race and/or ethnicity differs from that of the therapist), the authors observe that little attention has been given specifically to therapeutic interventions with interracial couples, adding to the lack of understanding and mechanisms for treating such couples. This particularly challenging issue is discussed within a framework of postmodernist ideas such as social constructionism, which, according to the authors, "suggests that what we know as reality is constructed through interactions with others."

Brown, John A. "Casework Contacts with Black-White Couples." *Social Casework* 68, no. 1 (January 1987): 24-29.

The author acknowledges the multidimensional nature of interpersonal conflict in interracial relationships. He provides techniques for identifying racist attitudes as well as a model for addressing race as one issue, but not the primary issue of dealing with interracial couples in therapy.

Chan, Anna Y., and Elaine Wethington. "Factors Promoting Marital Resilience among Interracial Couples." In *Resiliency in Native American and Immigrant Families*, edited by Hamilton McCubbin, Elizabeth A. Thompson, et al. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1998.

Chan and Wethington are critical of previous studies that have explored treatment of interracial and intercultural couples in therapy from strictly a conflict-based model. Those previous studies discussed interracial marriage primarily as a stressor. Chan and Wethington suggest a more appropriate model, focusing on marital resiliency by taking a strengths-based approach. The authors cite the most common conflicts between interracial marriage partners including family opposition and differing cultural expectations regarding gender roles. They also find that in order to combat these stressors, resilient couples must have strong social support networks and live in communities where their relationship is accepted.

Foeman, Anita Kathy. "From Miscegenation to Multiculturalism: Perceptions and Stages of Interracial Relationship Development." *Journal of Black Studies* 29, no. 4 (March 1999): 540-557.

Foeman seeks to discover the ways in which interracial couples communicate and negotiate their social and interpersonal interactions, assuming that romantic interactions come more easily for intraracial couples who are already familiar with each other's cultural norms and communication strategies. Foeman provides an overview of the history of interracial relationships in the United States as well as the myths surrounding them. She then outlines a theory of the stages of development for Black/White couples, including racial awareness, coping with social definitions of race, identity emergence, and maintenance stages.

Gaines, Stanley O., Jr. "Communalism and the Reciprocity of Affection and Respect among Interethnic Married Couples." *Journal of Black Studies* 27, no. 3 (January 1997): 352-364.

Criticizing Black psychologists who have refused to see the validity and importance of research on interracial couples, Gaines seeks to explore the relationship processes of intermarried couples in order to fill what he sees as a gap in the literature. He discusses various models of interpersonal resource exchange.

Gaines, Stanley O., Jr., Cherlyn S. Granrose, Diana I. Rios, et al. "Patterns of Attachment and Responses to Accommodative Dilemmas among Interethnic/Interracial Couples." *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 16, no. 2 (April 1999): 275-285.

This study highlights positive and healthy interactions between interracially romantically involved individuals. The majority of the

participants in the study, which included 103 couples, demonstrated that they were "securely attached" versus "insecurely attached." The study proves the researchers' hypothesis that interracial couples are capable of emotional commitment and intimacy, as opposed to having a purely physical or sexual interest in pursuing a relationship with someone of another race or ethnicity.

Hill, Miriam R., and Volker Thomas. "Strategies for Racial Identity Development: Narratives of Black and White Women in Interracial Partner Relationships." *Family Relations* 49, no. 2 (April 2000): 193-200.

Employing the racial identity development theories of social constructionism and feminism, Hill and Thomas explore women's racial identities within the context of interracial relationships. The authors also discuss coping strategies and defense mechanisms that Black and White women employ to set appropriate boundaries against the racism that is often directed at them due to their relationship status with a partner of another race. The authors also engage in an interesting discussion about their methodology. They employ methodology that argues for the validity of researchers in this area to disclose bias and personal experience with their topic in order to make readers aware of their "in-group" status and therefore gain credibility.

Ho, Man Keung. *Intermarried Couples in Therapy*. Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1990.

Filling a void in the psychotherapy research on couples and marital conflict, Ho lays forth a framework for couples' therapy with racially and culturally different spouses. Ho suggests that intermarried couples have more external stressors to their marriage and are more sensitive to the ethnic background of the therapist than most monoracial couples are. Ho further suggests that the practitioner must therefore possess an additional skill set for helping these couples to address the impact of race, racism, and culture upon their relationships.

Killian, Kyle D. "Reconstituting Racial Histories and Identities: The Narratives of Interracial Couples." *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* 27, no. 1 (January 2001): 27-42.

Killian's findings from separate and joint interviews with ten Black/White interracially married couples show that Blacks in interracial marriages tend to be more acutely aware of society's negative perceptions of such relationships than their White partners due to their individual experience of racism. Killian discusses the ways in which interracial couples identify as individuals and as

couples within the construct of race, as well as effective therapeutic interventions with interracial couples.

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