BETWEEN TWO CULTURES: EXPLORING THE VOICES
OF FIRST AND SECOND GENERATION SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN

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Between Two Cultures: Exploring the Voices of

First and Second Generation South Asian Women

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Women of South Asian origins were interviewed in an exploration of their values and beliefs regarding family and gender roles, and acculturation experiences. The participants were 25 first generation and 26 second generation women, representative of the South Asian diaspora in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. Grounded explicitly in feminist and hermeneutic theories, the methodology of this research consists primarily of an interpretive reading of transcribed interview narratives. In addition to thematic content, five narrative voices emerged as the women described and reflected upon their values and experiences. Moving beyond the dichotomy of "traditional" versus "modern" with respect to gender roles and acculturation, this interpretive method allowed for the multiplicity of women’s voices and for the complexity of their subjectivity.

Findings were primarily qualitative; however, some quantitative results were obtained. High inter-rater reliability was established between interpreters. Quantitative comparisons between the first and second generations suggested a statistically significant difference in the pattern of voices, and of thematic content associated with the voices (e.g., arranged marriage, spousal roles,
dating, authority to parents, parenting practices). Of the numerous themes that emerged in the women’s narratives, themes important to both generations include family honour (izzat), daughter as something held in trust (amanat), education, interracial relationships, and the conflict between family and independence. The impact of racism and internalized racism on ethnic identity formation was particularly important for the second generation. Meta-themes that predominated a woman’s story (e.g., severe intergenerational conflict) and themes of particular concern for each generation also emerged in the narrative texts. The social context within which South Asian women live in Canada and the clinical implications of these findings are considered.
I am comparing gravity with belonging. Both phenomena observably exist: my feet stay on the ground, and I have never been angrier than I was on the day my father told me he had sold my childhood home in Bombay. But neither is understood. We know the force of gravity, but not its origins; and to explain why we become attached to our birthplaces we pretend that we are trees and speak of roots. Look under your feet. You will not find gnarled growths sprouting through the soles. Roots, I sometimes think, are a conservative myth, designed to keep us in our places.

The anti-myths of gravity and of belonging bear the same name: flight. Migration, n., moving, for instance in flight, from one place to another. To fly and to flee: both are ways of seeking freedom ... an odd thing about gravity, incidentally, is that while it remains uncomprehended everybody seems to find it easy to comprehend the notion of its theoretical counter-force: anti-gravity. But anti-belonging is not accepted by modern science ... suppose ICI or Ciba-Geigy or Pfizer or Roche or even, I guess, NASA came up with an anti-gravity pill. The world’s airlines would go broke overnight, of course. Pill-poppers would come unstuck from the ground and float upwards until they sank into the clouds. ...

You see the connection between gravity and “roots”: the pill would make migrants of us all. ...

When individuals come unstuck from their native land, they are called migrants. When nations do the same thing (Bangladesh), the act is called secession. What is the best thing about migrant peoples and seceded nations? I think it is their hopefulness. Look into the eyes of such folk in old photographs. Hope blazes undimmed through the fading sepia tints. And what’s the worst thing? It is the emptiness of one’s luggage. I’m speaking of invisible suitcases, not the physical, perhaps cardboard, variety containing a few meaning-drained momentos: we have come unstuck from more than land. We have floated upwards from history, from memory, from Time.

Salman Rushdie, excerpt from *Shame*
I wish to thank my committee members for taking the collective risk in making it possible for this study to occur within our department; and for ensuring safety nets along the way. My heartfelt gratitude to Dr. James Marcia for the many years of mentorship and his support in my explorations at the edges of our discipline. I am especially thankful for his remarkable commitment to his graduate students in being available for us during his sabbatical year. Thank you to Dr. Meredith Kimball for her support and feminist visions, and to Dr. Ray Koopman for his critical eyes.

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This research upon which I embarked four years ago has been truly a challenging journey, complete with enrichment and inspiration. It was an exploration into the new, as well as into the underside of the familiar.

The first of the new is the writing of this preface. According to those sympathetic with feminist scholarship, it is important to make the voice of the researcher explicit and to position herself within the social context that the research is being conducted; into the context that is also that of the participants'. This subverts the positivist tradition of the independent, unbiased authority of the researcher who is after all, simply another human being.

My training has been in the scientist-practitioner model of clinical psychology, but that has always constrained my "interdisciplinary" aspirations. This research was an opportunity to explore the edges of psychology and the bridges leading towards sociology, anthropology, and women's studies (itself interdisciplinary), as well as the seemingly digressive but necessary perusal of post-colonial discourse. For many years, I have struggled with a sense of dissatisfaction around the limitations of psychology and the empirical paradigm. In reviewing the literature, especially
the rare blend of hermeneutics and psychology, and feminist theory and psychology, it was exciting to come across others who were seeking alternatives. I am in the privileged position of pursuing my own.

My interest in exploring the issues facing first and second generation South Asian women arose through a number of avenues. Years ago, when probing my own ethnicity and second generation status, the search took to me to India instead of China where most of my ancestral roots lie. I did not go to China because my ethnic identity is not Chinese but multicultural Malaysian, and more specifically, Peranakan or Straits-born Chinese. The first six years of my life were spent in Malaysia, surrounded by Overseas Chinese; Straits-born Chinese whose Chinese ancestors married Malay women and eventually formed their own cultural group; Malays who are the second racial group to populate the area after the indigenous Orang Asli; and Tamils and Sinhalese from South India and Sri Lanka. After arriving with my family in Canada to find discrimination by the larger Cantonese and Mandarin communities, any sense of belongingness to mainland China was further obscured. So I flew to India. Besides, I heard that the traveller's route in communist China was a nightmare compared to India, especially if one looked Chinese but "wasn't really". I was not ready for the Motherland, but I was for Mother India.
My recent travels around India have deepened an earlier
affinity and respect for the people, history, politics and
culture of the subcontinent. I began considering this study
soon after returning from my first journey to India, perhaps
as a way of extending my travels by understanding Indian
culture in Canada. When individuals in the local South Asian
community supported my ideas, I felt confident that my
concerns about the difficulties facing immigrant women could
be practically studied and perhaps beneficial for the
community. I have been especially concerned with the
increasing awareness of wife battering in this community.

Then I met a Bengali woman, a writer and academic who
teaches in the United States and lectures internationally.
Manisha Roy impressed upon me the importance of understanding
the struggles of the second generation - of women like myself.
At that point it became clear to me that while I was concerned
about both generations, it was the pain of the second
generation that resonated.

Born in Malaysia and raised in Vancouver after the age of
six, my own experiences of the trauma of relocation and
displacement, and the struggle of juggling two and more
cultures provide a backdrop for my research. I assume that
the children of Asian and South Asian families in Canada carry
the conflict of remaining loyal to the values and traditions
of their parents and culture, yet incorporating the "modern"
values and customs surrounding them. It is a battle for survival - a battle within themselves and within the family which creates varying degrees of heartache and identity crises, depending upon how "old-fashioned" the parents are and how "rebellious" the children are. Rebellion can range from sneaking what is impermissible to denying entirely our culture. And as we attempt to integrate, adapting somehow to the worlds inside and outside the home, we are also aware that we are "different", "coloured", and a "visible minority". Often we have the misfortune of experiencing prejudice and discrimination by the people we are desperately trying to be like. Straddling two cultures, always aware of the gaping hole beneath us, is not an easy position to be in.

Although I refer to "we", I am acutely aware that I am a non-South Asian conducting research with South Asians, a cultural group that is not my own. While we have some similarities in culture and acculturation, differences also separate and celebrate us. This leads me to an important point about the context(s) that surround the present study and which will be explicitly alluded to only in this preface. The women interviewed have emigrated from or have ancestral origins in countries that were under British imperialist rule and currently live within a post-colonial world - post-colonial India and post-colonial Canada. The post-colonial (and multicultural) context raises the complex problem of
representation: who should speak?, who speaks for whom?, and who will listen?. Hence, my non-South Asian status as interpreter of my research findings is a rather sensitive issue. The other context within which this study is embedded is the post-modern feminist controversies on essentialist versus constructivist arguments, and similarities versus differences debates. While my own experiences as a "(de)colonizing subject" and with "deconstructing" categories of "woman" and "race" provide an experiential basis for this work, the writings of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1990), Trinh T. Minh-ha (1989), bell hooks (1990; 1984; 1981), Audre Lorde (1981), and Himani Bannerji (1993) inform me in theory and analysis. The social-historical context within which this study occurs is the larger picture for a psychological exploration of South Asian-Canadian women's beliefs and experiences of gender roles and acculturation.
CHAPTER ONE
ON BEING A WOMAN IN SOUTH ASIA

There were no gifts offered when I was born
No blessings called upon, no hymns sung.
My birth was a secret, veiled and hidden
under the commiseration of friends.

Perhaps because, almost too naked, my form,
too easily betrayed, too vulnerable,
lacked well wishers -
or else, my womb, too easily exposed,
could not conceal the end-signs of pleasure -
or else my tears, too ready to flow,
made me fit only for stone altars in cold temples -
or else, I was not clean with each moon, and could
only be accursed for that time -
or else, I was not to be, but came along,
somehow, no matter what,
to tempt, to tease, to seduce, to nurse,
to feed, to please, but not to live.

Soon I became a shadow, and grew
to love my own dark profile,
and watched
till another shadow appeared -
one who held my hand across the dark,
and cried, "My mother has a Mind!".

Nilambri Ghai
"My Daughter"

Myth, legend and dharma

revere her, their city's namesake and patron goddess. Kali of
the black eyes and protruding tongue drinks lifeblood from the
cranial cup, giving life and eating life. She is the
embodiment of shakti, the feminine principle, creating good
and destroying evil (Mookerjee, 1988; Zimmer, 1972). The Mother of all, Kali is the fierce and violent nurturer. She is the other half of the god Shiva. Shiva-Parvati/Durga/Kali. Shiva-Shakti.

Shakti is power. In Hindu philosophy and theology, shakti is the active, dynamic dimension of godhead and the essence of the divine (Kinsley, 1986; Campbell, 1962). Shakti, the principle underlying feminine energy, is necessary and complementary to the masculine principle. Both are interdependent and given relatively equal status. Shakti is personified in Hindu goddesses such as Kali, Durga, or Parvati: Kali the aggressive, terrifying mother goddess; Durga the independent warrior; and Parvati the benevolent, bestowing consort.

Hindu mythology is replete with such images of powerful female goddesses and they are revered from the stone steps of city temples to the mud floors of village shrines. However, the Hindu tradition holds a dualistic view of womanhood which is complex and seemingly contradictory, pervading the folklore and laws of Hindu culture. Woman is worshipped as a powerful goddess; but, in the mundane world, woman is stereotyped as silent and self-sacrificing. This dichotomy is best understood by contrasting the concept of shakti, embodied in powerful goddesses such as Kali, the archetypal mother, with
the concept of the brahminical ideal, the pativrata woman (husband worshipper), best represented by the legendary Sita. A pativrata is a woman who is completely subordinate to the supreme deity in the form of her husband and lord, no matter his dire faults or mistreatment of her (Narasimhan, 1990; Kakar, 1989; Liddle & Joshi, 1986). Ironically, while it is the mother goddess who is traditionally revered, capturing the hearts of millions, it is Sita, the legendary long-suffering wife, who is emulated.

In the Ramayana, one of the most popular religious texts written sometime between 200 B.C. and A.D. 200, Sita is portrayed as the ideal Hindu wife, defined almost entirely in relation to her husband, Ram. All of her thoughts and actions revolve around her husband, always conceding to his welfare, his reputation and his wishes (Kinsley, 1988). Sita is steadfast, faithful, devoted and subservient. In the epic, when Ram is banned from his Indian kingdom and exiled into the forest for fourteen years, Sita follows him because life without him would be meaningless. She is later abducted by the rival Lankan king, Ravana, and then rescued by Ram, and finally spurned by him because he assumes her infidelity. Her purity is proved when Sita sits on a burning pyre that does not devour her. Sita is virtuous and indeed, the perfect wife who worships her husband (Narayan, 1972).
Although an incomplete representation of womanhood, Sita is an explicit role model for women. She is good, benevolent, dutiful and controlled, subordinating her individuality and sacrificing herself for her husband (Mukherjee, 1979; Wadley, 1977). Sita does not represent *shakti*, where woman is a source of power and life force, but the ideal wife and *pativrata*, whose strength lies in submission. Sita lacks identity, power and will of her own. She is almost invisible, portrayed only in the shadow of her husband. Although revered as a deity in today's popular Hindu culture, Sita never achieves the position of a powerful and independent goddess. However, she is probably the most important and dominant figure in Hindu mythology (Kinsley, 1988) and serves as the perfect model of wifely devotion.

Hindu law books, known as *dharma-sastras*, recognize women almost exclusively in the role of wife. Over 2000 years ago, when the status of women had begun to gradually deteriorate, the upper-caste law codifier, Manu, pronounced the duties of women in the *Manusmriti*, circa A.D. 200. Much of the social norms with respect to conjugal rights and privileges can be traced back to these laws and indeed, these laws form the cornerstone for the culture's official view of women (Bumiller, 1990; Narasimhan, 1990). Evident in these laws is that ironic mixture of reverence and denigration towards
women. Women are shakti incarnate, yet, women are evil, tempermental, heartless and disloyal; hence, they do not merit independence but instead must be protected and guarded at all times (Wadley, 1977).

Hear now the duties of women:
By a girl, by a young woman, or even by an aged one, nothing must be done independently, even in her own house. In childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead to her sons; a woman must never be independent. She must not seek to separate herself from her father, husband, or sons; by leaving them she would make both (her own and her husband's) families contemptible. ...

Though destitute of virtue, or seeking pleasure (elsewhere), or devoid of good qualities, (yet) a husband must be constantly worshipped as a god by his faithful wife.

(Buhler, 1886/1971, pp. 195-196)

Manu "created" the essential Hindu woman and allotted to women "impure desires, wrath, dishonesty, malice and bad conduct" (Buhler, 1886/1971, p. 330). Indeed, being born female is considered punishment for sins committed in a previous life but a woman can perform rituals and penances in order to prevent another female reincarnation. Despite women's status of lower birth and inequality, the honour of husbands and families rests upon her.

One example of women's honour according to tradition involves the aftermath of a husband's death. If a woman's husband dies, she is to blame because a virtuous wife would surely keep her husband and keep him alive. If a man's wife
dies, a widower can remarry in order to continue his patriliny but a widow must remain loyal to her husband despite his death. Manu decreed that remarriage is not permissible and a disloyal woman who remarried would be reborn as a jackal. If a woman remains a widow, she leads a life of deprivation and is shunned by society, even to the point where other men cannot eat food prepared by her. However, a widow can atone for her sin of having a dead husband through engaging in the ultimate act of wifely devotion by committing suttee and becoming a Sati. Although Manu did not dictate self-immolation, which involves committing suicide by burning on the dead husband's funeral pyre, it was ironically a horrifically tempting alternative to "hell on earth" since a Sati becomes deified, bestowing honour on her family and village (Narasimhan, 1990). Although suttee was banned in 1829 by the British colonists, the ritual continues to occur sporadically, bringing fame and wealth to the remaining relatives.

The lore and laws of majority Hindu India have evolved over centuries, influencing and influenced by invading cultures, religious practices, social norms, and political movements. They are part of the fabric of present day India, visually represented on the Bombay screens and woven into the hearts and minds of millions. Despite the existence of matriarchal myths, ritual practices, and communities, the
patriarchal Hindu tradition predominates. It is within this cultural setting that the girl-child is raised and the South Asian woman goes about her days, whether in purdah, in the home, in the field, in the classroom, or in the office.

**The socialization of the girls and women**

The life of a newborn baby girl ... starts with the disappointment she brings to her family simply by being born. After giving birth to her third daughter, my mother heard my great-grandmother cursing and saying, “I do not want anymore of this.” She is not to be blamed for her sincere reaction. It takes a woman to know a woman’s fate. (Nazneen, 1995, p. 64)

Do not abandon the vows of womanhood taken by you.
You have to follow your mother, grandmother, and great grandmother.
You have to mind the hearth and the children.
Do not ask odd questions.
Do not exceed the boundaries.
Do not abandon your vows of womanhood.
Do not speak with your face up.
Be inside the house.
Wash clothes, clean the utensils.
Clean the leftovers and remove the soiled plates.
Sew and embroider.
Sweep and draw designs on the floor.
Water the Tulsi plant.
Circumambulate the sacred tree.
Observe fasts and perform vratas.
Bend your neck downwards.
Walk without looking up.
Do not let your eyes wander.
Do not abandon the vows of womanhood.

From the play *Mulagi Jhali Ho* (A Girl is Born) (Dube) (1992) quoted in *Canadian Woman Studies, 13*, p. 60.
Whether in Hindu or non-Hindu communities in India, the neighbouring Muslim countries of Pakistan or Bangladesh, or the primarily Buddhist country of Sri Lanka, the situation of the girl-child is summarized by the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) as the following:

... born (if at all) into inequity, die in large numbers, gets lesser care and protection, receives less education, gets lower pay and inferior treatment at the work place, and has far more chances of becoming sick, pregnant, deserted, abandoned, or dead.

(quoted in Sen & Seth, 1995, p. 58)

It is well documented that girls are subject to violence even before they are born through the practice of foeticide. If the female foetus has not been selected for abortion, then female infanticide through intentional neglect or various lethal methods may kill girls. If they survive, it may be at a subsistence level as girls are given less food, less nutritional and medical care, and even less love and affection, in comparison to the overvalued sons in their family (Kumar, 1991).

If females live to adulthood and enter into either an arranged or love marriage, women may then become victims of avaricious husbands and in-laws, who may brutally beat and denigrate them, and at worst, murder them in the form of "dowry deaths" or "bride burnings". Predominantly, though not exclusively among the urban middle and lower-middle classes, conservative estimates are that at least 2000 women are
victims of dowry murders per year in India. In Delhi, an estimated average of two women die of burns everyday and in one Bombay hospital, there were 157 burn cases within a six month period (Ramachandran, 1995; Stone & James, 1995; Mies, 1986). Although initially reported as “suicide attempts”, investigations typically revealed that the woman’s husband or in-law family member set her on fire. Despite the banning of dowry in India since the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961, the harassment and terrorizing of women and their natal family for dowry and the tragic final result of fiery murders continue.

In India, we have a glorious heritage of systematic violence toward women within the family itself. Sati, the custom of self-immolation in which the wife is burned alive on the funeral pyre of her husband, and female infanticide, are the two better-known forms. Today, we do not kill girl babies at birth; we let them die through systematic neglect. The mortality rate among female children is thirty to sixty percent higher than among male children. Today, we do not wait until a woman is widowed before we burn her to death. We burn her during the lifetime of her husband so that he can get a new bride with a fatter dowry.

(Extract from Manushi quoted in Matsui, 1987, p. 78)

There are at present, 22 million women missing in India and the sex-ratio has declined drastically such that in 1901, there were 972 females to 1000 males, but in 1991, there were 929 females to 1000 males. There are fewer females despite rapid increases in the total population; this is in contrast to the sex-ratio in most developed countries where females
outnumber males. Within India, the lowest sex-ratios were found in the north in the Punjab (879:1000), Haryana (870:1000), and in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan (550:1000). These figures are attributed to a higher death rate of females throughout life, although males are more vulnerable to mortality factors than females (Sen & Seth, 1995; Karlekar, 1995; Ramachandran, 1992). The status of women is low in these societies that do not welcome the birth of a girl.

Although matriarchal systems persist in parts of India, particularly in the South, Kerala being a primary example, the patriarchal family structure predominates. The latter is characterized by patrilineal descent, patrilocality, the joint family, multiple hierarchical relationships including the strongly prescribed subservience of wives to husbands and the in-law family, and a marked preference for sons (Sen & Seth, 1995; Stone & James, 1995; Roland, 1989; Liddle & Joshi, 1986). The average girl born into a patriarchal family who survives her childhood and adulthood, can expect her life to be one of suffering, sacrifice, and silence from the day she is born and through the days as she fulfills her roles as daughter, wife, and mother.

From infancy, the preparation of the girl-child is for marriage and motherhood, and she grows up with the knowledge that her place in her natal family is not only inferior to her brothers, but also transitory as she will leave and lose this
family when she joins with and accommodates to another family. She also knows that in order to maintain the approval of her family of origin, she must conform to the patriarchal images of femininity. These images include deference and self-sacrifice, and as Manu had decreed, utter dependency on the males in her life.

In the Hindu tradition a woman is taught to understand herself primarily in relation to others. She is taught to emphasize in the development of her character what others expect of her. It is society that puts demands on her, primarily through the agents of relatives and in-laws, and not she who places demands on society that she be allowed to develop a unique, independent destiny. A central demand placed on women, particularly vis-a-vis males, is that they subordinate their welfare to the welfare of others. Hindu women are taught to cultivate an attitude that identifies their own welfare with the welfare of others, especially that of their husbands and children (Kinsley, 1986, p. 77).

As they grow up, girls' wishes are almost always in relation to others. They wish most of all to be a "good" woman, who is the "good", chaste daughter and repository of her family's honour (izzat); the "good" wife embodying the ideal of pativrata and skillful homemaker; and the "good" mother because she is fertile and bears sons (Kakar, 1986; 1981; Kalakdina, 1976). A woman's identity within the patriarchal family system is considered to crystallize when she enters motherhood.

In daughterhood an Indian girl is but a
sojourner in her own family. With marriage she becomes less a wife than a daughter-in-law. It is only with motherhood that she comes into her own as a woman and can make a place for herself in the family, in the community, and in the life cycle (Kakar, 1986, p. 27).

In patriarchal societies, the "essence" of womanhood lies in motherhood, her primary if not sole reason for existence. Even Manu the law-giver, elevated the status of woman as mother, however those who are not mothers are deemed worthless (Saidullah, 1992). A fertile womb can launch a woman's transition in status and identity, and birthing a male child increases her worth and gives her acceptance in the family (Stone & James, 1995).

Bearing children, especially the all-important son, empowers a woman and she can then begin to have a sense of belonging in the world and to climb the ladder of hierarchical relationships. Her relationship with her son, therefore, becomes layered with significance and evolves into a very complex dynamic. In the traditional patriarchal family, there exists a norm of husband-wife avoidance where interactions and intimacy between husband and wife are limited in order to preserve the harmonious functioning of the joint family (Derne, 1994). Although gradually changing, mostly in the urban middle and upper classes, a woman's needs for emotional intimacy are then gratified primarily through her child(ren). If she has a son, not only is he her social redemption, but
also her emotional sustenance. The mother in turn provides immediate gratification for all of his needs (no optimal frustration), and she becomes the all-powerful mother and he the omnipotent son (for an interesting analysis of the psychology of Indian men, see Kakar, 1990 and Roland, 1988).

The entrance of a wife/daughter-in-law into the family can pose a serious threat to the emotionally intense mother-son attachment and may give rise to rivalry and the mother-in-law/daughter-in-law tragedies notable throughout the subcontinent. Love marriages are potentially disastrous for the mother because the wife then holds the power. As well, when the norm of husband-wife avoidance is violated and the wife cultivates the love and support of her husband, the joint family can disintegrate if the wife demands to live apart from the extended in-law family. If the mother remains powerful, she can exert her power over the daughter-in-law to the young wife’s detriment.

Her ill-treatment of the daughter-in-law, to put it sympathetically, is a way of obtaining veneration which is otherwise given cursorily or denied to her. Having arrived at this stage of her life is indeed a testimony to her ability to survive – possibly survival of the fittest. She has managed to survive several childbirths, she has taken physical insults and psychological maiming of her self-image, and she has managed to live through it all. Now is her grand moment to receive physical comfort and respect. She makes sure she gets it, even if she has to extract it (Kumar, 1991, p. 156).
If the young wife/daughter-in-law eventually has a male child, she too will turn to him for gratification and ascendancy, and repeat the cycle of the mother-son dynamic.

It is said in the Satras:
There is no shelter like the mother
There is no refuge like her
There is no defence better than her
There could be no one dearer than her.
(Kalakdina, 1976, p. 100)

Traditionally, motherhood is upheld and the mother is a thousand times more venerable than the father. As mothers of sons, women hold a very powerful position in the family. The covert structural power of women exists in their management of the internal affairs of the family, their responsibility for the growth and development of the family and keeping the culture. Women provide the emotional glue and their honour determines the social position of the family (Roland, 1988). However, the men hold the overt power both in the public and private spheres, and for more and more women, this power structure is unacceptable. Kakar’s contemporary psychoanalytic studies of women in urban India suggests that women protest against a socialization which has emphasized the mother and housewife as their primary gender roles (Kakar, 1989). There are always stories of individual women who challenge traditions, and there are movements led by women, and men, on the subcontinent that have actively sought to redress the balance of power.
Challenging traditions

May I say that I do not agree with this idea of women's life or education? What does it signify? It means that woman has one profession and one only, that is the profession of marriage and it is our chief business to train her for this profession. Even in this profession her lot is to be of secondary importance. She is always to be the devoted help-mate, the follower and the obedient slave of her husband and others. I wonder if any of you have read Ibsen's "Doll's House", if so, you will perhaps appreciate the word "doll" when I use it in this connection. The future of India cannot consist of dolls and playthings of the other half, an encumbrance on others, how will you ever make progress? Therefore, I say that you must face the problem boldly and attack the roots of evil. 

I should like to remind the women present here that no group, no community, no country, has ever got rid of its disabilities by the generosity of the oppressor. India will not be free until we are strong enough to force our will on England and the women of India will not attain their full rights by the mere generosity of the men of India. They will have to fight for them and force their will on the menfolk before they can succeed.

Jawaharlal Nehru, speech at Allahabad, 31 March, 1928 (quoted in Jayawardena, 1986, pp. 73 & 98)

Although the dictates for women have been presented in terms of Hindu ideology, it would be inaccurate to give the impression that all South Asians are Hindu. A sizeable portion of the subcontinent prior to partition was not Hindu, and dissatisfaction with caste oppression was one reason for many to convert to Islam (as well as to other religions such
as Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism). However, Muslim women also became subject to the oppressions of a patriarchal, caste-bound society, and both Hindu and Muslim women in various parts of South Asia share common forms of social oppression (Trivedi, 1984).

The status of women in India has varied in different historical periods and in the different regions of the country, and has also been subject to differentiation according to class, religion and ethnicity. The general situation, however, was one of suppression and domination within the bounds of a patriarchal system. Whether the woman in question belonged to a peasant family and was compelled to drudgery in the field and home or to a high-caste family and living a life of leisure, she was the victim of a set of values that demanded implicit obedience to male domination, and many other social practices that circumscribed her life (Jayawardena, 1986, p. 78).

In the early 19th century, movements for reforming the social oppression of women began, led by both Hindu and Islamic reformers, and were usually attributed to the impact of British imperialism. Reformers were in part provoked by the colonialist assumption that the subcontinent was "backwards", "savage", and "barbarian" because of "certain dreadful practices" that indicated the low status of women. The reform movement addressed the issues of suttee, widow remarriage, polygamy, child marriage, and women's property rights. The reformers were mostly urban, educated bourgeois men who idealized women as wife and mother; and, while some
fought for reforms based on liberal principles, others hoped to appear "civilized" without jeopardizing traditional patriarchal family structures.

Suttee was declared illegal in 1829 and widows were permitted to remarry in 1856, however social custom lagged behind legislation. In 1872, the Marriage Act set higher age limits for marriage, girls at 14 and men at 18, and the Age of Consent Bill of 1891 raised the legal age of consent for sexual intercourse from 10 to 12 years for girls. The Right to Property Act of 1874 gave a widow a life interest in her husband's share of property but she had no right to own property, and daughters remained excluded from inheritance rights. As most girls did not have the benefit of education, education for women also became an issue for political agitation, however the purpose of educating women was limited to enhancing their competence as mothers and wives. By the 20th century, however, many women moved far beyond that narrow aim and wrote literature, became medical doctors, nurses, midwives, and teachers, and were instrumental in leading the women's movement.

By the late 19th and early 20th century, the objects of emancipation became the subjects of political and social reform. The pioneer women activists were typically educated and from the urban elite class, and linked by birth or
marriage to men who were reformers. However, it was the Nationalist Movement against British Imperialism where more women from various classes began to participate in political agitation. The Indian National Congress was founded in 1885 and included women members, and Congress leaders urged women to join the nationalist struggle as equals. Mahatma Gandhi drew countless women to the movement of non-cooperation and non-violent resistance against the British. However, while Gandhi recognized women’s power and made it possible for millions of women to participate politically, he endorsed the ideal of womanhood as embodied in Sita, and he did not advocate women’s economic rights (Liddle & Joshi, 1986; Jayawardena, 1986; Trivedi, 1984). Nonetheless, masses of women left the confines of their homes and joined the independence struggle: thousands were arrested and jailed.

Although the Nationalist Movement subsumed the early reform movement and women’s unequal status was neglected for that period of time, three major women’s organizations were founded and continued some of the reform work. Women’s suffrage was first raised by the Women’s Indian Association in 1917. The nationalists gave full support to women’s franchise, and in 1921, the Madras legislature was the first state to allow women’s vote. The most influential organization was the All India Women’s Conference begun in 1927; they tackled personal law reforms such as the issues of
marriage, divorce, and inheritance (Bumiller, 1990; Liddle & Joshi, 1986).

The current women's movement is considered the "third stage" by Indian feminists (to distinguish it from the European and North American women's movement) and began in the mid-1970's after the government released "Towards Equality" in 1974, a report revealing that the status of Indian women had regressed in significant ways since independence. This report shocked educated, urban women who believed they had achieved equality. After all, Indira Gandhi had been the Prime Minister for the past eight years and she was one of the most powerful women in the world. Although the Indian women's movement was founded by the urban elite, that is, the English-educated middle and upper classes, these privileged feminists recognize that "typical" Indian women for whom they are fighting are rural village women, comprising about 75 percent of India's women: and, while equality is a necessary aspiration, they have more basic concerns such as convenient access to clean water. According to Bumiller, there are three aspects of the women's movement today: the urban feminist groups, which are women's wings of major political parties or small leftist groups that have brought attention to the issue of violence against women, such as dowry murders and sex selection; the larger, rural-oriented voluntary organizations such as the SEWA bank for women; and mass peasant struggles
and uprisings where women play militant roles, such as the Chipko Movement (village women hugged trees to stop the forest’s destruction) (Bumiller, 1990).

While a great deal of work remains in raising the status of women towards equality in India and other parts of South Asia (as well as most other parts of the world), women are active. South Asian women are challenging traditions on political, social, academic, and personal fronts in post-colonial South Asia and diasporic communities.

...Lata was named after that most pliable thing, a vine, which was trained to cling: first to her family, then to her husband. Indeed, when she was a baby, Lata’s fingers had had a strong and coiling grasp which even now came back with a sweet vividness to her mother. Suddenly Mrs Rupa Mehra burst out with the inspired remark:

“Lata, you are a vine, you must cling to your husband!”

It was not a success.

“Cling?” said Lata. “Cling?” The word was pronounced with such quiet scorn that her mother could not help bursting into tears. How terrible to have an ungrateful daughter. And how unpredictable a baby could be.

Vikram Seth, excerpt from A Suitable Boy
CHAPTER TWO

ON BEING SOUTH ASIAN IN CANADA

In dimly grey apartments
we gather
shadows of our former selves
sharing humiliation, dislocation, alienation, pain
and loneliness
the only time we can speak freely
in our own language,
in our own voices
and be understood
beyond the words

We learn to split personalities
we become chameleons
we take on different accents
we dress differently
we change our names
we meet all expectations
we are quiet and keep our heads down
we are good coloured people
we don't want no trouble
in the sanctuary of our homes
we are closer to what we were before
but not quite ... there is something missing
we can relax a little
but not totally
will we ever feel at home here?

Gaps begin to grow between us
generation gaps
gender gaps
all seem acute
identity and belonging is unclear
big fights with my family
traditional expectations unmet
i am affected by feminism
which offers choices and freedoms
not allowed in our traditions,
life-savers in this era of turmoil.

Sherazad Jamal, excerpt from
"Making of a cultural schizophrenic"
South Asian immigration

Despite our eagerness to belong to Canada, we are always treated as the "Other". (Gerrard & Javed, 1994, p. 66)

In 1904, approximately forty-five Punjabi men immigrated to Vancouver, inspiring chain migrations so that by 1908, roughly 5200 East Indian immigrants had arrived in British Columbia (Buchignani, 1989; Paranjpe, 1986). Eighty to eighty-five percent were Sikhs and most of the others were Muslim or Hindu Punjabis. As economic depression worsened, anti-Asian sentiments rose and Indians, as well as Chinese and Japanese, became targets of racist hostilities.

In 1907, the federal and provincial governments responded to the public outcry against these "undesirable" Indian immigrants with racist policies (Buchignani, 1977). The British Columbia legislature disenfranchised Indians and the federal government decided to terminate Indian immigration. In January 1908, an Order in Council effectively banned Indian immigration with a continuous journey regulation: all immigrants entering Canada via British Columbia ports, who were not specifically covered by separate treaties, must come on a continuous voyage from their country of origin. No such route existed from India.

In 1920, the policy was changed, allowing the wives and children of Indian men with residency status to immigrate to
Canada. However, few families were actually allowed to reunite, essentially preventing this immigrant population from growing. As India gained independence in August 1947, the exclusionary ban was lifted and franchise was restored. By 1951, the federal government permitted an annual quota of 150 Indian immigrants so that families of settled residents could join them. In 1957, the quota was raised to 300 (Paranjpe, 1986). As racist immigration restrictions were dismantled, Indian immigration increased dramatically so that by 1971, when the Canadian multicultural policy was established, their population rose from a few thousand to 67,000 (Buchignani, 1989).

It is estimated that there are at least 250,000 people with Indian origins residing in Canada and they comprise the largest population of South Asians whose present population is about 380,000 (Buchignani, 1989). The majority are first generation, except for South Asians in British Columbia (Assanand, Dias, Richardson & Waxler-Morrison, 1990). Over the years, most South Asians have settled in Quebec, Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia. Although British Columbia has been a favourite province of destination, Ontario now has the largest population of South Asian immigrants (Ram, 1985).

There have been two distinct periods of Indian immigration to Canada which can be divided into pre and post World War II (Buchignani, 1989; Chadney, 1985). This
distinction accounts for the diversity in the Indian population. Between 1904 to 1944, the early settlers, numbering 6053, comprised the immigrant labour force. Not only were the early immigrants uneducated labourers, they were primarily Sikhs from rural Punjab in India.

The second wave of immigrants come from a diverse range of religious and ethnic backgrounds, and can be further subdivided into three groups (Naidoo, 1987; Ghosh, 1981b, Buchignani, 1977). From 1947 to 1970, well-educated Indians responded to Canada's need for professionals in the fields of medicine, engineering and higher education (some call this the brain drain (Sheth & Handa, 1993)). In the early 1970's, Canada provided political asylum for Indian-origin Ugandan refugees fleeing from Idi Amin's regime. Then, with the 1976 Act, blue-collar workers were accepted because Canada's labour requirements changed and more South Asians from the Indian sub-continent and other countries immigrated in response. The Sikhs from the Punjab, however, remain the largest Indian group, representing over one-half of all South Asians.

Although there are apparent similarities in racial features, South Asians are a heterogeneous group. In terms of religion, they are primarily Sikh, Hindu, or Muslim; some are Christian, Ismaili, Jain, Parsee, Buddhist or Zoroastrian. Those originating in India, who are the actual "East Indians", speak Punjabi, Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Gujarati, or Malayalee,
representing some of the sixteen states and eighteen languages of India. Others of Indian ancestry immigrated from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Malaysia, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Guyana, South Africa, Trinidad and Fiji (Assanand et al., 1990; Naidoo, 1987; Chadney, 1985). Not only is there a diversity in religion and language, there are also some differences ranging from food and dress to traditions and values.

**Families between two cultures**

Immigration can be defined as

a relatively permanent moving away of a collectivity, called migrants, from one geographical location to another preceded by decision-making on the part of the migrants on the basis of hierarchically ordered set of values or valued ends and resulting in changes in the interactional system of the migrants (Mangalam, 1985, p. 96).

While there are profound changes in immigrants and their community as a result of immigration, there is a kind of balancing act that transpires between change and resistance to change. It is a juggling of parts of the original and host cultures, and often some of the parts drop, become lost or hidden away, perhaps to be found and picked up later.

South Asians in British Columbia have succeeded in establishing what sociologists call "institutional completeness", where the community has social institutions
which provide for their needs (Paranjpe, 1986). There are service organizations which are geared towards South Asians, as well as a variety of groups formed on the basis of arts, recreation, caste, religion, language, nation, and region. Scattered throughout the lower mainland are highly visible temples and mosques, and in downtown venues, visiting swamis and gurus speak to their devotees. In South Vancouver, there is the Punjabi Market, a mini-India complete with restaurants serving dahl and burfi; shops selling saris and renting Bombay ("Bollywood") movie videos; and travel agencies offering cheap seats to India. Immigrants can leave the dung-smeared streets of India, yet surround themselves with India on Canadian pavements and not really integrate (Kanungo, 1981). The second generation however, is caught between the two cultures. They have been educated in Canadian schools; and, both curriculum and socialization within the school system on an almost daily basis during their formative years (i.e., five days per week for twelve years or more) would have a significant impact on them and their parents. They will bring home their knowledge of the western world, as well as the values of Canadian society. Furthermore, although the second generation are South Asian, they may have never visited the "back home" of their parents' nostalgia, and those who have assimilated may regard the customs and values of their parents as quaint, "backward", or "repressive" as they make their way
through Canadian culture, under the sometimes critically scrutinizing gaze of western eyes.

Families are typically the agents of socialization and the transmitters of tradition. Anthropological and sociological studies indicate that despite efforts to resist change and maintain traditions, there are structural changes occurring within the family in the process of adapting to the host culture. These changes are creating a "clash of traditions" (Ashcraft, 1986), throwing families into crisis, including domestic violence, and the second generation into a sense of alienation and displacement.

The traditional South Asian extended family is structurally organized by family roles based on patriarchy and gerontocracy. The husband/father holds the highest status, bearing the final authority, the wife defers to her husband and in-laws, and the children subordinate their will to the interests of the family (Naidoo & Davis, 1988; Ashcraft, 1986; Mukherjee, 1979; Ames & Inglis, 1973). By migrating, the South Asian family is uprooted from a society characterized by kinship ties, interdependence, and respect for age and authority, and moves into a host culture valuing independence, youth, and individualism (Wakil, Siddique, & Wakil, 1981). As kinship ties become distant, the extended family dissolves into the nuclear or conjugal family (Nandan & Eames, 1980), and the questioning of the authority of the husband/father and
elders engenders fundamental changes in familial status and role relations. The second generation are often blamed for the stresses and disintegration of the traditional family organization (Srivastava, 1974).

The enormous generation gap, which is also a cultural gap, is the basis for many conflicts within the family. Traditional parents fear the “corrupting” influence of western culture, worrying that their children will stray into the dishonour of outright rebellion, sexual promiscuity, divorce, common-law relationships, and disrespect of elders (Wakil, Siddique, & Wakil, 1961; Desai & Coelho, 1980; Ames & Inglis, 1973). Socialized and living in Canada, the second generation question the relevance and may reject (openly or secretly) their parents’ core values, such as the arranged marriage system, and age-based and gender-based roles, as well as the overt and unspoken rules against socializing with peers (particularly non-Indians), dating (especially for girls), and interracial marriages. Although many families adopt a middle course between “tradition for its own sake” and Canadian patterns, the compromise often remains more oriented towards the traditional, to the dissatisfaction of the second generation.
Ethnic identity

Psychological research on immigrants has focused mostly on ethnic identity but studies have been fragmentary and inconclusive. In a review of 70 articles (mostly American) published in journals since 1972, Phinney (1990) found that there was no widely agreed upon definition of ethnic identity, indicating confusion about the subject. She cites the following definitions of ethnic identity: 1) as a component of social identity, including self-identification, feelings of belonging and commitment, and shared values and attitudes; 2) as including cultural aspects such as language, behavior, values and knowledge of ethnic group history; and 3) as something actively achieved rather than given. Despite the lack of consensus on the definition of ethnic identity, it is assumed that ethnic identity is crucial to the self-concept and psychological functioning of ethnic group members.

Most of the research on ethnic identity of adolescents and adults has focused on White ethnic groups, African-Americans, or Hispanic persons, and few on Asian-Americans. It is unclear how comparable American studies are to Canadian ones, considering the implicit American "melting pot" (assimilation) policy and our explicit "multicultural" (integration) policy. In Canada, there appears to be one study on South Asian ethnic identity (Tonks, 1990) and this
research combines the acculturation framework with the ego-
identity developmental perspective (Marcia, Waterman, 
Matteson, Archer, & Orlofsky, 1993).

The term "ethnic identity" has often been used synonymously with the term "acculturation". However, "ethnic identity" may be considered an aspect of "acculturation", focusing on how individuals relate to their own ethnic group as a subgroup within the larger society (Phinney, 1990). "Acculturation" involves a distinction between two levels. At the population level of acculturation, the collective group experiences changes in social structure, economic base and political organization. The individual level of psychological acculturation includes changes in an individual's behavior, identity, values and attitudes as a result of contact with other cultures and as a result of participating in the collective process of acculturation of his/her ethnic group (Berry, 1990).

Canadian theoretical and empirical work on psychological acculturation in cross-cultural psychology has been guided by a two-dimensional model (Berry, 1990; Berry, Kim, Power, Young & Bujaki, 1987). This model assesses identification and behavior toward the heritage and host cultures by asking two important questions which are answered either "yes" or "no" (Sayegh & Lasry, 1993). The first questions ethnic distinctiveness within a pluralistic society and determines
whether cultural identity and customs are of value and to be retained. The second queries the desirability of inter-ethnic contact, determining whether positive relations with the host society are of value and should be pursued.

Generated from responses to these questions are four acculturation strategies: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization (Berry et al., 1987). Assimilation is defined as relinquishing one's cultural identity and moving into the host society (the "melting pot" concept). Integration implies the maintenance of cultural integrity as well as becoming part of the larger host society. Separation involves the maintenance of ethnic identity and traditions and no positive relations with the host society. Marginalization occurs when cultural and psychological contact with both heritage and host cultures are lost.

Tonks (1990) combines Berry's bidimensional acculturation model with the ego-identity formation framework¹ (Marcia et al., 1993) in his research with second generation Indo-Canadian youth and young adults. The identity development perspective can also be considered a bidimensional model for the construction of individual identity. The two dimensions of exploration of and commitment within such salient life areas as occupation and ideology yield a fourfold classification of identity statuses: achievement (self-
constructed identity), moratorium (identity exploration), foreclosure (conferred identity), and diffusion (identity confusion). In his sample of sixty-five male and sixty-five female second generation Indo-Canadians, Tonks found that those with achievement statuses tended to endorse integration attitudes; those with diffusion statuses tended to be marginalized; and those with foreclosure statuses tended to endorse separation attitudes.

In a study also utilizing the ego identity development model with American youth, Phinney (1989) found that minority adolescents with achieved identities demonstrated higher scores on self-evaluation, sense of mastery, social and peer interactions, and family relations, in contrast to adolescents with diffused and foreclosed identities. She suggested that the process of ethnic identity development is important in understanding self-esteem and adjustment of minority youth. Although there was some allusion to the internalization of the host society's negative views of one's ethnic group in Phinney's study, this study and Tonks' do not explore the impact this has on ethnic identity development and its implications for youth.

In his writings on identity, Erik Erikson considered the issue of race and internalized negative attitudes in identity development, focusing on black youth in America.
The individual belonging to an oppressed and exploited minority, which is aware of the dominant cultural ideals but prevented from emulating them, is apt to fuse the negative images held up to him by the dominant majority with the negative identity cultivated by his own group. Here we may think of the many nuances of the way in which one Negro may address the other as "nigger". (Erikson, 1968, p. 303)

Erikson also comments on the term, "surrendered identity":

I like this term because it does not assume total absence, as many contemporary writings do — something to be searched for and found, to be granted or given, to be created or fabricated — but something to be recovered. This must be emphasized because what is latent can become a living actuality, and thus a bridge from past to future. (Erikson, 1968, p. 297)

The impact of internalized negative attitudes, or more precisely, internalized racism, has not been adequately explored in psychological research with ethnic minority groups despite discussions on assimilation. Although most eloquently articulated by writers and artists from various ethnic communities, internalized racism and the process of "recovering" identity has yet to be included in the psychological literature.

**Women in transition**

In the past fifteen years, a handful of psychological studies focusing specifically on South Asian women have emerged (Lalonde, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1992; Naidoo & Davis, 1988; Naidoo, 1987; 1980; Moghaddam & Taylor, 1987; Ghosh,
These studies include South Asian women of varied origins and they have been conducted mostly in southern Ontario and Montreal. The researchers investigate South Asian women's adaptation to the host culture, examining in general, issues of discrimination, social integration and cultural maintenance.

In Montreal, Moghaddam and Taylor (1987) interviewed 104 women of Indian origin, questioning the assumption that all ethnic groups desired heritage culture maintenance in Canada's multicultural mosaic. These women were ambivalent towards the general issue of cultural maintenance, yet were strongly committed to certain aspects of their heritage culture, such as language and intergenerational relationships. The researchers suggested that this ambivalence was due to the women's experience of perceived discrimination and their uncertain feelings about their acceptance by mainstream society. A later study reiterated this finding (Lalonde, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1992), suggesting that Indian women may be experiencing feelings of alienation due to a lack of integration of heritage and host society identity.

Ghosh (1981a) conducted a study with first generation South Asians, basing her findings on women's self-perceptions and their husbands' perceptions of how his wife views herself. Integration patterns suggest that South Asian women accept some new patterns of behaviour and attitudes, such as dress,
jobs, children's choice of career, inter-religious marriages for their children, and the selection of spouse by children within the arranged marriage system. However, most were resistant to new patterns in values and attitudes involving male-female relationships. Dating, especially for girls, and inter-racial marriage were sensitive areas and generally not acceptable. Ghosh suggests that this generation of South Asian women has integrated with varying degrees, but that the second generation will experience fundamental changes. However, she warns that a "total break with traditions will leave the next generation with no cultural moorings" (1981a, p. 70).

A cross-generational study by Khosla (1981) with Hindu women from Uganda suggested that "the woman as an individual generally does not exist in Hindu society" (p. 182). Utilizing the Twenty Statement Test as the main indicator of self-concept, the study suggested that the Hindu woman's self-identification is based on her traditional role as wife and mother. Her "self" is placed within the context of her family. Furthermore, the older generation of women defined themselves more frequently by reference to familial roles than did the younger generation. (It was unclear whether the "younger generation" are raised in Canada. There was also no information as to sample size and how a cross-generational analysis was conducted.) However, the younger women revealed
a complex duality in their self-identity. They remained traditional in their values regarding marriage and family (wished to be a good wife/mother), and were also concerned with self-development through personal ambition and high achievement.

Khosla's findings are consistent with a series of studies in southern Ontario by Naidoo (Naidoo, 1980; Naidoo & Davis, 1988) whose research indicates that South Asian women reveal a duality in life orientation with both "traditional" and "contemporary" attitudes. "Traditional" is defined as pertaining to "values, beliefs and customs handed down from generation to generation, often firmly adhered to, and less subject to forces of acculturation as migratory groups come into contact with other cultures"; and, as referring to the "belief that a woman's primary responsibilities are home-making and child-rearing" (Naidoo & Davis, 1988, p. 313). "Contemporary" is defined as designating "those values, beliefs and customs prevailing in the mainstream culture to which migratory groups have/are being acculturated"; and, refers to the "belief that women should be as free as men to pursue educational and occupational goals; that men and women should share equality in responsibilities inside and outside the home" (p.313).

Naidoo's 1980 interview study with 210 respondents suggested that with respect to marriage, family and religion,
South Asian women, as compared to ethnically Anglo-Saxon women, remained "traditional". However, they were "contemporary" with regard to high aspirations in pursuing education and careers outside the home. A later study utilizing survey interviews (Naidoo & Davis, 1988) again found a sample of 300 South Asian women to have "contemporary" values related to education, achievement, success, and aspirations for themselves and their daughters, and to remain "unacculturated" with respect to "traditional" values pertaining to home, children, religion, and gender roles. Furthermore, compared to Anglo-Saxon women raised in traditional homes who were found to be low achieving, South Asian women were high achievers and did not fear success.

Overall, these studies appear to indicate that South Asian women in Canada welcome "modernization", from dress and food, to careers and higher education. However, they do not embrace "westernization" in the more deeply rooted values involving family.

South Asian women seem to want the best of both worlds. On one hand, they desire a greater range of freedom outside the home and more control over things within it. ... On the other hand, immigrant wives and mothers continue to ground their identity in the family. ... They see many Canadian notions about family, marriage and children as threats to this family-linked identity. At the same time, they value family access to Canadian educational, economic, and social opportunities even though they are aware that these have potential for further weakening what they value about the traditional family.
Unfortunately, this "dualistic" outlook of South Asian Canadian women has contributed to conflict within the home, along with the changes in family organization previously mentioned. South Asian women find it increasingly difficult to accept traditionally defined gender roles and Canadian born women are particularly disinclined to regard their spouse as "husband-lord", as tradition dictates (Ames & Inglis, 1973). The rising incidence of reports of battering within this community appears to be related to the women's pursuit of education and careers outside the home, combined with their husbands' continued expectation to maintain their traditional role within the family (Assanand et. al., 1990). The generation gap increases between parents and children, mothers and daughters, as the second generation question the issues of dating, arranged marriages, and gendered hierarchies. Adjustment to Canadian society and negotiating culturally traditional values and assumptions challenges those who have recently immigrated and even those who have lived in Canada for three generations. As the space between "back home" and "here" becomes wider and the gulf between immigrant parents and "Canadianized" children expands, conflict and crisis put stress on the family system and the hierarchy of roles tumble down.
Everything she valued had been upset by the change; had in the process of translation been lost. Her language: obliged, now, to emit these alien sounds that made her tongue feel tired, was she not entitled to moan? ... Where now was the city she knew? Where the village of her youth and the green waterways of home? The customs around which she had built her life were lost, too, or at least were hard to find. ... Plus also: they had come into a demon city in which anything could happen, your windows shattered in the middle of the night without any cause, you were knocked over in the street by invisible hands, in the shops you heard such abuse you felt like your ears would drop off but when you turned in the direction of the words you saw only empty air and smiling faces, and everyday you heard about this boy, that girl, beaten up by ghosts. - Yes, a land of phantom imps, how to explain; best thing was to stay home, lock the door, say your prayers, and the goblins would (maybe) stay away. ... Not only was she the shopkeeper’s wife and a kitchen slave, but even her own people could not be relied on; - there were men she thought of as respectable types, sharif, giving telephone divorces to wives back home and running off with some haramzadi female, and girls killed for dowry (some things could be brought through the foreign customs without duty); - and worst of all, the poison of this devil-island had infected her baby girls, who were growing up refusing to speak their mother-tongue, even though they understood every word, they did it just to hurt; and why else had Mishal cut off all her hair and put rainbows into it ... 

Salman Rushdie, excerpt from The Satanic Verses
CHAPTER THREE

EXPLORING THE VOICES OF FIRST AND SECOND GENERATION SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN

The present study is an exploration of the values and beliefs regarding family and gender roles, as well as the acculturation experiences of first and second generation women of South Asian origins. Although there has been some research with first generation South Asian women, most of the anthropological and sociological studies have been observational, and the handful of psychological ones are based on questionnaires and surveys, with only a few involving interviews. Research specifically with the second generation is scant.

From a stance of respectful concern about the issues and struggles facing immigrant and second generation women, the present study asked questions in order to understand experience, rather than to test hypotheses in order to confirm theory. The interview method allowed for insights to be gained by having conversations with the women, unlike a structured questionnaire which does not permit such mutuality of exploration.

Prior research suggests that first generation women maintain a traditional position with respect to marriage and
family roles, and that the second generation appear to be questioning the relevance of traditional values in their lives. Which values then, of the heritage and host cultures have the second generation incorporated and how are they resolving the differences? Literature and research also suggest that the immigrant South Asian woman defines herself in the context of her family. Having been raised in the individualistic orientation of Canadian culture and exposed to the North American women's liberation movement, how do second generation women define themselves (their self)? And what are the experiences of immigrant women who are not role bound in their self-definition? How do both generations negotiate the transition between cultures and the apparent gulf that potentially separates them? What culture does the second generation consider as "theirs"? More interestingly, how do these possible conflicts and accommodations manifest themselves in the women's actual relational experiences? In a more general query, given the context in which the immigrant women were raised, and the shifting context between home and outside home of the second generation, what are their various experiences? What are the stories the women tell about their lives?
PHILOSOPHICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

The methodology for the present study is primarily of a qualitative nature. The information gathered is based on extensive, in-depth interviews, analysed within an interpretive framework for examining themes and content. The research intentions are exploratory. Rather than seeking to support existing theories, this study may begin to lay the groundwork for developing theory, as well as providing a basis for further qualitative and quantitative research.

The philosophical foundations for this methodology involve two separate layers which will overlay and intersect each other in the way that the research is conceptualized and conducted. The first layer is grounded in feminist analyses of the social sciences (Harding, 1991; M. Gergen, 1988; Hubbard, 1988; Du Bois, 1983) and the second layer is classic hermeneutic theory (Dilthey, 1900/1976; Ricoeur, 1979; Gadamer, 1975). Both of these approaches provide alternatives to research based on more traditional empirical assumptions and methods. Essentially, this methodology follows in the footsteps of Carol Gilligan's and her colleagues' work on women's psychology at the Harvard School of Education (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Brown, Tappan, Gilligan, Miller & Argyris, 1989). It is the integration of an interpretive method and
current feminist strategies in qualitative research.

**Feminist critiques of the social sciences**

The first philosophical foundation for this methodology involves feminist critiques of the social sciences. Mary Gergen (1988) outlines "wrong assumptions" within the social science tradition. They are the following: 1) the independence of scientist and subject matter; 2) the decontextualization of the subject from the social field; 3) value-free theory and practice; 4) the independence of facts from the observing scientist; and 5) the methodological superiority of science and the scientist.

Gergen and others challenge these assumptions, maintaining that research is not value-free and that the scientist is not objective, neutral and uninvolved (Harding, 1991; Billson, 1991; Kimball, 1991; K. Gergen, 1988; Hubbard, 1988; Smith, 1987; Du Bois, 1983; Mies, 1983). Context stripping in the natural sciences, such as classical physics, cannot be applied to the social sciences (Hubbard, 1988). The researcher and subject do not exist in separate vacuums and the subject is not an isolable variable to be looked upon objectively. Instead, there is an "indisputable unity" between researcher and subject, and it must be acknowledged that the researcher is
a self-conscious subject who lives, and
does science, within the context in which
the phenomena she or he observes occur
(Hubbard, 1988, p. 11).

Facts are not independent of the maker and social science
involves interpretation and theory-making. Hence, "science is
not 'value-free'; it cannot be" (Du Bois, 1983, p. 105).
Research is influenced by personal values and bias and this is
most likely to be evident in the interpretation of data (M.
Gergen, 1988; Mies, 1983). Kenneth Gergen maintains that

in spite of the early attempts of empiricist
foundationalists to separate clearly between
fact and value, there would appear to be no
means by which value neutrality can be achieved.
To the extent that any set of observables is
subject to multiple interpretations, rules of
empirical procedure furnish no barrier against
the free play of values in selecting one
interpretation over another (1988, pp. 29-30).

What then do we do - abandon research in the social
sciences, embrace the chaos of relativity and write fiction?
According to feminist scholars, there are a number of workable
solutions to the challenges they have raised.

One of the first steps entails recognition of those false
assumptions and making that awareness explicit. The
researcher starts by acknowledging that the researcher and
subject are interdependent or interconnected, that they are
both embedded within a social context, and that the researcher
has values and biases (M. Gergen, 1988). Researchers then
accept that their values and beliefs influence their work and
learn to identify their effects (Harding, 1991).

Researchers can add another step and that is to be explicit for their readers by stating their own social location - their gender, class, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, theoretical bent, or whatever may be relevant and serve as interpretive lenses for their research (Sullivan, 1991; Harding, 1987). Situating the researcher within the social frame may make explicit how assumptions can shape research. More importantly, this avoids the objectivist stance and makes explicit the presence of the researcher.

According to Harding (1991), not only must researchers be explicit about their assumptions, they also need to be honest and careful in their methods, open to alternative interpretations, clear in describing pitfalls and conclusions, and responsible in the language used to convey results.

In addition to critiquing and providing some solutions for the social sciences, feminist scholars describe a theoretical basis for conducting research with women and other marginalized groups. This theory does not simply add or include women as research participants, as has been done in countless psychology studies where women were appended after research was already conducted with men, or in conjunction with research with men. Instead, the key point is to start from women's lives (Harding, 1991; Du Bois, 1983). This
theory demonstrates

how to move from including others' lives and thoughts in research and scholarly projects to starting from their lives to ask research questions, develop theoretical concepts, design research, collect data, and interpret findings (Harding, 1991, p. 268).

... analyses must begin in real, historic women's lives, and these will be women of particular races, classes, cultures, and sexualities (Harding, 1991, p. 151).

Research with women must be grounded in women's experiences, their voices clearly audible.

**The hermeneutic circle**

Hermeneutics is the general theory of interpretation and the study of understanding. There are six related definitions of hermeneutics which reflect its historical development (Palmer, 1969; Packer, 1985; Gergen, Hepburn & Fisher, 1986). Hermeneutics emerged in the 17th century as a theory of biblical exegesis until its secularization in the 18th century as a general classical philological method. In the 19th century, hermeneutics evolved into the nondisciplinary study of linguistic understanding (i.e. texts), reconceived as the science or art of interpretation by Schleiermacher (Schleiermacher, 1977 (original work 1805 to 1833)). This approach was further developed by Dilthey (1900/1976), whereby hermeneutics became the methodology for the interpretation of
written records - of all human expression such as art, actions and writings (Geisteswissenschaften). In the anti-scientific, existential philosophy of Heidegger (1927) and Gadamer (1975), phenomenological hermeneutics or the New Hermeneutics was defined as the phenomenological explanation of human existence and the understanding of Being through language. In France, Ricoeur (1974; 1979; 1981) conceived of the central concern of hermeneutics as being the text and the interpretation of meaningful human action as text. In addition, Ricoeur's approach has linked hermeneutics with structuralism, psychoanalysis and symbolism.

Hermeneutics crosses disciplines and is shared by philosophers, theologians, social scientists, literary critics and others in the humanities (Gergen, Hepburn & Fisher, 1986). With respect to qualitative research in the social sciences, the works of Dilthey and Ricoeur provide an appropriate theoretical and methodological basis for the interpretation of texts. Phenomenological hermeneutics has also been proposed as a method appropriate for the social sciences, especially psychology (Packer, 1985). However, this existential perspective appears to be more concerned with understanding the nature of understanding itself than with the valid interpretation of texts.

Indeed there is a contemporary polarization which seems
to revolve around the question of objectivity (Palmer, 1969). Some adherents view hermeneutics as a methodology and seek validity in interpretations (Dilthey, 1900/1976; Hirsch, 1967; 1976). In contrast, phenomenological hermeneutics focuses on the historicality of understanding and the essential nature of all understanding, without distinguishing valid from invalid interpretations. Hermeneutics oriented to method and validity provide methodological grounding for the social sciences, whereas hermeneutics as a branch of existential-phenomenological philosophy, while necessary for enhancing theory (i.e. Gadamer, 1975), is not sufficient for furnishing a methodological foundation. However,

even if the two are predicated on antithetical assumptions and do not harmonize on the issue of objectivity ...

[hermeneutics can] hold within itself two separate foci: one on the theory of understanding in a general sense, and the other on what is involved in the exegesis of linguistic texts, the hermeneutical problem (Palmer, 1969, pp. 66-67).

Hermeneutics is the art of understanding and understanding is a referential process. The interpretation of meaning is characterized by the hermeneutic circle, an important concept in Dilthey's methodology. The hermeneutic circle involves the dialectical interaction between complex wholes and their parts, where each gives the other meaning.

Here we encounter the general difficulty of all interpretation. The whole of a work must be understood from individual words and their
combination but full understanding of an individual part presupposes understanding of the whole. ... The whole must be understood in terms of its individual parts, individual parts in terms of the whole. ... Such a comparative procedure allows one to understand every individual work, indeed, every individual sentence, more profoundly than we did before. So understanding of the whole and of the parts are interdependent (Dilthey, 1900/1976, pp. 259-262).

Whether the text is a literary work, the constitution, an event of human action or an interview narrative, the interpretive procedure is circular. The text is treated as a whole, where the whole is understood in terms of its parts and conversely, the parts must be understood within the context of the whole (Rabinow & Sullivan, 1979; Brown et. al., 1989). Interpretation involves a recursive movement between the whole and the parts.

[There is a] continuous back-and-forth process between parts and the whole which follows from the hermeneutical circle. Starting with a first often vague and intuitive understanding of the text as a whole, its different parts are interpreted, and out of these interpretations the parts are again related to the totality, and so on. In the hermeneutical tradition this circularity is not viewed as a "vicious circle", but rather as a "circulus fructuosus", or spiral, which implies a possibility of continuously deepened understanding of meaning (Kvale, 1983, p. 186).

The interpreter may begin by guessing the meaning of the whole (Ricoeur, 1979) and as the meaning of the parts become understood, the original guess for the whole may be
reinterpreted, again influencing the meaning of the separate parts.

[There is] a dialectic between guessing and validating . . . The relation between whole and parts - as in a work of art or in an animal - requires a specific kind of "judgement" . . . There is no necessity and no evidence concerning what is important and what is unimportant, what is essential and what is unessential. The judgement of importance is a guess (Ricoeur, 1979, p. 89).

In the process of reading a text, there is the balance between the genius of guessing and the scientific character of validation which constitutes the modern complement of the dialectic between Verstehen [understanding, comprehension] and Erklären [explanation] (Ricoeur, 1979, p. 91).

However, while there are no rules for guessing, there are methods for validating our guesses and we must criticize our guesses as we build and validate meaning (Hirsch, 1967; Ricoeur, 1979).

**Integrating the layers**

The purpose of this research is to explore the thoughts, perceptions and attitudes of first and second generation South Asian women toward gender roles, as well as their acculturation experiences. The semi-structured interview will be the main methodology in this research for a number of reasons. Immigrant South Asian women are apparently unfamiliar with the empirical approach and tend to view it
with suspicion. Also, they may not be sufficiently literate to answer a questionnaire nor motivated to complete it: responding to questions in an interview situation, because it is a relational context, may be easier (Naidoo, 1987; Pareek & Rao, 1980).

Although extensive interviews permit in-depth exploration, there are some limitations to this approach. Interviewing and then interpreting interviews is time-consuming and labour intensive; and there are no shortcuts for conveying the information generated. Comparing interview material across studies is difficult. As with more traditional quantitative measures, issues of reliability, validity and accuracy or authenticity are present and perhaps harder to assess with interview narratives, unless an empirical check is in place. Also similar to quantitative approaches, biases enter into the interview process and interpretation. Because interpretations are subjective, it may be difficult to achieve consensus among interpreters and at worst, research can become stalled in the face of conflicting interpretations; i.e., falsifiability is a problem.

Although feminist theory and hermeneutics stem from radically different positions, they sometimes refer to each other (e.g. Steele, 1989; Brown et al. 1989) and they both expose the limitations of the empirical tradition and offer
alternatives. Both criticize the empirical assumption that there exist "brute" hard facts which can be identified and recorded through objective, value-free data collection (M. Gergen, 1988; Packer, 1985).

We are always in a cultural world, amidst a "web of signification we ourselves have spun". There is no outside, detached standpoint from which to gather and present brute data. When we try to understand the cultural world, we are dealing with interpretations and interpretations of interpretations (Rabinow & Sullivan, 1979, p. 6).

No research is interpretation-free.

Both feminist and hermeneutic perspectives also recognize the embeddedness of the researcher in his/her social and historical context. There is a wide variety of perspectives from which facts/texts can be read due to the reader's subculture or time in history (Gergen, 1989; Hubbard, 1988; Freeman, 1985; Ricoeur, 1979; Gadamer, 1975). Not only is research and the researcher context-bound, there also exists an interdependence of researcher and subject, interviewer and interviewee (Brown et al., 1989; Du Bois, 1983). Especially because the interview narrative is not a finished, pregiven literary text, the interviewer then, is to some extent a co-creator of the interview to be interpreted (Kvale, 1983).

Feminist scholars and hermeneutic thinkers call for theory and research grounded in actual lived experience (Josselson, 1995; Du Bois, 1983; Palmer, 1969). Lived
experience includes the researcher's or interpreter's experience, where the interpreter is not so much a knower as an experiencer (Gadamer, 1975). The interpreter places himself/herself in an attitude of openness to the text: open to the experience of the text; open to the experience of lived stories.

The women in this study are a "visible minority" but their lived experiences are often invisible in this society. Through these interviews, they will have told their stories, which might otherwise have remained unheard, unseen.
Participants

Included in this study were 51 women of South Asian descent. They were solicited from the local South Asian community, through South Asian organizations and service agencies such as the India-Mahila Association, South Asian Women’s Action Network (SAWAN), and the Vancouver and Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Support Services Society, as well through word of mouth. The women represented a wide range of socioeconomic status, education, and place of origin.

The women’s ages ranged from 20 to 57 years and they comprised two groups: immigrant or first generation and second generation. There were 25 women in the first generation group and 26 in the second generation (the latter having an additional person because part of one interview was lost). Both groups served as each other’s comparison group. Women in the first generation group typically immigrated to Canada in their late teens or adulthood, with their family or husband, or in order to become a bride. If they immigrated on their own for education or work, they had relatives here, such as a sister, a child, or an uncle. First generation women were born and raised in various regions of the Indian
subcontinent, including Pakistan. Some were born and raised in various countries of the South Asian diaspora such as Fiji and East Africa where the Indian community has maintained its traditions and identity. Women in the second generation group were born in the Indian subcontinent, Fiji, East Africa, England, or Canada, however they were raised from childhood in Canada.

Most of the women in this study spoke English fluently. Some had recently completed English as a Second Language programs and had a reasonable command of the English language. Although the author had originally hoped to include non-English speaking South Asian women, they were not included because a translator would have been required and there were concerns that the translator’s voice or interpretations might have intruded upon participants’ interviews.

Measures

Family Roles Interview (FRI) (see Appendix A). The Family Roles Interview is a semi-structured interview developed for the study in order to explore values and the perceptions of self in various family roles and relationships. Some of the questions pertaining to spousal roles in the FRI were based on sections of the Identity Status Interview developed by Marcia (Marcia, Waterman, Matteson, Archer, &
The FRI is a 60-90 minute interview and divided into six sections: the roles of spouse, daughter, daughter-in-law, and mother; the role of a woman in society; and acculturation experiences in Canada. All interviews were carried out by the author. Each interview narrative was interpreted by the author and a second interpreter. Two other interpreters were involved for part of the study: one who interpreted narratives for the pilot study and one who interpreted a third of the interviews until her job demands increased and she could not continue with interpretations.

The FRI was tested on 8 pilot participants. The first form of the FRI consisted of questions from the Identity Status Interview and queries considered relevant to this study. These questions were put to four women: one graduate psychology student, one elementary school teacher, one ESL teacher and one Asian woman raised in India and currently working as a Canadian government employee. Each question was tested to assess the wording and the responses that each generated. They were judged in terms of whether they were difficult to answer because they were too complicated or vague, and whether they could be answered honestly and with interest.

After questions were modified, deleted and added, four additional women were interviewed and audiotapes were
transcribed for the second stage of testing. These women respondents were two ethnically Anglo-saxon graduate psychology students, one Asian woman born in India and raised in Canada, and one first generation Punjabi woman. The interview questions and the four transcribed interviews were then read by a clinical psychologist and the author. Questions were again evaluated for the responses they generated. Also assessed were the length of the interview and the sequencing of interview items, as well as the way in which rapport was established.

Based on the reaction of the participants and the information generated, questions were again modified, deleted, and added, resulting in the current FRI. Each of these respondents found the interview enjoyable and interesting. The FRI gave them a chance to reflect upon and speak about issues and experiences that interested them.

Conflict Resolution Dilemma (see Appendix B). The Conflict Resolution Dilemma is a standardized dilemma that was given to all participants. It is an excerpt from the "Betty dilemma", about a woman unhappy in her marriage, developed by Skoe and Marcia (1991) for a study on care-based moral thought. The names were changed to "Geeta" and "Sanjiv". The participants were asked specific questions, some of which were designed to incrementally push their limits. For example, "If Geeta no longer loves her husband, what do you think she
should do?", to "If Sanjiv has been having brief affairs with other women and Geeta finds out, what should she do?", to "If over the years, Sanjiv has physically beaten and injured Geeta, what should she do?". Each resolution for the CRI was analysed independently from the FRI by the author.

The Conflict Resolution Dilemma and the questions pertaining to it were tested on the 8 pilot participants who were instrumental in the development of the FRI.

Demographic Information (see Appendix C). The Demographic Information form provided data on all participants regarding information such as place of birth, number of years in Canada, marital status, caste and class, religious affiliation, ethnic affiliation, occupation, and education. This is a written form that the author completed verbally with the participant prior to the interview as a way to establish rapport.

Procedure

Participants were interviewed in their homes, in the author's home, in the author's office at the university, and on one occasion, at one of the service agencies. All participants were given information on the study and asked to sign a consent form (see Appendix D). The information handout described the nature of the study as an exploration of women's
thoughts and perceptions about family roles. They were informed of their right to withdraw at any time and that their anonymity and confidentiality were ensured. All interviews (FRI and CRD) were audiotaped and later transcribed. The order of administration was: 1) Demographic Information form, 2) Family Roles Interview, and 3) Conflict Resolution Dilemma.

Most interviews, including completing the Demographic Information form and Conflict Resolution Dilemma, and answering participants' questions, lasted about two hours. No financial compensation was made. Those who requested a copy of the transcript were sent one. Also, a brief report on the study, which will be given to interested South Asian organizations and agencies, will be sent to all participants.

**Interpretive procedures**

Each transcribed interview narrative was interpreted with the use of the Interpretive Reading Guide (see Appendix E). The interpretation of each interview involved multiple readings of the narrative text, with each reading approaching the narrative from a different standpoint. Each interpretation was then discussed by the interpreters in collaborative group meetings. The work of Brown and Gilligan (1992); Brown, Tappan, Gilligan, Miller and Argyris (1989); Packer (1989); Mishler (1986; 1979); Juhl (1980); and Hirsch
were instrumental as theoretical and methodological models in the development of the Interpretive Guide.

**First reading:** The narrative text was read once to establish the story and place the interpreter within the whole narrative. The narrative was read while listening to the audiotaped interview so that the voice and nuances of the narrator were heard. The interpreter noticed themes, metaphors and images, the narrator's style and emotional tone, and the interpreter's own responses to the narrator. In order to organize the interpreter's thoughts and reactions, as well as the content of the narrative text, the interpreter recorded her observations and the thematic content. Observations were noted on the "Observations" sheet and themes were recorded on the "Summary Worksheet".

**Second reading:** The interpreter tracked the narrative text for five different voices, tracing each one with a different coloured pencil. Two of these voices were originally based on the findings of sociological, anthropological, and psychological research. These voices were made more distinct and expanded to five different voices through a pilot study in which eight interview narratives were interpreted. Five were the narratives of South Asian women, while three non-South Asian narratives were read for
comparison. As the author and other interpreters began reading the narratives, the five voices were initially viewed as potential voices. With the completion of interpretations of all 51 interviews and inter-rater reliability established, these five voices are now considered confirmed voices.

The voices were labelled by colour as an attempt to control for the biases and assumptions that labels other than colour may have raised for interpreters. The voices are: green, pink, red, purple, and orange. The green voice spoke of the acceptance of cultural and/or parental values and traditions with little or no questioning. It was a voice that was secure and comfortable in the traditional belief system. The pink voice spoke of the acceptance of tradition but with some change having been negotiated with either the family or community. It was a voice of accommodation, spoken with some pride in meeting challenge or having brought about change, although fundamental values or assumptions remained. The red voice questioned, rejected, and protested traditions but was unable to make significant change and was bound by tradition. It was a voice of conflict and frustration, struggling either with those around the woman or with herself (fighting but bound). The purple voice criticised and rejected traditional cultural and/or parental values, and held different ones. This voice spoke of the possibility of change or having made
changes in values, attitudes, beliefs, roles, or lifestyle. It was a voice that spoke either of current resistance (fighting and free) or of difference that has always been part of who the woman was. The orange voice previously rejected traditional values but came to recognize their worth without necessarily endorsing them. This was a voice that did not speak of uncritical acceptance but had a different perspective that allowed for a re-valuining of traditional beliefs. This voice spoke of a cycle of rebellion and then returning to traditional values with a fundamental shift in attitude and a new point of view.

Third reading: The third reading utilized the Summary Worksheet and required another reading of the narrative text, focusing on the voices. First, the interpreter recorded which voices spoke in each section of the interview. Then the interpreter recorded theme-voice associations, noting the themes previously recorded and the voices that were associated with them.

Fourth reading: The final reading was again a wholistic reading, informed by readings for voice and theme. This reading brought the parts back into the context of the whole, making sense of the narrative text and determining inconsistencies and contradictions, noting what might have been previously missed, and confirming the interpretation.
Collaborative group meetings: Each narrative text was interpreted independently and then discussed in collaborative group meetings, an essential component of the interpretive process. The author met with the second interpreter (H.W.) for all the narratives, and with both the second and third (J.K.) interpreters for one third of the narratives. We met almost monthly for a few hours, over the course of about one and a half years, discussing our interpretations of each narrative text. We began by noting our observations, clarifying any questions, and discussing our reactions to the narratives. At times we found it necessary to debrief if the narrative included a particularly painful life story. If one or all of us had strong reactions to a narrative, such as distancing, ambivalent feelings, or alliance, we discussed these reactions and their possible impact on our interpretation.

We then discussed theme-voice associations, assessing whether we had noted the same themes and agreed on theme-voice associations. Any disagreement on theme-voice associations required discussion and consensus on voice. Successfully negotiated theme-voice alterations totalled about 35. Unreconciled theme-voice associations, where consensus was not reached, totalled about 6. (These figures do not include the first four narrative texts utilized in training sessions.) We
found that as we made more interpretations and had more discussions, our interpretations and agreement improved. This likely had a positive effect on our overall inter-rater reliability.

**Interpretive process**

*Interpretive Reading Guide:* The development of the Interpretive Reading Guide and the interpretation of the narratives involved a fluid process requiring flexibility and openness, beginning with initial uncertainty and leading to confidence in interpretations. When the Interpretive Reading Guide was first written, it was based on prior research, assumptions, and a pilot study. It had to stand as a work-in-progress because the circle had not been completed - the interviews and interpretations were not finished. The current Interpretive Reading Guide in Appendix E is a recently revised one based on the accumulated experience of interpreting the narrative texts.

One of the changes that was made to the Interpretive Reading Guide included the labelling of voice. Initially the voices were given names such as "Traditional" or "Nontraditional". When piloted with another interpreter (S.D.) and in discussion with her supervisor's research team, the author found that these labels carried their own meanings
for each person. The labels raised biases and assumptions that were not necessarily consistent with the voice described. Since these voices were being tracked by different coloured pencils, it was decided then that the voices would be labelled by colour only. The second and third interpreters, who were not part of the pilot study, read for voices based on the colour labels. Although relabelling at the completion of interpretations was left open, the colour label is preferred and so remains.

As more interviews were conducted and narratives interpreted, the interpreters discovered some other processes in the narratives that were not necessarily another voice but certainly important aspects of voice. Some of the interviews were conspicuous for what seemed like absence of voice, where the women did "not know" what they thought or never considered the question, or they spoke of silence or not having voice in their relationships with others. These silences were noted with a yellow pencil. Some of the interviews revealed processes underlying the narrative or life story requiring very close readings for interpretation. For example, one narrative had a predominantly purple voice with respect to attitudes and values, however the process was essentially green/pink whereby this woman shifted with her entire family to a religiously fundamentalist stance (with a progressive
interpretation of a holy text) that pervaded her world view. Another narrative included life changes and influences that have had a significant impact in developing the current voice and that narrative’s purple voice had a different quality from other purple voices, appearing to be based on a different process of development and a wisdom and integrity not present in the other purple voices. Although these processes are noted as having their own particularities for understanding specific narratives, they do not form a consistent pattern for general guidance in interpretation.

Training interpreters: In an undergraduate psychosocial developmental research course at Simon Fraser University instructed by the author’s supervisor, the author led a research lab with students who were interested in learning her research method. Two students from this class continued working with the author as the second (H.W.) and third (J.K.) interpreters. The process of training interpreters included reading various articles, as well as the Interpretive Reading Guide and dissertation proposal; initial group practice in interpretations, close supervision, and interviewing practice constituted part of the research lab. When the two interpreters began assisting the author in interpreting narrative texts, their interpretations were made independently.
None of the interpreters, including the interpreter for the pilot study, were South Asian. There were no South Asian women available in the Psychology Department as research assistants. Although it may have been ideal to have one South Asian interpreter, it was not vital to the study. Also, the author did validity checks with representatives from the South Asian community as part of the interpretive process. It was important however, that the interpreters were sensitive, displayed competent clinical judgement, and were open to other cultures. Both of the interpreters had intimate knowledge of a culture other than their own, either as children or adults, and they were very interested in learning about and from South Asian culture, as well as learning feminist theory and practice. As they were not South Asian, the interpreters required cultural training. This included discussion about the traditional South Asian family structure and expected roles, as well as cultural, immigration, and race issues.
CHAPTER FIVE
QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

The hermeneutic method typically generates qualitative results. Words and sentences constructed with literary finesse, rather than statistically calculated numbers, often convey the interpretation of meaning. Although this is a predominantly qualitative study nestled in the hermenutic circle, it is also embedded within some of the traditions of psychological research. It is not unusual to encounter both qualitative and quantitative results in a given study. Quantitative methods can allow for rigour and confidence in results which many qualitative studies do not afford. The qualitative approach however, yields an abundant richness of information that can satisfy the desire for understanding.

The results in this chapter are primarily qualitative. The statistical analyses are descriptive and serve the purpose of establishing reliability of interpretations and comparing differences between groups. The first section is a profile of the women interviewed in terms of demographic characteristics. This is followed by reliability results based on the five voices. Thematic content in the narratives is conveyed in four subsections: theme-voice associations, important themes, meta-themes, and other themes. Findings
from the Conflict Resolution Dilemma are described next, followed finally by validity results based on discussions with representatives from South Asian organizations.

The hermeneutic circle is a key to understanding these results. The parts make up the whole and the whole brings meaning to the parts. One moves back and forth between parts and whole as meaning gradually emerges and the stories become resonant. This process is rather like a painting in progress, with colours and details, background and foreground, slowly revealing themselves until the painting is completed. The following section describing participant characteristics can be considered the background to this metaphorical painting.

**Participant profile**

**Age:** The age range of the women in this study is 20 to 57 years (n = 51). The first generation ranges from 23 to 57 years (mean = 38.08; s.d. = 10.85) and the second generation range from 20 to 40 years (mean = 27.04; s.d. = 5.78).

**Birth place:** Of the 51 women interviewed, 29 have origins in the Punjab, either by birth or their parents' birth if they were born in Canada or England. The majority of these women are from rural areas in the Punjab and are Jat caste (farmers). The women were also born in other parts of North India (8/51) and South India (10/51), and many of the
immigrant women were from urban centres such as Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras. Pakistan (2/51), Fiji (4/51), and East Africa (2/51) are other places of origin. In the second generation, 9 were born in Canada and 1 woman was born in England.

**Years in Canada and citizenship:** Of the 25 immigrant women, 6 have lived in Canada for less than 5 years. Eleven women have lived in Canada between 5 to 20 years, and 8 have lived in Canada for over 20 years. Eighteen first generation women are Canadian citizens and 7 have landed immigrant status.

**Languages spoken:** All of the women in this study had varying levels of English fluency. Of the 25 women in the first generation, 18 spoke two Indian languages and 3 were fluent in three or more South Asian languages. Education on the Indian subcontinent includes learning Hindi as it is the national language, hence 20 of the women spoke Hindi. Thirteen women were fluent in Punjabi, 4 in Tamil, 4 in Telugu, and 3 in Urdu. The Malayalam, Bengali, Kashmiri, and Kannada languages were spoken by 1 woman each. Of the 26 second generation women, 14 had varying levels of fluency in Punjabi, and 8 in Hindi. Tamil, Malayalam, and Urdu were each spoken with some fluency by 1 woman each. Four of the second generation women did not have fluency in any South Asian
Religious affiliation: Of the 51 women in this study, 27 were affiliated with the Sikh religion, either as practicing Sikhs, having a Sikh identity, or acknowledging Sikhism as part of their cultural heritage. Fifteen women were Hindu, 6 were Christian, and 2 were Muslim. One woman did not identify a religious affiliation either for herself or her family.

Class: Socio-economic class was determined by asking the women a direct question as to their current status. Almost half of the women perceived themselves as middle class (25/51). Sixteen women perceived themselves as working class and 10 as middle-upper class.

Education: The distribution of education across each generation reflects an immigrant population where immigrant women are more educated than Canadians born in Canada (Estable, 1986). In the first generation, 2 out of the 25 women had less than Grade 12 education and emigrated from the rural Punjab to become brides. Four women had Grade 12 education. Two women in their 20s who immigrated with their families were currently working towards their Bachelor’s degrees. Nine women had Bachelor’s degrees and 8 had Master’s degrees, mostly obtained in India. One woman completed her Doctoral degree in Canada and had a Master’s degree from India. Some of these highly educated women who were in their
30s had careers based in their degrees; however, many of the women in their 40s and 50s had degrees that were not considered equivalent to Canadian degrees and had to accept jobs below their level of qualification or unrelated to their degrees.

In the second generation, the majority of the women have post-secondary education, bearing the educational fruits of their immigrant parents' labour. Of the 26 second generation women, 7 were currently working towards their Bachelor's degree, 10 had completed Bachelor's degrees, 4 were currently completing their Master's degrees, and 2 had obtained their Master's degrees. Three women had Grade 12 education only and were not considering further education.

**Marital status:** Marital status differs between generations and likely reflects the age distribution within each group. In the first generation, the majority of the women are or have been married. Of the 25 women in this group, 12 were currently married, 5 were separated or divorced, 1 remarried, and 2 were widowed. One of the younger women who immigrated to Canada with her family in her late teens was living common-law with her Caucasian partner at the time and was considering marriage. The only other woman who had once lived common-law had also immigrated with her family in her late teens and eventually married her Caucasian
partner. Only 4 of the women are single. These women are all in their early to mid 20s; one woman is engaged, and another had returned to India in an attempt to arrange her marriage as she could not find a suitable partner here.

The second generation are predominantly single (17/26). One of these single women was engaged at the time of the interview and is now married. Three women are married. One woman is remarried, one is living common-law with her Caucasian partner, and one woman is divorced. Two women are lesbian and were not in relationships at the time of the interview.

Establishing the reliability of interpretations

All narratives were independently rated on the predominance of the five voices by the author and second interpreter (H.W.). For each narrative, the interpreters assigned the values of 0 to 9 for each of the five voices, (i.e., 0 = not at all, 4 = moderately, or 9 = extremely). These ratings gave a profile of voice for each narrative.

Statistical analyses of the voice profiles utilized measurements for agreement and disagreement between the author and the second interpreter. In order to measure agreement between the author and second interpreter, an intraclass correlation from the kappa family (weighted kappa, with
weights equal to the square of the difference between the scale values) was calculated for each of 51 narratives. The range of intraclass correlations was 0.845 to 1.000 (mean = 0.967; s.d. = 0.036). Measurement of disagreement between the author and second interpreter was made by calculating the root mean square difference for each narrative voice profile. The range for this descriptive measure was 0.000 to 1.414 (mean = 0.515; s.d. = 0.318). The results for the measurement of disagreement are consistent with the intraclass correlations.

Over time, the reliability of interpretations improved, increasing in agreement after about half of the narratives had been interpreted (first half: mean = .9561; s.d. = .042; second half: mean = .979; s.d. = .024). Reliability also tended to be higher for second generation narratives than first generation narratives, probably because the first generation often had more complicated voice profiles (first generation: mean = .960; s.d. = .040; second generation: mean = .974; s.d. = .030). There was a total of 10 perfect agreements on the voice profiles, which means that both interpreters independently assigned exactly the same values for all five voices on 10 narratives.

Exploring the voices

Based on the voice profiles made by the interpreters,
each narrative was assigned a voice type. These predominant voice types permitted both a statistical and qualitative comparison of the two generations. Furthermore, the voice types provide a sketch depicting the voices of the women in this study. To extend the painting metaphor further, bear in mind that the women’s narratives and their lives are rich and complex, full of details and vivid colours, and completing the picture will require many and various strokes of the pencil and brush. Consider the statistical analysis and the description of the women’s voices in this section as the composite sketch in the painting. The thematic content in later sections are the details, the lines and marks and layers of colours filling out an emergent painting. Only when the painting is completed will the intricacies of these women’s narratives be understood, and even then as with any artwork, its meaning is held in the eyes of the viewer.

There are five voices retaining their colour labels of green, pink, red, purple and orange. Assigning a neutral colour label to each voice circumvents potential biases in interpreting the narratives, as well as in reading this text. Although it may be difficult for the reader to remember the description of each voice initially, the distinctness of the voices will become clearer as the qualitative information unfolds. (If the reader requires quick reference to the voices, please see Table 1: Appendix F, for brief voice
The following results are based on a statistical analysis and is only one of the ways in which to understand, in a simplified form, the wealth of the narratives. In order to retain as much subtlety of voice as possible, the voice types included one, two, or three predominant voices. Those that have two or three predominant voices are narratives that had similar values assigned for two or three voices. For example, a Green-Red voice type (GR) was assigned the values of: green = 8, pink = 2, red = 7, purple = 1, orange = 0. Or a Green-Pink-Purple voice type (GKP) was assigned the values of: green = 7, pink = 5, red = 2, purple = 6, orange = 0. The voice types and the two women's groups generated a 24-cell contingency table (see Table 2: Appendix F). In order to conduct a Chi-square analysis with small cells, the Pearson Chi-squares for exact probabilities was utilized by running the Stat Xact program, statistical software for exact non-parametric inference. Results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in the distribution pattern of voices between the first and second generations ($X^2 = 18.33$, df = 11; exact $p = .0310$). The predominantly Green voice type was only present within the first generation and the predominantly Pink-Purple and Red-Purple voice types were only present within the second generation. The predominantly Purple voice type was over-represented in the second
generation. The following are descriptions of the significantly different predominant voices types.

An immigrant woman with a predominantly Green voice prided herself in having been a homemaker and assuming primary responsibility in raising her children, whom she viewed as in need of parental protection until they are married. A meta-theme throughout her narrative was that of caring for others, often sacrificing herself for the sake of others which she did willingly and without grudge. She held traditional values about marriage and marital roles, childrearing, and women’s roles.

I love to be a woman anytime. First of all because you’re not wholly responsible for everything like, you see. ... The men are more responsible, the head of the family. They have to look after everything overall.

A second generation woman with a predominantly Pink-Purple voice was highly skilled at negotiating with her parents, her extended family, her community, and the mainstream society, and was also an independent and outspoken woman who was developing her career, organized as a feminist and anti-racist activist, and travelled internationally alone. She had found ways to accommodate both Indian and western beliefs, forging a path for herself between strong family values and individuality, and bringing both worlds together in an integrated and interesting way.

A young second generation woman with a predominantly Red-
Purple voice was struggling with her own opposing values. Her father had encouraged her to develop independence and she was living apart from her family, attending university. While she had values regarding equality in relationships and was sexually active, she was in conflict with the traditional expectations of her boyfriend and guilt-ridden by her emerging sexuality, in part because of her own and her family's traditional values around sex and marriage. She was experiencing pressure to marry and then felt confused by her developing analysis of gender roles and her assumptions that,

you’re basically there to serve your husband and your in-laws, right. I think you lose your whole, your whole self. Well that’s a bit drastic. Actually that’s being quite a bit drastic but um, the way, the way it is, you just, it’s a complete turn around I think, for the worst.

She appeared to have been silenced by her boyfriend, closing her lips tightly against words of dissent or contradiction; however, it seemed that around the time of the interview, she was re-voicing and regaining the courage to speak her mind.

The predominantly Purple voice was evident throughout a young woman’s narrative who had been raised in the West. She had chosen a profession despite her community’s disdain and her parents’ concern (although they were supportive). She dated interracially, would prefer a common-law relationship prior to marriage, and refused to fit into the culturally constraining assumptions of what women should be. She
acknowledged having a liberal upbringing and was very much her own person.

A first generation woman with a predominantly Purple voice had lived in India as what she called, a “social wife”, and then immigrated to Canada carrying traditional values that her husband would have preferred she had left behind. With his coaxing, her children’s ardent rebellion, and her own lived experiences and often painful self-reflection, she gradually developed values that were very different from the ones she had grown up with in India.

Among the other voice types, the patterns between the two generations are fairly similar. The following are some brief examples of these other voices. A predominantly Green-Red voice was apparent in the narrative of an immigrant woman who held traditional values and had severe conflict with her in-laws yet felt guilty about the strife, despite their tyranny. Speaking with a Pink-Red-Purple voice, a second generation woman who rejected traditional assumptions about women and hoped to celebrate daughters, also found herself at odds with her traditional in-laws but was hoping to work towards a satisfactory compromise with them. The Purple-Orange voice was particularly conspicuous in the narrative of a first generation woman who both resisted and developed new perspectives on cultural values.
Thematic content

Themes are the content of the narrative and over two hundred themes emerged in the women's stories. They are the details of the painting, adding texture and colour to the painting. Many of the themes were frequent in all the narratives, however there were variations on these themes. They were voiced in various colours or not at all. Some themes presented themselves only in the narratives of one generation but not the other. A few themes were unique and rarely occurred, while others were inter-connected with other themes. Many narratives included themes that were like a thick, bold stroke bringing completion to the composition, holding a woman's life story together.

Themes, voices, and generations

The interpretation of themes was made in part by noting which of the five voices was associated with a theme. For example, the theme of "arranged marriage" could be associated with a green, or pink, or red, or purple, or orange voice. It was this theme-voice association that the interpreters had to agree upon in the collaborative group meetings. For the statistical analysis, these theme-voice associations were compared between the first and second generation. Of the numerous themes contained in the narratives, there were 42 themes with voice associations that occurred with regular
frequency. Chi-square analyses were conducted and again, because the cells were small, exact probabilities were calculated. Each theme with the five voice associations and two generation groups generated a 10-cell contingency table, although some tests included a 6-cell or 8 cell contingency table if there were 0s for one voice in both generations. The following results are the statistically significant theme-voice association between the generations (see Tables 3a-3l: Appendix F).

**Arranged Marriage**

The pattern of difference between the first and second generation suggested that the majority of the first generation had arranged marriages and, at the time, had accepted this system (green voice), in contrast to the second generation who did not accept traditional arrangements (no green voice association). Instead, the second generation had varying opinions about arranged marriages ranging from accepting contemporary arranged introductions (pink voice), to being opposed to any form of arranged marriage (purple voice), to viewing such marriages as acceptable within its context but not actually consenting to them (orange voice) ($X^2 = 25.91$, df = 4; exact $p = .0000$) (Table 3a).

A first generation woman spoke about her arranged marriage 15 years ago (green voice):
Then they arranged my father’s auntie’s house, they brought their family and my family brought me there and he was just standing in the door and I just passed. We didn’t talk. We didn’t say hello. We didn’t say anything. He just saw my face but I felt so shy, embarrassed so I couldn’t look at him. So I just see like half of his body. He saw a couple of other girls too but he didn’t like them, the colour, their skin colour or their height. And he said yes, like after the second day, my father’s aunt, she came to our village and she said, oh they like the girl and they want to get married. And my father and my mother, they fixed the date. Arranged marriage, they started buying things for me. In fourteen days ... I didn’t say anything because my sister, she got married two years before my marriage but she didn’t say anything. We grew up that way. We didn’t know we can say something to them. We didn’t have that thing in our minds. If parents say, stand there, we stand there. If they say, okay get married to this guy, we get married to that guy. We didn’t, like now I know, I can pick but on that time I didn’t have any choice. And it wasn’t really I didn’t, like that, because that age, 18, you don’t know anything, what’s coming on there. You’re thinking, oh you are going to Canada. Its a big deal ... That’s all things were in my mind. But I was sad too because I was going to leave my parents, my family there. But it didn’t came to my mind to say no to my parents.

A young woman recently immigrated to Canada found arranged marriage acceptable and said,

...it’s real luck. Like if we get a good person, then it is our luck. Otherwise we have to cope with it.

Both generations were equally likely to view arranged marriages as a viable option but not in the traditional sense and within limits. Many of these first generation women had love marriages to Indian or non-South Asian men, or were divorced from their arranged marriage, and those in the second generation were dating, often out of race. The following
quotation is an example of an orange voice for arranged marriage, spoken by an immigrant woman living common-law with her Caucasian partner.

I’m for it in its own context. Like it works in a place like India because the whole mind set is that marriage is just the next thing that you do. You’re born, you get raised, you get married, you have kids, you go to haj, ... There’s sort of a path. There’s a path that everyone leads. And it’s about companionship and it’s about procreation and those things. It sort of gets mixed up here because you don’t have a time for things ... the stages aren’t that clear ... I’m only against it when the children have no say, when they’re very young, or when women have no say in the matter and it’s forced upon them.

When speaking about arranged marriages, the second generation referred to them as arranged introductions and often saw the arranged marriages of their parents as “archaic”, “traditional”, and without choice. The young women who found arranged introductions acceptable (pink voice) would often say something similar to the following:

I don’t have anything against arranged marriages as long as I’m given the opportunity to get to know the other person and I have the right to say yes or no. But they also say if I find somebody on my own, that that’s okay too as long as he’s approved by them. So it works both ways. I mean, I’m not guaranteed that I’m going to find somebody on my own. I think that they have more links than I do. It might even be better off if they found somebody for me.

Well my parents are the type that if I met someone on my own, they would be perfectly okay. So I am, like I’ve been meeting people that my friends have been setting me up with. I tend not to tell my parents about it only because they tend to get really excited and I just, for me, I want to tell them only when I’m sure it’s the person. So basically I’ve just sort of been sending the word
out that I am interested. My parents have introduced me to a couple of guys but just, there was nothing there. ... I would like to get to know the person before I said yes. When I say on my own, I think it just takes off a lot of pressure. Otherwise you know, the parents are there and you feel more obligated to say yes. So I do it on my own. The only criteria for my parents is that he’s a Sikh. That’s all they want. ... And Sikh would be nice because it would make life easier for everybody.

Second generation women who spoke about arranged marriages with a purple voice, often said that the issue of arranged marriage was brought up in their homes “as a joke”. They were adamantly opposed to arranged marriage and did not view arranged introductions as fundamentally different from the traditional system. One young woman objected strongly to arranged marriages.

I hate the idea of someone taking control of my life, and even if I like the guy, I still wouldn’t because I feel so strongly against that. I just don’t want, I don’t think anyone has the right. The community doesn’t have the right. My parents don’t have the right to do that to me. ... Arranged marriage, it just, maybe it works in some cases but I think if you’ve grown up with a different set of ideas and you know what you want, it’s hard to allow someone to take the reins in their hands. Okay well, what about this one. I think it’s a meat market too. I feel sorry for the men because there’s a certain stereotype. They have to be a certain way in order to get a good wife. Every aspect of your life is cut open. The way you look. What colour, how dark your skin is. What you’re studying. What you’ve done. What your great great grandfather has done. I mean, what does that have to do with anything?

When asked about arranged marriages, a woman born in India and raised in Canada said,

Well I’m glad that I’m not in a situation where
I’ll be pressured to undergo one. I’ve watched my cousin, who is in India, have to submit to one just recently. I have friends also who are facing that future and they’re just terrified of it because they have no idea about where their lives are going to be going. They realize they don’t have much to say in this direction at all. So I’m very glad that I don’t have to be in that situation. ... In India there’s not a lot of room for women to go and be self-supporting so the fathers of the women make sure the husbands are going to do that. In this country and even more recently in India, it’s just not needed, especially since we both have education, my sister and I. There’s no reason for it so...

When I asked her about arranged introductions, she responded,

When it does happen, I think it’s also just paying lip service because the underlying framework is still that the daughters don’t have any choice to say, no, when it comes down to it. Even good friends of mine have said that their parents were fairly liberal in letting them meet the person, you know, discussing it. What did you like? What didn’t you like? When it comes down to it, not just the parents but the daughters realise as well that they, the parents are doing for them what is so-called best. They haven’t been taught to go out and meet people. They haven’t sort of developed qualities of an independent person generally ... So even though they may, it may be a little bit less shocking than appearing on your wedding day and seeing this person for the first time because you’ve met this person and sort of canvassed out a few of his qualities, whatever you can in an hour or two, it’s really still, it really doesn’t do anything in the end. ... I suppose because unless you change the whole structure, it doesn’t matter. It’s like saying, I don’t know, we’re not going to execute somebody by this way, we’re going to do it this way.

Although the majority of the first generation spoke with green voices about their arranged marriage, a few of them preferred to make arranged introductions for their children (4 women) and many did not want any form of arranged marriages for their children (9 women). Some of the latter women’s
children had love marriages to non-South Asian partners, even if those children had grown up in a fairly traditional household. A woman who met her husband for the first time when she came to Canada to marry him and live with his extended family said of her children's marriages:

It's altogether different views now. With my children, we couldn't make them matches or nothing. ... We tried. We were thinking that living Indian ways and joint family might have some impact on them, but no ... They're both married to Canadian people ... Oh it bother us little bit and then we, I think we were kind of afraid from the community and the relatives ... Then my dad say, you don't have any difficulty with him communicating. You understand the language. So what else would you like to pick. He said, if we have mix marriages, then maybe some discrimination will go away. ... We thought why should we afraid from people. At the end, our children will be ours. That's what concerned to us, not the people.

Marriage

Marriage itself was viewed in various ways by both generations, but they differed significantly in the general beliefs that each generation held ($X^2 = 9.284$, df = 4; exact $p = .0204$) (Table 3b). The majority of first generation women accepted the notion that the purpose of marriage was to have children and join two families together (green voice). For many of them, marriage was an inevitable part of the life cycle and made them complete, allowing them to fulfill their function in the world as wife and future mother. One woman eloquently described her beliefs about marriage.

... ultimately this should be your goal in life, to have a family and to keep up society the way
it is. Keeping the family as a unit. ... I feel that it’s the family and the values that are in the family that really make up society. If marriage is not strong, then society doesn’t have meaning anymore because whether it’s, unless we educate our children and teach them that innovation is good and you should, the quest for knowledge and stuff like that, you’re not going to have any sort of furtherment as a, for mankind as a whole. Family is the smallest unit where mankind can live on earth. So this is going to be the, I think if a man and woman have a good marriage, it’s going to be the base for a good family life. You bring up children who are, who are as healthy physically and mentally as possible, and the more families who are like that, we’re going to have a healthier society on the whole. That’s the way we have to emphasize and that’s the example we’re setting for our children. As long as you have a happy marriage, then everything starts from there.

In contrast, the majority of second generation women believed that marriage, as well as children, were options in life, and that marriage was entered into for love and partnership, and not necessarily “till death do us part” (purple voice). There were also many who were critical of marriage as a social institution that provided women with credibility.

What does marriage mean to me? I think that it’s a really rich opportunity to grow with someone and share your life and incorporate your dreams. I think it’s hard work and I think it’s unrealistic within our society. I think it’s um, it’s just a big chance. It’s like having kids. I don’t know that I could have kids because it’s such a difficult thing. It’s so much work. I love being married. I love my husband. ... I think when I was a little kid, I thought, cos I saw my parents fight so much, I thought, oh God, to be stuck to someone for fifty, sixty years, this will be a living hell. So I used to look at my parents and go, I’m not going to get married till I’m 60. ... I think that I thought that I would have, I would be an eccentric single person with lots of affairs. Just a woman of the world.

When asked about the impact of marriage on a woman’s life, one
woman replied,

... all of a sudden instead of being an unknown quantity or a problem that’s not solved, not a problem but an equation that’s not solved, I think a lot of people see as, okay then, a equals b, finally equals c. It’s also I think so many, probably all through the world, it’s a rite of passage. It’s kind of like, you’ve grown up now. You’ve made steps towards being a normal, well-functioning human being. Yeah, I do think people see it that way. Whereas it was sort of like, before marriage it’s kind of, it seems like everything is still possible for that person. You don’t know if somebody, you don’t know if they might still move to another country or if they might end up being lesbian. All the possibilities are still there.

**Spousal Roles**

Consistent with the differences in their beliefs about marriage, the first and second generation also had different patterns in their notions regarding marital roles. The second generation scorned the traditional demands on the South Asian wife and instead had or desired an equal partnership with a mate (purple voice only). While the majority of the first generation also disapproved of the stereotyped role, they varied in their beliefs and circumstances \( (X^2 = 9.844, \text{df} = 3; \text{exact } p = .0085) \) (Table 3c). When asked to define the cultural notions of the ideal wife, the women often responded with comments like:

the Indian movie woman. She works hard all day and she pleases her mother-in-law and she’s a good mother and good sister and she’s a good daughter and good neighbour. And then her husband comes home from work and she gets all pretty and you know, he thinks she’s like, you know, like you know, the most incredible thing ... pretty, sweet, and good cook, socialized to take care of
her servants and her house and stuff.

Or,

Well the ideal wife would probably be living with her in-laws and be really happy about it too. Doing all the housework and never sitting down. Always doing everything for everyone. Probably the traditional wife, I wouldn’t see her working outside of the house either. I see her mostly doing the housework.

Or,

... maybe I’m just being pessimistic but, your husband’s shoe. ... You follow your husband, right? That’s what they expect and that’s what they want. That’s what the husbands want.

As already mentioned, the second generation and most of the first generation did not subscribe to the traditional portrayal, however the latter had varying voices on this theme. Born and raised in India, a woman expressed her distress at the undervaluing of the traditional role of wife in North American society (green voice).

... an ideal wife would always be supporting to the husband. Like my husband is a doctor and I worry about him more, not only for him, for his patients too. If I don’t keep him happy, peaceful you know, he can’t take care of his patients too good. ... I always try to keep him very calm. I don’t bother him much of my problems or my house problems. I can take care of house as I can so he can be peaceful. He always says that if he can’t be, you know, this way, he wouldn’t be taking care of his patients too. So that would be I keep all the time in mind. ... I wouldn’t be much appreciated here as I would be in India, like as a mother or as a wife and everything. ... I’m sacrificing so many things. Like I came all the way from India for my husband. If I was in India, everybody would appreciate it. See how much you’re doing for your husband.

A first generation woman briefly described the change in her
beliefs and how in the early years of her marriage, she thought,

Just follow your husband. On that time but not anymore. Just like, I always uh, following the footsteps, following the husband’s footsteps. I always believed in that but now I’m not East Indian that much, I’m more Canadian now. So like, I walk, how can I say, equal. I feel equal with my husband.

In speaking about the difference between her beliefs and her husband’s, and her solution, a first generation woman observed,

When you’re working, then you don’t really want to be cooking and cleaning and doing all those sort of chores. I don’t believe that a wife has to do that ... you know, that type of a wife. A wife may choose to do those things but I don’t think that she’s an ideal wife. It’s not necessary. ... My husband is very, very different. He has very traditional ideas. Like if I ever say, please try to make your bed, you know, he says, what do you think I have a wife for? I have to just sort of overlook it because that’s just the way he’s been brought up and there is no, he will never change. People don’t change like that. That’s his upbringing and he believes I should cook and I should clean. But he doesn’t, not to that extent. Like he pays to get the house cleaned.

It was interesting to note that while while some of the first generation women held conservative views of marriage, they were not necessarily traditional with respect to their marital relationship. For example, the woman quoted in the “Marriage” section, who spoke about family as the basis of society, also believed strongly in an equal partnership.

A good wife is a person who’s her husband’s equal in every way. Who can understand her husband as, for what he is and make sure that her husband understands what she is. ... The wife who just blindly thinks that keeping her husband no matter
what is actually I feel is not a good wife. ... If the husband does something wrong, if you’re really a good mate to him, you’ll stop him and say, what you’re doing is wrong. Don’t do it. Or do everything in your power to make sure he can’t do it. I feel that’s what is a good wife. Sometimes it’s all twisted out of proportion. All these myths which come from half-baked knowledge. They just say that, no well, you just, you have to knuckle down to everything your husband does and that’s really, it’s really untrue. It’s not true at all. That’s just something which must, it’s been propogated by the male chauvinism in eastern culture.

In speaking about the spousal role, a second generation woman said censoriously,

She’s got independence but only so much. That independence would, it would be like having a dog on a very long leash and she would be the dog and the husband would be able to jerk. In our culture, North American culture, the leash is much longer than say in India, but it’s still there. So that’s how I consider that. For me, I just don’t want the tie. ... Men are brought up from day one with the understanding that what they would like for their career, any kinds of ideas of success, they are able to achieve, including the women in their life. Women on the other hand are just brought up to sort of understand that it will be their role to submit to whatever it is their husbands have in mind for them.

Another second generation woman remarked,

I think the ideal wife is someone that is equal and that, because the sense of being equal is strongly rooted in herself, she’s not fighting. ... That it’s not a constant struggle to be equally valued and equally respected. Just somebody who is capable of being loving and giving. Just being positive. Being able to be, because I think the thing we’re missing here or what we’re losing is that, the ability to encourage each other.

This woman objected to the notion that

the wife is really the helpmate ... that the wife is more the accessory to the husband. That the husband has the stronger goals and stronger needs to be fulfilled by the wife. Just, what’s the word, she just mediates life and reality so that the
husband can do what he needs to do.

Along a similar vein, another woman believed that a wife is strong enough that whether she wants to help him pursue his dreams or she has her own dreams, she is validated. She is not taken as an appendage.

**Dating**

The majority of the first generation did not date prior to marriage (green voice), in contrast to the second generation who either dated openly (purple voice) or without their parents' knowledge (pink voice) \(X^2 = 13.72, \text{ df } = 2; \text{ exact } p = .0007\) (Table 3d). For many of the first generation women who had traditionally arranged marriages, dating was not an option, and women who had come to Canada as young, single adults and are now dating, also were not permitted to date in India. One of these young woman stated,

I think back in India I would never think about dating anybody. It’s just not there. It’s just not comfortable. Yeah, if I wanted to tell my parents that I like somebody, (?) check them out, I have the freedom to do so. But dating somebody is really out of the picture. It’s something you won’t even think about. Yeah I had school crushes. All that stuff ... Still it just doesn’t go there. Here you go out and date a guy. It’s just like you’re born with it, you know what I mean?

When asked about dating, a second generation woman who dated without her parents' awareness commented,

Well everyone does it you know, but it’s not something you would want advertised or you would tell your parents ... to let them know that you’re dating or having a boyfriend is just not what you do. Its sort of like your own business. Its not that, you don’t bring them home or you don’t do any of that. So it’s better. That’s how most of my cousins have done it.
There are as many second generation women who date clandestinely as date openly. One woman spoke with lingering pain about openly defying her parents and how she broke away from their intolerable restrictions by leaving home.

All of a sudden I, you know, wow, the whole world just opened up. I could date anyone I wanted ... For years, I was convinced I would marry an Indian man. That would really be the best thing for everyone involved. Then my parents stopped talking to me and I started dating and I haven’t looked back. It suddenly seemed really racist of me or discriminatory to think that the only person qualified to marry me would be an Indian ... and I have had four, five relationships in my life, from the point that I was 19. All with men I either met through work or university. And positive relationships. I knew nothing about men and I knew nothing about dating and I made a lot of mistakes that most people make in highschool, I made them in my 20s, which was painful but, you know, I’m a late bloomer.

Some of the second generation women perceived their families as liberal and they could date and have long term relationships without the expectation of marriage (purple voice).

... my relationships have been pretty good and up until recently, I have managed to sort of get myself involved with a capital M, macho typical man ... just recently had a sort of very, sort of casual affair with someone who was really really typical male syndrome ... Its possible that my faith in the ability to actually have relationships with men will sort of wane and I might want to start relationships with women ... But at the same time, I’m not going to force myself because its trendy to be bisexual or trendy to, you know. Its like, if it feels right, fine. If it doesn’t, fine.

Although the majority of the first generation spoke with green voices about dating in their youth, if they did speak about their children dating, they spoke with pink (2 women) or
purple voices (7 women). A woman who described herself as having previously been a traditional woman and experienced transformative changes over the years said about her daughters,

They’ve all at different times in their lives had boyfriends. They’ve all had live in boyfriends too. My eldest daughter is lesbian now so I know, I know about all that and I’ve had to deal with those kinds of things. Now I see it as, it’s their lives and it’s their relationships.

Age Issue

Although the issue of age for marriage was not a frequent theme, it emerged differently between the two generations. The first generation raised this issue more often and were concerned about it (green and pink voices), but the second generation were not (purple voices) ($X^2 = 11.00$, $df = 2$; exact $p = .0061$) (Table 3e). An unmarried first generation woman in her mid-twenties said in a green voice,

I guess I’m concerned because I’m too old to be single right, and you are reminded time and again. I also, I’ve come to the point where I think I am. Like it’s not just what people are saying but I myself feel like I want to settle down and I feel that if I leave it much longer, my options are going to be much limited, much more limited than they are now, or they might have even been a couple of years ago. ... but mainly it’s just all my college friends are married and all of them were on an average at least two years younger than I am and a lot of them have been married for two or three years now.

When asked why she decided not be married yet, a second generation woman in her early 30s remarked,

Well I certainly did not want to get married early because a lot of my cousins older than me had
gotten married earlier. So that was one reason. I just thought, age. ... I just think it's too early to get married. There's things I wanted to do. Especially when one's going to school, you don't want to get married. So I think age was one thing.

**Living With In-laws**

Many of the first generation assumed that they would be living with their in-laws and were content in doing so (green voice), in contrast to the second generation who neither assumed or wished to live with in-laws (purple voice), or else negotiated or hoped to find a compromise in living arrangements (pink voice) \( (X^2 = 7.992, \ df = 3; \ exact \ p = .0395) \) (Table 3f). An immigrant woman spoke about her initial thoughts about living in a joint family when she first arrived in Canada.

... But here when I came, my father-in-law said, we are going to live together all of our lives. So that sink into my mind. I have to think for, to make it happen so that we can live together. If, that day he told me that, that I will take it negatively, why I have to stay all my life him. Then we worked around that feeling that we have to live together, then there is this way that we can live nicely.

[Did you ever think negatively about it?]
No. Never, never.

A second generation woman reflected back upon her thoughts about living with in-laws.

Although I was of marriageable age, I always knew that I didn't want to live with the in-laws. ... I think that I don't really mind if they stayed in my house but as long as, you know, if I got along with them. But I knew from my experience that the daughter-in-law role is to serve her mother-in-law and her father-in-law and
anyone else that is in that hierarchy list. It was, well, the role of the daughter-in-law in the traditional families is subservient. She has to be taking care of everyone else’s needs.

A young woman, engaged to be married and quite opposed to living with in-laws, was struggling with her parents-in-law’s expectation that she cohabitate with them and was attempting to find a way to accommodate them and herself (pink voice).

Well I was very, I always stressed that I wanted my own kitchen. So we’re going to have our own basement suite. That was really important to me. Because my fiancé doesn’t do any housework right now. He’s totally spoilt. His mother totally dotes on him. Has dinner ready for him and everything. It is very hard because I made him make tea for me once when I went over to their house. His mom came home and she was so shocked he was making tea. Just a little thing like that. So I think, and it would be really awkward for him too to try, cos I want him to do some of the housework. At least do some of the work. But I think it would be hard for him with his parents around because they’ve always done that for him. Plus I want the privacy too. ... But still I want, I want to keep my distance too. I don’t want to be totally engulfed by their family. I just want to retain myself too and have a relationship, but not so enmeshed. ... I’m hoping that having my own kitchen and stuff can do that. ... But the thing is, this is a good thing. I have an allergy. ... So I think, like they want us to eat together, but I think because of my allergy too, it will be a lot easier to have my own kitchen. I can use my allergy as an excuse, like, oh I have to go eat my special food.

Some of the women did not see conflict in living with their in-laws and believed that there would be few problems in doing so.

I think I’ve got a lot of patience in the sense that I could probably negotiate successfully if I lived in a family. If I had a mother-in-law, I would be okay. Because I think, because I’ve worked on a lot of issues of boundaries and all of that, so it’s not something that’s going to
set me off. You sort of work around it and you understand where it's coming from and you appreciate where they're coming from and all of that. ... As you get older, you get more mature right. For me, privacy is not a big thing. I think that's a very western yuppie kind of concept. We need our own condo, right. Strain on our relationship.

Role of the Daughter

The role of the daughter is a rather complicated one, and while it is presented here on its own, it is interconnected with the themes of izzat (family honour), being amanat (held in trust), and the role of the daughter-in-law, and these four themes should be presented together for a fuller understanding. These other themes however, will be discussed fully in a later section as they are very important but were not statistically significant between the generations.

At its most superficial level, the traditional role of the daughter pertained to conformity, carrying out household tasks, and living up to expectations (i.e., education and marriage). First generation women mostly believed that they were good daughters who were obedient, compliant, and well-behaved (green voice), whereas the second generation had varied attitudes about themselves as daughters (pink, red, and purple voices) ($X^2 = 11.12, df = 4; \text{exact } p = .0122$) (Table 3g). When asked about her parents' expectations for her as a daughter, an immigrant woman said,

... their expectations were never spoken out loud. It's just that, when you're younger, they would say, oh this girl did this so nicely, or
somebody would have visited us and given my, if my mother would have visited a family who had a daughter, and when my mother would have visited the daughter would have woven a small basket or something like that. Or she would have taken care of her parents’ needs or something. She was really polite. The child really took care of us and she made sure we had fresh towels and you know. She brought us our coffee the moment we walked in the door, and stuff like that. It made us understand that that’s what they thought of being, how a polite girl will behave. That’s how, they never told us that this is the way you should behave. This is how good daughters behave. I don’t think they did.

A second generation woman observed about the role of the daughter,

She’s supposed to listen to her parents. She’s supposed to do all the housework. Once in a while they used to say, go to school. That was emphasized in our house. Education was definitely emphasized. ... Talking to all the relatives. Talking and greeting everybody properly. Respecting your parents.

[Did you agree with all that?] To a degree. I just, I don’t think that if I don’t cook on a regular basis, it doesn’t mean that I’m going to be a total failure in life, but my mom would think so. ... So some of the things she takes to extremes, but overall I agree. Like respect your parents.

In contrast, a second generation woman who did not conform to the traditional role of the daughter (purple voice) said rather bitterly,

My parents thought a good daughter would be someone who could cook, clean, compete in every sport, get straight A’s, be involved in every club, and have intelligent options that reflected their own. Have no sex drive. Get straight A marks in university which they would hope to be a lawyer, doctor, or engineer. That they would be musically talented as well.

Her own beliefs about the role of the daughter were:

A good daughter is someone who will be able to
accept her parents' idiosyncrasies and treat them lovingly and enjoy them as friends. As an adult. A good teenage daughter, I think she would just be someone who would not be surly and get reasonably good marks and be interested and not overwhelmed by peer pressure. I don't mean about drugs and stuff. Just about relating to other humans and stuff. Not fragile. Strong minded, independent, free thinking. That's what I think. And who took an active interest in family life or you know, enjoyed the family dynamic. That's a good daughter. That would be a good family member, male or female.

**Authority to Parents**

A related theme to the traditional role of the daughter is giving unquestioned authority to parents. With this theme, the majority of the second generation perceived themselves as questioning and oppositional (purple voice), whereas some of the first generation saw themselves as either accepting, accommodating, or rejecting their parents' authority (green, pink, and purple voices) \( (X^2 = 12.12, \text{ df } = 3; \text{ exact } p = .0018) \) (Table 3h). A young woman who grew up in Canada talked about how her relatives were appalled at her manner with her parents (purple voice).

They just can't believe that I would even, you know, just tell my dad, well I don't think that's right. Or telling mom, no I don't think so. And they're just like, you shouldn't talk to your parents that way. And I'm, well I am. My parents don't care. I mean my parents want me to. I mean, that's the way they raised me to be is that you shouldn't just be accepting of everything your parents say and you need to question it. Find out why they think that way. And then it would be okay to accept it.

Another second generation woman spoke along a similar line, although her parents were not as pleased about her independent
mind and this resulted in a great deal of discord in the family.

They raised us to be independent thinkers but they really squelched any attempts towards any independence. ... they put women, they put us through university. We weren't stupid. They encouraged us to think for ourselves. They encouraged us to never rely on anyone else. They literally, they both were so afraid of the possibility of a spouse dying or whatever. Both of them had parents who died so they said, you've got to be self-sufficient. And for that reason, it was really important to them that we have careers and that we had dreams and that it had nothing to do with men. So as a result, when you raise children to think on their own and stuff, they're going to think on their own.

Many of the women, whether first or second generation, had different responses regarding parental authority depending upon the parent. Fathers commanded more authority than mothers, and mothers often took the position of ally and support to their daughters.

I couldn't disagree with my dad. There's no way. We just have to accept his law. But with my mom, I would have disagreed. I did.

**Work and Childrearing**

The issue of having a working career outside the home and/or childrearing evoked different patterns of responses between the generations. The second generation saw themselves as women working outside of the home, often with careers that they were developing or had already established, and sometimes as "supermoms" who worked outside the home and raised children (purple voice). When the first generation discussed this issue, their responses ranged from assuming motherhood only,
finding a compromise between working and childrearing, developing a career, and coming to a different perspective about this issue (green, pink, purple, and orange voices) \( (X^2 = 16.12, \text{ df} = 4; \text{ exact } p = .0002) \) (Table 3i). A typical response (purple voice) from a second generation woman is similar to the following:

... my great desire to be a mother only comes from listening to my mother. I can’t think of any other influences that have made me want to be a mother. Um, I do though, want to be a mother later in my life, you know, when I have had the chance to establish my career or do all those other things. The travelling. I’ve travelled incredibly but it’s not enough. So maybe, I don’t know, in my 30s, if I’m married. My 30s would be good. ...

[Do you see yourself as working when you’re raising kids?]
Oh yeah. Definitely. Without a doubt.

Those in the first generation who worked and raised their children did so either because having both a career and children were important to them, or out of economic necessity as a single mother and/or struggling immigrant. There were also a few first generation women who simply could not envision themselves as full time mothers despite a love of children (purple voice).

I don’t know if its cultural, if its my over-maternal zeal that I have since day one. I definitely want to have a child. With me, I was going to have a kid at 30 no matter what. I was 25. Artificial insemination. I mean, this is still an option for me. Relationship or no relationship. ... I definitely want to have a child. ... I work with children. I want to have them, and that’s very much a part of my psyche. ... If I didn’t work, I’d be in school or something. I don’t think I could do a stay home thing. ... I think a lot of it has
to do with the power stuff about seeing women
I know sort of lose something, maybe this fear
of becoming totally fixated and linear about
just childraising and forgetting the other
aspects. ... I couldn’t imagine being home
twenty-four hours of the day just totally in
a childcare thing. No. I’d probably put my
kid in daycare and then go to work in the
preschool and then be with other kids.

Many of the women who viewed motherhood traditionally, in
that motherhood was an assumed role, did not discuss at length
the issue of work and childrearing. Having children and
creating a family was expected and working outside the home
was not really an option. However, some of these women, whose
children are now adults, are working part time currently or
engaged in volunteer work. There were a few first generation
women who approached this issue from a vantage point that was
different from either traditional assumptions or “supermom”
expectations. The following is spoken by a woman who has her
Doctoral degree and was on staff as a Research Associate in a
science department at a university (orange voice).

... my mom was a homebody. She was always at home,
and I appreciate that now when I think back. I had
a wonderful childhood and so did my brother and
sister, and I think I owe it to my mother because
she was a stable figure in the family. My dad was
always there too and he’s a lot of fun too. But
having mom around, when you come back from school
and you see your mother is there and snacks are all
ready. Maybe I was a chauvinist. I don’t know
what it is but that definitely was there when we
were growing up and I think that’s important. That’s
probably the reason why right now, I don’t mind
staying at home with these guys. I’m not planning
on going back to the work that I was doing, as I
mentioned to you. I’m planning on just taking some
time off. I’m just going to apply for a teaching
position at the colleges, if I can get one course
to teach, just to keep myself a little busy while
they’re growing. I would like to be there for them because that’s how my childhood was. I know it was very stable because of that. I would like them to have the same thing too. I’m not that career conscious that I have to go back to work when this guy turns six months or whatever.

[So you see yourself as working part time but mostly being around here?]

Part time, yeah, until they’re really, once they start going to school. Maybe then I can start doing other things.

**Parenting Practices**

Parenting practices, where raising children was either the sole responsibility of the mother or equally shared between the mother and father, were viewed quite differently between the two generations. The majority of the second generation wished to have equal parenting (purple voice), with a small number hoping to find a compromise between their beliefs for shared parenting and their assumption that their spouse would prefer less involvement (pink voice). The first generation were either content as primary caregiver or with a compromise, had managed a relatively equal share of parenting, or were struggling and frustrated with solely carrying the responsibility that they preferred to share with their husbands (green, pink, purple, and red voices) \( (X^2 = 8.250, df = 3; \text{exact } p = .0427) \) (Table 3j). When asked what kind of role she thought the father would have in parenting, a second generation replied in a purple voice,

A really strong role. Oh, I think equal to the role of the mother or the wife. In terms of discipline. In terms of the amount of time that
you spend, waking time with the children is the same. That really has to be shared because I would really, because I find that one of my real goals I guess, is that my kids learn from, like because I think that you learn how you are with other people from what you see your parents doing to each other. I would really want us to set an example, that this is really can do. You can really share all the responsibilities and respect each other and love each other. Yeah. That they got equal affection from both of us because it’s, I think it really does face how each child looks at the opposite sex when they grow up and how comfortable they are around the opposite sex. So if it’s equal, then there’s no sort of confusion.

A first generation woman, angry yet resigned to being the primary caregiver despite her belief in sharing the parenting with her husband (red voice) said,

But it’s hard just doing it all yourself. You know, being a single parent. It is really hard. Sometimes I sort of feel like maybe I should give myself a bit of time on my own. Like having to worry about her babysitter and everything. Even when I go to __ for that matter, like I’ll always have to arrange a sitter.

[Even your husband isn’t available to be there?]
No. Even if he is at home, he does his own thing. I still have to have a sitter.

[So you really are a single parent.]
Yes, a single parent. Even if it is till midnight, he’ll be in the house doing his own thing. My daughter, I guess she’s just grown up like that now. If I ever tell her that I’m going to leave you with your dad and I’m going out for half an hour, she does not want it. She wants a sitter. She’s just gotten used to it. ... Sometimes it is really hard when you don’t get a break. I mean, it must be wonderful to, I shouldn’t say it’s wonderful, that’s not what I would want. But to really actually have children and not have to really do anything. I mean, from a man’s point of view, from a father’s point of view. Like really not have to do anything and yet they are your children. And when they grow up, they don’t really seem to remember who as much.

Another immigrant woman said about her husband’s role in parenting,
I have to sort of motivate him all the time to get him involved, but culturally it's considered a woman's responsibility to raise the kids, teach them good things. He would do things like taking them to the library once in a while when it's his mood, so his responsibilities were basically optional to him. ... I wanted him different. I wanted more shared responsibility with the kids and that also was very difficult. And he was really, because he kept aloof and he knew that the responsibilities were in my hands for raising them, he was very quick to criticize all the time, the way they were acting or the way they were not doing certain things. So not only I had the responsibility but I had to constantly deal with his criticism about the way I was doing things.

Some of the first generation however, were quite comfortable with being the primary caregiver (green voice). When asked if her husband shared in parenting, this woman stated,

Not much. He believe in that. Everybody should have share to do that but in practically, he didn't, see. It was most of my responsibility. I take them for shopping and the younger one. He would help for cooking. Yeah, he help me sometimes. Sometimes he takes some responsibility, but not all the time. ... I brought them myself.

Guiding Children

On the theme of generally guiding children, the second generation who discussed this viewed childrearing from a non-traditional stance (purple voice only), whereas the first generation considered a compromise between traditional and non-traditional methods, or they were non-traditional (pink and purple voices) \( (X^2 = 8.0, \text{df} = 2; \text{exact p} = .0137) \) (Table 3k). With careful consideration, a second generation woman said about raising children,

... the family sort of seems to be more real.
Kids are what you leave behind and that has more to do with being in this planet as a whole. This is, and also that's where the truth comes about, about what you really believe in, because you have to start teaching them to somebody else. All your values and your ideals. Your beliefs. That’s the true test, I think, of who you are because you’ve decided that you’re going to teach this to somebody else. You’re by example teaching it to somebody else. ...

[What do you think the ideal mother would be like?]
Just really someone who, I think someone who loves their kids and wants, it’s like they find the world so wonderful that they want to share it with someone. That’s what they’re teaching them. Not that it’s like so rosy wonderful but that it’s so interesting that there’s so many things to learn. And really try to bring out, like to make children aware of where they are. This is a huge planet with so many differences, so many similarities. There’s just so much that you can learn. Somebody that gives their kids a sense of that but also a sense of security in that, you know, I think the mom really ideally is there for you all the time. That’s what you need.

A first generation woman spoke about raising her two daughters (green voice):

... I only just pray that they don’t do anything wrong in their teenage years or as they’re growing up, you know. They should not cross their limits. ... well ideal mother would always expect the children, the best for the children, you know. Just hope that they go in the right path, right direction. They don’t slip here and there, you know. Find the right partner too. ...
[Do you think you mother the same way your mother raised you?]
I think quite a bit but living in this country, I’m more lenient than my mother is. ... But my children, they were just not that bad. They were always obedient. They just listened to me most of the time. Like ninety percent of the time, they listened to me. ... They always need your help. They always need the protection. I feel that way. I could be wrong.

Differential Socialization

Almost all of the second generation were opposed to the
differential rearing of children based on gender roles (purple voice only), and although most of the first generation also were of the same opinion, they also held other beliefs and practices (green, pink, red, and purple voices) ($X^2 = 5.881$, df = 3; exact $p = .0216$) (Table 31). Second generation women often mentioned the following:

I wouldn’t play, put on any roles. I mean, they would grow up wearing pink, yellow, and blue, all of the colours, and purple. And they would both play with dolls and tractors, play with everything. You know, I wouldn’t buy specific toys for either one. My son and daughter would both have teddy bears and would both grow up as feminists and be brought up with it. Whether they’d stick to it or not is another story. But um, no, I mean, I’d want them to be proud individuals of who they are and where they’ve come from and what their history is and um, continually fighting knowing that it is a responsibility to be fighting inequalities out there. So I mean, I don’t think I would ever raise my children in, I don’t like the term “gender roles”. I never have. I mean, its just sexism. ... The reason I don’t like it is because when people mention gender roles, they’ve suddenly placed a list, he - she, you know. You know, aggressive - caring. You know, these really, terms, and the women are given all these nice terms and men are given all these go-getter terms and stuff. And its like, that’s crap, you know. Because I always find that they’re so intertwined.

Another second generation woman said,

Hopefully I would try to make it that they had the same responsibilities and that they would have the same outlooks on, as a boy or as a girl. The boy doesn’t have to play with his trains and the girl doesn’t just have to play with her dolls. She’s not the one that’s only expected to help with cooking and he doesn’t just get away with sweeping the floor and clearing the table like my brother did. ... I think the only thing that comes to mind now though is I would try to teach my son to be very respectful of women. That in terms of, not just physically be more kind towards your
sister because she has to learn to take care of herself also, but that sometimes women do have a lot of, they’ve had different things happen to them in their life than guys have. I think maybe for both of them actually, I would try to teach them that what we are as men and women, we’ve been taught and sometimes that reflects in these kind of attitudes. But also for men to be able to understand that women are people.

When asked if she would raise boys and girls differently, a first generation woman commented,

Oh I would hope not but unfortunately, probably. I think a lot of it will depend on what kind of person I marry. If he’s the kind that sort of helps out or whatever, then I think I’ll probably raise my boys similar. But if he’s the kind that doesn’t, then I think it’s more likely that I’ll fall into that same habit. I know it might bother me if he doesn’t and I would like my sons to not be like what my spouse is and maybe whatever I see bad in my spouse, change it for my children. But it’s probably very easy to fall into the habit. It’s the habit of doing it for your husband so it might become a habit to do it for your sons. So I might not break that pattern even though I want to. Yeah, and I, yeah, I think I probably would perhaps, I hate to say, treat boys and girls differently.

Another immigrant woman who has a boy and a girl spoke about her conflicting feelings about her daughter’s behaviour.

The only thing with her is that she is very, she is a leader by nature. She’s already a leader. She’s only six. That really sometimes, in a way I am happy about that but in some ways, it also scares me. That in our society, such (?), culturally that it’s not, when we go to social gatherings and stuff, into the Pakistani community, when they see a girl acting like a leader, they don’t really approve of it. They feel girls should not at a young age. It’s only for boys. Girls should not be heard speaking really loudly and my daughter is very loud. So I’m happy about her leadership because I think a child should have that. But there are some things that socially are looked down upon and that becomes a concern. Basically approval from
the community about everything.

[Is it important to you?]
It's important in some ways. Initially I couldn't live without it but it's very, for some reason, I don't know why it is important. It's the rejection of the community.

There were many theme-voice associations between the generations that did not reach statistical significance. These themes included: divorce/separation, career, division of labour, independence, education, izzat or family honour, interracial relationships, financial security, self-sacrifice in marriage, in-law involvement/obligations, physical abuse, role of daughter-in-law, authority to in-laws, amanat or temporary possession, loyalty to family of origin, respecting elders, overvaluing of sons, motherhood, transmission of values, perspective on children, maternal obligations, maternal self-sacrifice, role of Indian women, expectations or wishes for daughter, feminism/women's movement, nurturing others, breaking rules, and communal living (see Table 4: Appendix F for frequency of voices in these voice-theme associations). Many of these themes and others that were not statistically analysed were very important themes to the women and this study in general. Some of these themes will be presented in the following sections.
Important themes for both generations

Statistical analysis of the themes, like the voice types, was one method of approaching the wealth of information garnered in the narratives. Although comparing the theme-voice associations between the generations revealed interesting results, to present only statistically significant material limits our understanding of the women's stories. Some of the themes entered into the statistical program were simply not significantly different in the way they were voiced between the generations, but this does not negate the qualitative importance of the themes for both generations. There were some themes that were conspicuous in the narratives of both generations and very meaningful in these women's lives and in the South Asian community.

A central theme of importance to this study and to the women themselves is that of women's position within South Asian culture. This predominant theme has been broken down into sub-themes but they are only separated for the purpose of conveying the results. The role of the daughter, for instance, was discussed previously because this theme generated significantly different results between the two groups of women. However, the role of the daughter is tied to the themes of izzat (family honour) and amanat (held in trust). These three themes are also interrelated with themes
about daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law, and the overall role of South Asian women. These themes are all interconnected and understanding any one of these themes requires the understanding of the others.

**Izzat or Family Honour**

Izzat (or izzet) is a Hindi word, alluding to the notion of family honour, not only of the nuclear family but of the entire extended family or kinsfolk. It often refers to the honour or reputation of the family, and its opposite of course, is shame. Although izzat applies to both sexes, the women are the repository of family honour. According to a report by the India Mahila Association,

... izzat is part of a system of social norms that is designed to regulate the actions of members of the community, particularly the women. ... the izzat of the family comes primarily from the standing of the women of that family within the community. Some families interpret this to mean that izzat is determined solely by the actions of the women (IMA, pp. 18-19).

Although this may seem to be a concept foreign to western culture, it really is not if we consider Jane Austen’s writing and her astute depiction of a segment of the English upper classes. In her novel, *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), one daughter’s indiscrete behaviour and lack of delicate honour (she ran off with a man) shamed the rest of the family and nearly ruined the prospects of marriage for her four sisters.
The loss of the izzat of the family can mean humiliation for that family within the community, and indeed undermine the marriageability of any single women, or men, in the family. While men can bask in the double standard of “sowing their wild oats”, women must remain chaste. Women’s purity is at stake and so izzat falls squarely on the shoulders of the daughters, of the women in the family, and they feel its power, which can often be painfully oppressive. One of the women interviewed explained izzat.

If a woman, if any part of our family is found to be morally wanting or that her behaviour is not, doesn’t positively reek of propriety and she doesn’t behave in a proper way, then they say you know, oh it must be something to do with her family and the family is blamed for it. Then she was not taught well enough. ... They always connect the behaviour of the other members of the family to the faults of one child, or that particular woman. Oh my God, the entire family is like that. ... But it was so obvious to us by the behaviour around us, the way we were expected to conduct ourselves. There was no doubt in our mind that if we did not behave in that way or we, it could be different from that, but if crossed a certain line, we were going to put our parents to shame.

A young woman raised in Canada talked about how she was not allowed to date because that would shame her father, yet she very much wanted to find her own partner, to “fall in love”. If she wanted to meet someone on her own, she said,

I have to keep that very secretive, very secret. Because it’s all dealing with reputation. Cos my dad is really well known in the community. A lot of people know him. He’s just really involved, ... that for me to be seen with a guy is really a stab in his reputation. Because the daughter’s purity is something that everybody, it’s really important
to every family. ... We get lectures every four months or so. Just, you know, so he tells us about what things are good, what things are going to effect his reputation and how his reputation is in my hands. He says, ... if somebody says anything about my daughter, then I'm going to be, well I'm going to be alive but I'll actually be dead. That's how serious it is to him. ... Because he feels so strongly about it, it almost forces me to listen to him because I care about him. I care about his reputation. And if it means that much, then I'm obligated to do that.

Another second generation woman spoke about how she survived the tribulations of izzat:

I think as all Indian women, you have this sort of burden of upholding or maintaining the family's honour. I think I had quite the burden because a lot of my cousins had more or less ruined it. ... and I think one has to understand it, and at that time, I think I did a good job of it. Understanding it as not something that was coming from them but coming as sort of this pressure from this community, this amorphous kind of community. That was the thing to do. You don't let your daughters go out on Friday nights. You don't let your daughters go see a movie. Your daughters don't get their hair cut. They don't pluck their eyebrows. They don't go on dates. This constant sort of chiding. You're bad. What have you done? This constant questioning. You're bad. Are you doing that? What are you doing? You know? So having to deal with that and still coming out of it with a sense of self-esteem. I think that's a real critical thing that a lot of young women, a lot of women my, when I was going to high school and university, really come out of that with, really damaged. Like even though parents don't mean it, but it's sort of, almost sort of questioning all the time. You're not sleeping around are you? Then, you know what I mean? Like you're not a bad girl? This constant thing of distinguishing that. ... So really having to distinguish that that's not about me. ... I think a lot of people are traumatized by that, but I could see where they were coming from. So you just, you just end up doing things in a way where people don't find out about them. So you become very resourceful and very flexible, and that's what I did. ... I think I had this sort of sense
of being able to see through it all in some ways. I have sort of, it’s not about my family, right. It’s not about my mother being mean. It’s not about my father being an awful patriarch. It’s about values and community and just finding ways of, well I’m going to do it anyways but do it in a way that’s not going to have to put them at the brunt of it, for them to have to deal with other people’s gossip.

Because of izzat, daughters have stepped gingerly, held or forced a silence, remained in physically abusive relationships, or were shunned by family and community. izzat, while intended as a commitment to uphold the family reputation and benefit a family, has sometimes inadvertently ruined the family through misinterpretation of the notion, causing irreparable damage where daughters run away and parents turn their backs.

**Amanat or Held in Trust**

Although daughters hold the family honour, they are also traditionally looked upon as living within the family home on a temporary basis. Daughters are “held in trust” for the family they will eventually marry into. Because of patrilineal descent, daughters do not carry the family name and, traditionally, did not inherit property. They are a liability rather than an asset because they do not bring another person or material wealth into the family. Instead, they leave, and with a dowry that becomes her husband’s and his family’s property. (According to some sources, originally dowry was for the daughter’s financial security, although she
often did not have control of, for example, the gold jewelry). Dowry itself can sometimes be a burden to a family who may have great difficulties meeting the dowry demands of the in-laws. In India, dowry greed has claimed the lives of a large number of married women through dowry burnings, as discussed in a previous chapter. So a daughter can create financial strain on a family and her future is an unknown. A daughter's position is very tentative; she does not really belong to her family of origin because she will be given up in marriage to another family. Daughters are amanat. Two first generation women explained this concept to me.

Amanat. It means somebody as a possession that you are holding temporarily. In our culture, girls are, for the parents, daughters are an amanat till you hand them over to the next.

Having a daughter is like, talking about bringing up a daughter is like watering your neighbour’s tree. Meaning that she’s the property of the next home. You’re merely bringing her up, right.

A young woman elaborated on her distress about the notion of amanat (red voice):

That is really frustrating and I get very angry with that idea. But that, it really feels, like you really say, who am I? Where do I belong? Once again I think that’s totally unfair and I can see what it does to women. ... It makes you a lot more vulnerable. You don’t have a real stable, you can’t really say, yeah this is where I’m from. ... You don’t know where you belong. You don’t, basically you don’t have any place. You’re just sort of helping men with their lineage, you know. You just have your life, your existence, and that’s it. Then you’re like dropped off the face of the earth. ...
Sometimes I am really frustrated and angry. What can you do? You can’t do much otherwise. You either go with the flow and if you do go with the flow, you’re rewarded. ... You are like wonderful daughter, daughter-in-law, if you just do things traditionally. If you don’t, you go against the flow, its harder to do. You’re looked down upon. So I don’t know. I don’t want to go with the flow. ... I don’t know what I’m doing. Just drifting, or drowning. I don’t know.

Daughters, as amanat, must leave their family bosom and are expected to adapt to the family they marry into. The women do the adjusting and accommodating, and parents prepare their daughters for future circumstances. One woman remembers her years of growing up, of preparation, in India (green voice).

My mother always said, what’s the use of educating the girls? Why are we spending all this money on education? Give it to me. I’ll buy nice dowries and we’ll get our daughters married into good homes but we don’t need to waste all this money on education. I do remember my father saying, no, education is my dowry to my daughters. He said, humour me, let the girls have their education and any money that’s left over, you can buy whatever dowry you want. We were sent to a sort of convent school up to grade three. Then my mother said, these girls, by going to a convent school, are becoming very westernized and they’re not getting Indian education, so she demanded that we change schools and we were sent to an Indian school where we, everything was in Hindi and that sort of thing. But then my father said, no they need to be polished. They need to be rounded out. So both of us were sent off to a finishing school. One of the reasons that we were sent to the finishing school was that my parents were vegetarians. There was no meat cooked in the house and my father used to say, if these girls are going to be vegetarians and their husbands are non-vegetarians, then my girls are going to be miserable. So let’s send them to this finishing school and we’ll demand that they eat meat there and they learn to eat meat. Then if they get married appropriately,
then they’ll be versatile. There are many things like this. ... when we travelled as a family, we always travelled third class. But when he and my mother travelled, they always travelled first class. The two of us, when we became older, we used to resent this. Father, why do we have to travel uncomfortably? He always used to say, just a minute, stay this way, then once you get married, if your husband is going to be a first class traveller, then you can get used to the luxury, you’ll be fine. But if I get you used to luxurious things, if you don’t get it, then you’ll be miserable. Our fridge was the same kind of thing. He never bought a fridge for our home. God knows we could have afforded it and we would have loved to have ice cold water to drink in the hot summer months but my father said, no, if the girls get used to fridge water and they don’t get it later, they’ll be miserable. The minute I was married, the first thing that my parents bought for their own house was a refrigerator. So I remember them constantly trying to keep us pliable. All I can say is like a lump of clay, then a potter, an expert potter can come and mold it to whatever way he wanted it. That’s the way he wanted the daughters.

The idea of grooming the daughter for the in-laws is further reflected in this quotation:

I think a good daughter-in-law has been drummed into an Indian girl’s head from day one ... if you have a daughter in India, you’re preparing her for marriage. Your whole success as a parent depends on how well your daughter succeeds as a daughter-in-law. Anything, like if you teach her music, it’s because your in-laws will appreciate it later. If she answers back when you’re talking to her, you reprimand her, not because it’s the wrong thing to do but because you don’t want her doing it in her in-laws house when she gets married.

Another first generation woman said,

We were raised with the idea that we would have a mother-in-law in our life, that we would have to listen to and obey and follow orders from. That she would be, that my mother used to say. Every step of the way she, if we resented something she was telling us, she said, good heavens just wait and see till your mother-in-
law orders you around. Do you think this is allowed? Those kind of lessons, she made us listen to many, many times.

After years of preparation, the parents’ efforts have finally resulted in the marriage of their daughter and she leaves their home. Some women look forward to the moment of their marriage, perhaps with romantic longings, though more often with the hope for fulfilling the dharma or duty of wife and mother. For many, however, this can also be a very sad and painful time, especially if the woman is moving to another village or country and expects never to see her parents again. Furthermore, this can be a rather frightening time, particularly if a woman does not know her future husband or his family, and walks into an unknown situation that has the potential to be fraught with danger. A first generation woman who met and chose her husband in Canada (a love marriage) was nonetheless profoundly affected by the meaning and implications of the wedding ceremony. She described the traditional Indian wedding and remembers the pain she felt at hers:

...that’s why in Indian marriages, it’s so symbolic. Like when a girl is getting married and then, the time for her to go away, there’s this major weeping session. And it’s very, it’s because of that, because they know she’s going away, she’s now married and she’s never, she’s not one of them anymore. It’s a very tearful goodbye session and it comes from that. ... It’s also just the, it’s the thing about females, you know, the, it’s like, goodbye darling. And they have songs to mark the occasion and it’s like, oh, oh it’s one of the most painful things
to go through apart from the death of somebody I think. ... You see, in India, when a lot of girls who are getting married, if there is a dowry problem or a lot of times they’re not sure what the in-laws are like, they don’t know what she’s getting into. She could be beaten everyday. She could be abused. She could be burnt to death. She could be whatever. That doesn’t happen here, but the thought that she’s now moving from the way we nurtured her to somebody else’s house, we don’t know how she will be taken care of. And that’s why it’s very sad.

The daughter is not supposed to return home to live under any circumstances. Perhaps she can visit, but then her status is that of a visitor, and her priority is her husband’s family, both of which some daughters resent. Some of the women interviewed were opposed to the traditional viewpoint of “visitor daughters” and were finding ways to assert themselves as members of their family of origin, despite overt or covert opposition from their husband, parents, or in-laws. A second generation spoke about her conflict with the married daughter’s position.

Traditionally in India ... women are married to far away villages and you’re not supposed to go there and visit. You’re supposed to sort of leave it. I’ve heard one man actually say that to his daughter, like the daughter coming back. He was saying, you’re not supposed to be coming back to us. You’re supposed to almost let that relationship go and if you don’t, you’re causing stress or strain on the new family dynamics, I guess. Somehow that way of thinking still lingers on, especially with my mom’s generation. She doesn’t say that. They wouldn’t say it either. Nobody would say anything, that’s how they were raised, with that way of thinking ... I feel resentment. I do. Just because I want to have a relationship with my mother too and I feel like she’s [mother-in-law] trying to, sort of take me away
almost. ... So when I’m coming home from work, I’m going to go to my mom’s house almost daily, or see my sisters. I can do that any time after work. ... And I think it will be tough for me to do other things too. I’m going to be working and going around visiting people. Whatever. This is all on me to do everything.

Not all Indian women grow up as amanat or were, metaphorically, watered with the express purpose of planting in a neighbour’s garden. There were many first and second generation women who did not have this experience within their family, although they were knowledgeable due to the experiences of women around them and felt sympathy for those who endured a “held in trust” status. Some women were determined to be involved in their parents’ lives, and even contributed financially. This was not typical for daughters and somewhat of a source of shame for some parents. There were also those women who actively challenged the assumptions of amanat by not overvaluing sons and preferring to have daughters, celebrating their births in the ways in which sons are ritually celebrated. Also they refused to cater to actual and potential mothers-in-law by being the perfect daughter-in-law. A young, immigrant woman’s response (purple voice) to the pleasing of mothers-in-law was:

I remember last time somebody talked to me and was trying to set me up with this person and the woman said, well does she know how to cook Indian food? The mother-in-law said, well not mother-in-law but the mother of the guy. So I told the lady to tell the mother of the guy that, tell her that, yes I do know and I’m ready to make your guy learn, make your son
learn how to cook. So don’t expect me to cook all the time, kind of thing. I guess, she declined. Not pursue that thing. So anyways, I’ve always challenged those positions or said that I don’t want a mother-in-law.

Daughters-in-law and Mothers-in-law

The stories about relationships between daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law range from pleasant supportiveness to horrific tragedies. In India, dowry deaths continue to extinguish the lives of daughters-in-law, and even locally, daughters-in-law have been found, their lifeless bodies stuffed in the trunk of the parents-in-law’s car. Some of the women interviewed have had very difficult relationships with their in-laws. They have been threatened physically or economically if they wanted to live independently, or have been battered by their husbands and received no supportive intervention from their in-laws, or have struggled with power and control over their home and children. But not all daughters-in-law have suffered; many of the women had mutually sustaining relationships with their in-laws in which where there was sincere care and affection. Nonetheless, the relationship between the daughter-in-law and mother-in-law is often ambivalent and highly charged, and so I asked the women to tell me how they understood this complex relationship. One woman demonstrated how this relationship is so embedded within the culture that it is sung about at the wedding.

All the wedding songs and everything are on the
mother-in-law. Like there’s one where the bride is singing ___, which literally means, I want to beat up my mother-in-law. Its a song being sung from the girl, the daughter-in-law’s, not the bride necessarily, the daughter-in-law’s perspective, right. Or there’s, oh there’s, if you study the Punjabi wedding songs, they’re all about mothers-in-law and how she has long teeth and I want to punch them out, or I want to pull long hair or something.

Other women explained the patriarchal system that operates to maintain the dynamic of this relationship.

... now that you’re married, your mom is, your mom first should be your mother-in-law and then your mom. Well I, I mean I was born to this mother. She will always be my mother and nothing will change that. I don’t accept this. I think again, its a matter of supremacy. Because males are considered to be supreme, so the wife, or they have to go through a lot, a lot of pain and suffering in order to come to a time where they can enjoy a bit of respect. Its like taking it out or compensating on. ... the daughter-in-law’s the one that’s the next in line to get it ... It’s a power struggle and it keeps going from generation to generation unless that cycle is broken somewhere. It’s really tough to break it too.

A young woman studying law said,

... as Indian society is organized in family, then if the family’s main priority is to sort of uphold their status and make sure the daughters don’t bring any disgrace on the family, then it would seem logical to assume the mother-in-law’s function is to make sure that the new daughter of the family, i.e. the son’s wife, also sort of abides by those codes of conduct that the family has put in place for itself. So if the son were to marry a woman who dances and the family, the son’s family doesn’t agree with dancing, it’s kind of like a loose profession, like prostitutes do it, then she’ll be stopped to dance. And if she didn’t want to stop dance and if she refused or resisted in ways, then I suppose it could get physical.

Another second generation women suggested that
the mother-in-law is not supposed to like her daughter-in-law. Even if you do, you’re not supposed to. There’s always that. My mom has always said, well my mother-in-law loved me. I said, well your mother-in-law lived 14,000 miles away. ... If you were the daughter-in-law and your mother-in-law made your life hell, it was your chance to get even and make someone else’s. They never seemed to see it as, you’re a woman, I’m a woman, let’s try to change it. I don’t want anyone doing this to my daughter. That sort of aspect. Instead, it was like, now it’s my turn to make someone’s life hell. This is going to take a long time for that to go away. You would think that you would look at your daughter and think, oh oh, no wait a minute. She’s going to have a mother-in-law. I don’t want her mother-in-law treating her this way. They never rationalize in that direction.

A young feminist active in the community said,

... culturally it’s okay for me to totally abandon my parents, you know. ... I think that’s ridiculous. I think that’s totally unfair. But I can see why they do that, because it sort of isolates women. I guess because of my background, I’ve sort of looked into stuff like this. Traditionally, if women are uprooted from their family of origin and displaced into a new family, they’re at the bottom of the hierarchy. They have to do all the adjusting. They have to figure out what the family dynamics are. So they’re more in a vulnerable position. I can see why traditionally it’s evolved that way because, given the position women are in in our society, in all cultures, I guess.

Another woman remarked,

My compassion really goes out to daughters-in-law in India because it just seems like they have a hell of a lot heaped upon them and it’s like, it’s a constant state of deferring their own desires. ... I think on some levels, you know, a woman’s children are their only sort of mode of expression and I think that there is the desire to totally cling to and maintain control over your kids cos that’s your, you know. And I think that’s so all consuming that it’s no wonder that a new woman that comes into that situation is going to be constantly bashing her head against a brick wall and constantly feel excluded.
I think all parties to a certain degree have to take responsibility. I do think the daughter-in-law is the most innocent of the parties. I think that there is a really, I think that between mothers and sons, I don’t know if I would have felt comfortable saying this if it wasn’t for the fact that it was a lot of my Indian relatives and friends of relatives that agreed that there is a really really deeply psychotic mother-son thing in the Indian relationships that are in Indian culture that has just been passed along. And that it’s just, I mean, it needs to be divested of its sort of power. That it needs to not be such a strong bond because it just sort of creates a whole series of sort of social problems.

As described in an earlier chapter, the traditional South Asian family is characterized by patrilineal descent, patrilocality, and the joint family. The daughter-in-law can pose a serious threat to this structure by encouraging her husband to break from his family by living independently. She is especially dangerous if she enters the in-law family on the basis of love rather than arrangement because her husband could then be her ally. If a mother loses her son’s love, she can lose her power in the traditional family. A South Asian woman is raised within a patriarchal family structure and it is at that moment when she becomes the matriarch, when her son has brought home a daughter-in-law, that she can then take the power that she has never had. Some subscribe to this and the cycle of suffering between daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law is unbroken; however, others refuse to continue the ill-treatment that they might have experienced when they were at the bottom of the hierarchy within their husband’s family.
They break the tragic cycle.

Role of South Asian Women

The traditional expectation of South Asian women is that they are subservient first to their father, and then to their husband and in-laws, and, finally to their son. They are good daughters, good wives and daughters-in-law, and good mothers, dependent upon the men in their lives. A small proportion of the women in this study subscribed to traditional roles and some of them argued that not all traditional women are oppressed. Although it is a controversial notion within the South Asian women’s community, South Asian feminism recognizes the indirect power of women within family relations and their strength of character in this family structure.

I guess well, they say that women do, women are the household leaders, like indirectly. They don’t have the power directly, which I’m not quite able to understand that, but they are behind everything. Like the woman makes the family. The woman makes the household. You don’t have a household without the woman. So somehow being in that position is good, but I’m not sure exactly how that works if you don’t have the choices to do things. But that’s what they say.

Most of the women interviewed objected to traditional assumptions. They spoke out against generalizations that all South Asian women were passive stereotypes and against misconceptions of traditional notions, and they resisted conservative expectations in varying degrees. The following quotations are from women raised on the Indian subcontinent.
...what the western world sees as the Hindu woman. Somebody who’s trodden on and ill-treated and that kind of thing. ... I think the western person thinks that here’s this woman who’s never had any say in anything in her life. She’s brought up to listen to her parents and she’s thrown into this marriage where she has no choice, forever to be the slave of her husband, with no voice whatsoever. ... It kind of irritates me that the western world should only have that vision of India when a large percentage of the Indian women are not like that.

Honest to God, I have lots of respect for both, same way, men and women, boys and girls, all over the world. But if the man think only for two inches of flesh he’s better than me or better than a woman, I do spit on them, I have no respect for them. They don’t deserve my respect. Generally speaking, humanitarian basis, I’m very respectful, I do respect for all human beings and I have nothing against them, but if the man is so egotistic to just think that for two inches of flesh is something better than me, then get the hell out of my life. That’s why I’m living alone. I have nothing against men. I was raised by men.

Another woman commented on women’s “duty”:

The saying is that, a woman is made for the man. She is made for the man. This is ridiculously funny. And if they ever have a conflict, if a man isn’t happy with a woman, like a husband and wife and they’re unhappy. If the husband is very upset about something, it’s the wife’s duty to go and approach him before they sleep at night. It’s her duty to go up to the man and seek forgiveness and if he defies her, and no, he’s not willing to forgive her, she should keep trying the second time. If he doesn’t forgive her, the third, and before they sleep at night, you know. And after the third time, if he still said that he, that she is unable to make up with him, then she is condemned by, which is not true, this is a fanatic’s approach, then she is condemned by the angels or whatever that she did not succeed in making up with her husband. Because the woman’s duty is she’s made for the man. A man’s role is only to comfort her. These thoughts are still prevailing in Vancouver in this educated society of Pakistani turned Canadian. ... The women here, they just laughed it off and they thought it was ridiculous. They said, if three times, if you try and make up with the man, the angels should be cursing the man for not, rather than angels.
still cursing women.

A young immigrant woman spoke about her attempts at challenging the prevailing norms.

I don’t feel that I am, quote unquote, the woman of the house, because I don’t behave like women are supposed to be. I don’t do anything at home, frankly speaking. ... I guess I am challenging the system. Even a lot of times I feel guilty about it because my mom ends up doing a lot of the stuff. However, when I’ve seen that when my mom does stuff and they do want to help out, but maybe if I was helping out, then they wouldn’t. So a lot of times when I see everybody working, I’ll help out. But if I see only my mom, then I will help out in ways that they don’t notice. So I really want them to know that she’s on her own. I don’t know if I’m making a point. ... Before I was more guilty about it but now I feel like, when I see the results confirm that maybe I am doing the right action. I’m still not sure if I am or not, but I feel like I have done the right thing. There’s a lot of change in our responsibilities in the house so my brother and my dad (?) and act in ways that he probably wouldn’t before.

When asked about the Sati-Savitri ideal, one woman said,

It just goes with that martyr Indian mother-daughter-sister sort of stuff. For me now, and I probably would have said the same thing a few years ago, is that men fear women so they’ve created these images in order to control them, right. So I mean, what do you do with a widow? You burn her. For the good of the community. Well come on. Probably if she stayed alive and made chapatis for the whole village, she’d be doing more good.

With humour, with intelligence, and with sophistication, many of the women interviewed demonstrated how they neither fulfilled or wished to fulfill the ideal of womanly submissiveness. They either broke rules or if they were in constraining circumstances, their minds resisted, and they
were resilient.

Education

In Kerala, the state in India that has the highest literacy rate and continues to practice matriliny, the grafitti reads, "An educated woman is a liberated woman". Liberated in mind and for some, liberated in body.

Education was a major theme for most of the women interviewed, however education was important for various reasons. For some women, education was part of the life path, which one woman previously described as birth, growing up, education, marriage, and children. It was one of the obligations of life, and a post-secondary education was in some ways, a form of dowry, in both a contemporary and traditional sense. In contemporary terms, education provides a young woman with more attractive attributes for marriage. Once married, however, especially in privileged families, the husband and in-laws curtailed or denied their wife's or daughter's-in-law career, despite her education. Furthermore, the acceptable profession was teaching children. In India, a teaching degree has status and the hours permit a woman to be at home when the children return from school. In a traditional sense, education can also be seen as a form of dowry. This is illustrated in the previous example of the father who asked his wife to humour him and let their
daughters receive education, his dowry to them. Education was seen as the daughters' security for the future. A South Indian woman said that in some parts of India, education is the cornerstone of everything. That's where it starts. No matter whether its daughters, sons. The sex has nothing to do with it. You have to get an education first. ... They want the girls for a career to fall back on no matter what. ... In case of anything, you know. Its all really well if your husband earns or something like that. What if he loses his job? What if he gets sick? There has to be somebody else who has to go out to work. That preparation has to be there, and they feel the preparation, there's no better preparation for life than education.

For some, the education of women was necessary for their role as mothers.

As they say in India, if the woman is educated, the whole family is educated. If the man is educated, just he is educated. They say that. That's why I give more importance to education in woman.

Another woman elaborated further.

All the daughters at least did their undergraduate studies and if they did, my sister did her postgraduate studies and then she worked. ... All the daughters in my family, like all my sisters, they're all educated at least to the undergraduate level.

[Do you know why it was important in your family?]
Because they didn't want the continued thing of the wife not being educated. That she's limited. If the mother is educated in the house, she's the one who spends the most time with the children, so there's a chance for the children to start, to help, because in India, the children come home with mounds of homework so the mother has to spend. Even if it is just for that, you know. Even if she doesn't go out and work, they feel that its a very big disadvantage for the next generation if the mother is not educated at all.
For some of the women interviewed, education was crucial for independence, providing them with the key to unlock the cage of abuse and hopelessness, freeing them from oppression.

But then I desire to go out to learn a little bit more English and do something and upgrade my education and I can do something over there. My husband was totally against that. He kind of felt very offensive and that he think that he’s not enough for me or something and I don’t want to do something by myself. I told him, I said, this is not the way I’m going to live my whole life. ... He was, anytime I say something, he’ll feel kind of threatened that I’m very aggressive or something. He said, no, East Indian women don’t do this, don’t do that. I said, I never read in any book, I never seen anybody, and my mother is quite aggressive in the house and doing everything on her own, and my grandfather was a freedom fighter and he taught me to be, live life in freedom and live and let live and not to bother anybody. So I like to be independent. ... I was not happy. Inside me was missing something all the time, that if I don’t do anything in my youth, and how much will I do in my old age. ... I was kind of feeling very upset so one day I said, I’m going back to school, and he said, why? I said, because I’m so fed up in the house and I was full time teacher back home and ever since I learned to speak and walk, and I was out of the house everyday, and I’m so kind of feeling prisoned into the walls ... And then I go for evening classes in Intermediate English class ... So then I have more interest and I said, no that’s not enough. I want to go for something more, so I go and talk to somebody at the district and they said, go for Grade 10. Then I go for Grade 10 and then I passed that in ’78. Then I asked to go for the GED course, the Grade 12 equivalent course. So I asked him to take care of the child, the younger one was in Kindergarten, go for evening classes. So I asked him if he can take care of him for a couple hours and then I can go. He said, no I’m not here to take care of the kids. That’s your job. So I said, well okay, it’s my job. I understand that. So what I did, I said, I’m going to tell you whose job is this. I said, you made this kid and I gave birth to this child and don’t forget you put the seed in. I said, if you’re not going to take care of him, that’s fine. I’m not going to throw my kid away. I’m going to take care of him. But I said, I need something.
I need financial security. I need my physical good health. I need psychological well being and everything to do, to run my family smooth the way I want to. I said, fine you go your way and leave me alone. I’ll do what I want today. ... But I couldn’t do it because there was no way I can get out of the house. I have no car. I have license but I have no car. No nothing. No job. I was full time dependent upon him in the house, which I hated, but I feel was no other choice. ...

She later left him, with the support of her family, and while she and her husband were dealing with divorce proceedings, she continued in her determined pursuit of education.

Then in the meantime, I was going to college so I go for English as a Second Language classes. Like English 140 and 141, 120 and 121. I done all four English classes. Then I go for a course and I finish that in 1980. In January 1981, I found a job in a private hospital ... and since February the 9th, 1981, I’m working with Surrey Memorial Hospital full time. So as soon as I accepted, I phone to the welfare office. I said, I don’t need anything anymore. I got job. Then after that, my husband got so jealous and so bitter that he gave me nothing at all. He just cannot tolerate that being an East Indian woman and so independent and this and that. I don’t know, God made me like that and I followed through.

She eventually bought a house and raised her three children to adulthood on her own.

Another woman had many times tried to leave a battering relationship but her economic disadvantage made it impossible, until she realized that education would provide a means of escape from the relationship.

He was putting me down on my job a lot so I said to him that I, okay if you let me, if you allow me to study, take this, there’s a program at ... I said, if you allow me to do that program, then I can make more money. But actually what I was doing was I was
manipulating him. I had learned that I wanted to get away from him and I was trying to get away to stay away from him without leaving him as such, as I'd done before. But still having that time away from him. And right away, he agreed to my course thing. ... Like I really, because I kind of saw that as an escape now. It just flashed into me one day ...

She is now educated, working in social services, and separated from her husband.

Parents placed a great deal of emphasis on education for many of the second generation. Like other immigrants who came to Canada and struggled to ensure that their children receive a good education, these parents also invested high hopes in their daughters' education. Going to university was an expectation rather than an exception. About eighty-two percent of the second generation women interviewed had some post-secondary education. Most of these women intended to develop or had already established a career based on their education, either in teaching, natural and social sciences, or theatre (less acceptable), to name a few. To many of these women, education also enabled self-sufficiency, but for some, those who were privileged in both the first and second generation, education was also for self-development - for the sake of their own minds (and not only for their children's).

**Interracial Relationships**

The issue of interracial relationships was a predominant theme for the second generation, but not so for the first.
Most of the immigrant women had marriages to South Asian men and they never had any internal conflict about whether or not they would have “mixed marriages”. Only six of the first generation women had or were currently in interracial relationships. If the immigrant women were concerned about interracial marriages, it was with respect to their children. Many of the first generation interviewed, as well as the parents of the second generation (according to the second generation), preferred that their children marry someone who was also South Asian, preferrably from the same part of the Indian subcontinent or the diaspora, and having the same religion and caste. However, some of the women interviewed, while they may have had preferences, also accepted their children’s choices, whether of a different caste, religion, or race. Sometimes they had to bite their tongue, sometimes they quietly accepted with some disappointment, and sometimes they simply did not mind.

The women who grew up in Canada however, gave careful consideration to the issue of interracial relationships. Some of the women had never dated a South Asian man and although they felt obliged or were curious, they did not for various reasons. Some were not meeting South Asian men whom they found compatible: and if they did, sometimes those men dated only white women. Or some found that South Asian men did not approve of them because they did not conform to traditional
images. Some of the women would never consider dating non-South Asian men because of anticipated parental displeasure and difficulties within an interracial relationship. Although some women experimented with dating non-South Asian men, they subsequently decided to date or to be introduced to, and marry a South Asian man, partly because the risk of an interracial marriage was too great and staying within the South Asian community made life much easier for all involved.

A young, single woman explained her struggle;

It would be nice to be able to find someone who was of my background, in a way. I don’t mean it as racist, but it would be so much easier to have someone who really understood. But I’ve never, I’ve never gone out with anyone who’s Indian, because I guess the boys and the men that I’ve seen, they don’t really, I just don’t like them. They seem totally focused on business or that kind of thing, or a lot of them usually either want a girlfriend, if they want an Indian girlfriend, one who’s going to do something like be an accountant or a lawyer or a doctor. Or they want someone who’s white because of, that’s better, right. ... I’m so mixed up about all the culture conflicts and it would be hard for me to be with someone who’s not, who doesn’t understand totally my side or even tries to, and then it would be hard for me to be, because I can’t see anyone in the Indian community that I would want to be with, I’m kind of on both ends. I’m kind of like balancing and I can’t go on one side or the other. It’s like I’m caught in between. I can’t be happy with one and I can’t be happy with the other. ... I see, on the one hand, I see these interracial marriages on the one side, and then I see the complete, I call them the complete brown marriage. My mom’s sister is, she’s got the stereotypical Indian marriage. She’s got the abusive husband who reigns over the family. She’s got the daughters who are so downtrodden throughout their life that they’ve broken out and become, God knows what. Like they’ve run away from home. One of my cousins has married a man exactly like her father. Just
the modern version now who instead of alcohol, it’s drugs and alcohol. He beats her and everything. I just don’t want that. That’s what I see on that side. On my dad’s side, I see these very amicable relationships between two people and I see my aunts who are not, even though they may be Indian, they’re not Indian. They’ve totally become whatever their husband is and that really bothers me. I see my cousins growing up and they don’t know anything about our culture. Not one thing. ... I call them oreos, oreo cookies. ... It’s upsetting to me and because I see the way my aunt’s children treat them. When it’s trendy, it’s like, look at my mom, isn’t she cute? My little brown mom, kind of thing ... Or when they introduce me to their friends, they like to see their reaction. That’s your cousin? You mean, she’s that dark? That kind of a thing. I just feel like I’m a zoo piece.

When asked whether she would date or marry someone who was not Indian, another woman raised in Canada responded,

Right now I tell you that I don’t think I would. Not that, I think that interracial marriages and like I said, when I date, that would be for marriage, I think that interracial marriages, I think that only some people can do them. I don’t think I’m one of them. Because I think marriage requires a heck of a lot of adjustment, a heck of a lot of sacrifice as it is, even if you are the same race and same culture and all of that kind of stuff, and the same values. To mix, and I have some cousins who are inter, who have interracial marriages, and I look at them and I think, you know, I think of how much, I think that you have to sacrifice some of your culture in order to be, in order, and that person needs to sacrifice some of their culture in order to be together. And the real, and I don’t think it’s, I mean it is a bit of a problem even with just the two of you, and then when you have children, I think it becomes even more so. I mean, what are you going to teach these kids? Are you going to have them be Hindu and Christian? Are you going to ask them to choose? ... I think that’s a lot of stress on kids. Not that the kids wouldn’t love their parents any more but I don’t know. I guess I think that marriage is so much of a gamble anyway, it makes it so much more of a risk if you, if it’s interracial. ... I would want him to be able to understand where I was coming from. What my background was and what my thinking was and I
don’t know if that could happen if it was an interracial marriage.

The women actually had diverse reactions about mixed race children, from seeing these children as beautiful, to worrying about their confusion and suffering as miscegenated offspring. A woman whose mother is Caucasian and father is Indian described her experiences of being mixed heritage, of having what she called, a “fluctuating identity”.

Being of a hybrid background, I really like the idea of crossing borders and I like, I don’t like any kind of homogeneous communities which is partially why I’ve never really been involved with racially exclusive communities. ... I’m sort of a chameleon. ... I think I maybe have an addictive edge to sort of transgressing difference. To try to find, to try to seek common ground. ... I always knew that I was different and from somewhere else, or that part of me was from somewhere else. But it didn’t make me feel ungrounded. I think that’s part of my problem with a lot of the identity politics that flourishes in this community, is that there’s a feeling that you have to be grounded in tradition and that tradition is this one static thing. I don’t believe that. I believe that you can be grounded in a number of ways and it doesn’t mean playing to certain sort of timeless traditions. ... I don’t think that that sense of trying to develop a sense of groundedness demands a trip back to wherever your, quote unquote, homeland is.

[Do you ever feel like you’re juggling somehow, juggling your two kind of, sides of yourself?] ... It seems natural for me to kind of negotiate the two different sort of cultural. ... it’s only in retrospect that it feels like juggling and I think that’s because of a kind of popularized consciousness about racial identity. I think that, it’s kind of ironic how I think that a lot of that rhetoric, even though it can be really empowering, is also really anxiety inspiring. ... like, how white are you? Are you more white? Have you adopted more of the white side of you? Trying to sort through. ...

[So do you feel a sense that you’ve
integrated both sides then?)
I feel like I've integrated to the extent that
I feel comfortable with. I have to admit, and
I told you this before, that I don't feel
particularly, like I don't think that my Indianness
is very evident and I don't prove the things to
other people. I'm not going to make it more
evident. But I've integrated it to a way, I
don't think it's a half and half thing because I'm
much more westernized. But I've integrated in
a way that makes me feel comfortable and that's
appropriate for where I've come from.

Often it was not future children that the women were
concerned about, but their own parents. One woman who had in
the past and was currently dating interracially, realized that
she "just had to and would marry someone of Indian descent".

She elaborated further;

... for whatever reason that I've evolved to
this stage, I just can't imagine marrying
someone who isn't Indian. I don't know if I'm
so convinced for me or if I'm just scared to
deal with the consequences of all the turmoil
that would come with it. ... I anticipate, I
would expect, I mean if I went home and said,
guess what, so and so, we're in love and we're
getting married. I think, I anticipate seeing,
having my father just look at me and not say
anything, but see so much hurt and disappointment
in his face that it would break my heart. My
mother would just like rant and scream. But this
is what I think and I don't know that. ... My
Indian heritage is important to me. The older I
get, it seems more important to me and I want
to hang on to it. I'd like to pass it on to
my children. I fear that if I marry someone
who isn't Indian or doesn't have any Indian
background, I mean, when you go into a marriage
you take a little bit from this person, a
little bit from this person in the best cases.
Well my little bit is probably going to be my
non-Indian little bit. Its so hard to keep a
culture alive. My mom is less Indian than her
parents were. I'm less Indian than she is. My
children in turn are going to be less Indian
than I am. Well they're going to be even that
much more less Indian if one of the parents isn't
Indian at all.
Another woman had a somewhat similar reason for preferring marriage with a South Asian man, although she mostly dated "out of race".

I think there might be difficulties, I myself sometimes, you know, think that I'd like to marry someone Punjabi or South Asian in the sense that, you know, they can communicate with my parents. We can keep things like religion, language, and it's traits that I'd like to keep in my children. You know, I want them to be able to speak, be fluent in Punjabi and Hindi, or any other South Asian language. It's really important to me and to, you know, um, even if I have kids, I think about having them in India. Like I know I would have them in India.

Then she said that if she did not marry another South Asian, she would want to marry someone of colour. You know, it's very important to me that I do because I don't want oppression-oppressed relationships, you know, on that personal level with me. And I want, I want someone I can bring home issues of racism with and not have it questioned or whether I'm personalizing something. You know, for just to be able to say, you know I've dealt with this, and for them to say, yeah I know what you're talking about. Instead of, well are you sure, you know, are you sure you're not taking it in another way. And it's like, no I don't want to deal with that. So I am going to marry someone of colour if I do get married.

Whether its the same food, different language, foreign customs, or identical values, this issue is really about the gulf between people and whether or not it can be spanned. A woman who dated not only interracially but internationally said,

When I think interracial relationships, it's not just that they're a different colour. That doesn't, or a different race or culture. It's just that, can we bridge the gap, because I
think that there always will be gaps. But that could also be with somebody that’s Indian. That there’s so many gaps in growing up. Like unless you marry your brother who’s grown up the exact same way as you do, you’re bound to find that there’s differences in how you’ve been thinking about things. It’s really bridging the gaps that matter the most.

**Family and/or Independence**

The South Asian women interviewed who are not necessarily living in prescribed roles find themselves juggling or integrating some of the core values of the two cultures that they are immersed in. The South Asian value emphasizing family and the collective harmony of “we”, in contrast to the western striving for individuality and independence, can either collide with, exclude, or balance each other in these women’s lives. For some, this is a battle that is fought either internally or externally, while for others, the best of both worlds are at their disposal.

A very independent, career woman who has an established reputation within both the South Asian and mainstream community struggled between her dedication to her family and her own independent life, in making decisions that could both hurt family yet meet her needs (green and purple voices).

... my family is the single most important thing in my life. Nothing is above my first. I will change things, drop things, not do things, for the good of my family. Or if that’s what I think they expect of me. I’ve really, not, I don’t know if anyone’s forced me to, but I know, I’ve lived in the world of expectations and I’ve lived in a world of living up to other people’s expectations. ... They’ve [parents] taught me to be independent. They taught me to be able to
look after myself, to have opinions, to voice them. They never stifled me in any way. Yet they come first. What they think comes before what I think. What I think they want comes before what I want. After all these years, I just don’t know the difference anymore.

This same woman regards this struggle as a form of juggling two cultures.

... everything in my life is two sided. My cultural side. I can be totally North American, and like a light switch, I can be so Indian and just go, who is this person. I can take from both cultures. For a while it was great but now I see it’s taking its toll. I have a kind of career and a life that is just so, I mean there’s a lot of women who aren’t Indian that don’t even have the kind of life I have. ... It’s just such a life of awareness. And yet in this one, just this one little tiny corner, it’s so backwards. [What about you is so Indian? What is that part of you that kind of gets switched on?]

In an Indian situation, I can be very Indian. But I think the Indian comes out of me just in my principles and morals, what’s important, and what’s right and what’s wrong. My commitment to my family. My ability to acknowledge obligations.

Also adept at negotiating family and independence, another second generation woman talked about her movement between the two.

I think sometimes the assumption there is that, women between cultures, there’s always this cultural conflict and I think that can be a little bit of a fallacy. Then why does there always have to be conflict as a process. I’m comfortable with either. I don’t think that I’ve had major clashes with my sort of sense of being independent and being very much a part of the mainstream society, and me being very Indian and a visible minority and being a woman. There hasn’t, I mean there’s been sort of struggles, what have you, but I don’t think that’s been something that’s been sort of in conflict at all times with each other. But you know, I’ve done things which have been unusual in the sense of what a typical Indian woman may not
have done. As soon as, when I went to university and after I went off to Indonesia for five months. I’ve travelled in Eastern Europe. I’ve been to Nicaragua. I’ve just gotten up and gone. ... In many, most cases I’ve gone by myself. Not a lot of women, especially women in our family didn’t do that. ... So in that sense, I’m very independent in making those decisions and those weren’t decisions I made in consultation with my parents at all. But I’m very much in that sense, very much connected to my family. Oh, maybe not so much emotionally but in the sense of being an only child, being a daughter and doing a lot of things for them and feeling responsible for them in many ways. Like having to negotiate with my mother more simply because she doesn’t have the language and she doesn’t drive. She doesn’t have a lot of friends. Always having to be an interpreter, a negotiator for her in terms of her experiences in the wider community. ... Some parents are more demanding than others, but my parents haven’t been demanding in that sense. But I’ve made it a priority. But I think now as I get older, in some ways I really think about it, in some ways it has been very limiting. ... Just in the sense that I think my life, in the last couple of years, would have been different if I hadn’t developed this sort of, as sometimes I may exaggerate the responsibility. I don’t know. Because once you’ve done it for so many years, you just think that they won’t function without me, sort of thing. But I think in the last couple of years that my life would have been different if I didn’t have the responsibility of my parents. I probably wouldn’t be living here.

These quotations from second generation women demonstrate how the values of family and independence became integrated though sometimes at odds within themselves as they grew up in Canada. Having been raised in India, first generation women have experienced these disparate values differently. Some of these women, whose independent tendencies developed either in India or Canada (as adults), hold a more peaceful balance with
family orientation. Although there were a number of these women, two in particular were conspicuous for their equanimity in maintaining values of both family and independence (they had Green-Purple voices). They were from urban centres in India, educated, and middle class, and had immigrated with their husbands. Progressive and independent, they were also strongly rooted in family. Marriage, children, and family connections, both to family of origin and the in-laws, were of central importance in their lives, however they also demanded egalitarian relationships with their husband and an independent life of work outside the home. Although at the time they were engaged in full time mothering with very young children, their independent career or course of studies remained important.

**Racism, Internalized Racism, and the Developmental Process of Ethnic Identity Formation**

According to the women in this study, racism continues to rear its virulent head despite multicultural policies in pluralistic Canada. Racial slurs and hostilities, stereotypical assumptions, well intentioned yet harmful comments, thinly veiled looks, and even the subtleties of exoticism are the daily diet of visible minorities both outside the home, and invading within through visual and written media. Although a small proportion of women denied
personally experiencing overt racism and extolled the kindness of unprejudiced white neighbours, they were aware that racism exists from knowing about other people’s stories or overhearing remarks on the streets.

Being coloured, speaking English with a discernible accent, or having a seemingly unpronounceable name can invoke reactions to one’s person and livelihood, ranging from violent assaults and verbal denigrations, to the sudden refusal of a job interview or curt treatment in a store line-up. Although these experiences are painful and often humiliating for the recipient, the impact is different for the first and second generations. Immigrant women arrive in Canada as adults with relatively formed identities. While the onslaught of racism is hurtful and discomfitting, it attacks the outside but does not necessarily penetrate their interior. Although questions of identity and belonging may be initially confusing, their sense of self remains intact. However, for those who grew up here, who as children developed their identities and sense of who they were in the world in a racist environment, racism is highly painful. It seems that having a supportive buffer of family and friends who take pride in their cultural heritage, as well as active involvement in the community in positive ways, softens the blow of racism and limits the extent of internal damage.

The following narrative excerpts reveal the dissimilar
nature of the impact of racism on both generations. A first
generation woman who moved from northern India to England, and
then to Canada gave an articulate account of her daily
experience of racism.

Being a woman of colour means you have now just
tripled your problems. You add racism and sexism
and everything else. Coming from a third world
country, you can begin, kind of magnify that a bit.
... Race is something you didn’t have the luxury
of examining and saying, well I may be a feminist
or not. Race is something you don’t have that
luxury. You are perceived as woman, person of
race, woman of race. You’ve got to deal with it.
And like I said, it comes down on you fast and
heavy in every day of your life and you deal with
it every day of your life. ... What I consider
racism is when people look at me differently, they
treat me differently because of the colour of my
skin, and they don’t, don’t bother or don’t account
my personality ... of what makes me a human being,
takes me and everything I say or do is slanted
because of my race. That to me is racism. It
always will be. I consider it racism and that
happens everyday for me. ... And if people see me
as a woman and a woman of colour, I just think
its their problem, that they’ll deal with it. But
I also know that’s a fact that I have to work
twice as hard as anybody has and to be twice as
good as anybody else to be anywhere. ...

[So the discrimination and racism, has
it made you at all wonder who you are,
your identity?]
Yeah, it did in the beginning. ... It did when I
was in England. Like I said, for the first time
it made me realize I was an East Indian. I was
a person of colour. It is like the traditional
Salman Rushdie novel where the person looks at
themselves in the mirror and says, oh my dear, I’m
black. You know? It was almost as traumatic, you
know, realizing, oh my God, I’m coloured. Its not
that I didn’t know I’m brown skinned but it was
like, it never really mattered before that. But
all of a sudden, it mattered, and it wasn’t my
choice. I wasn’t given a choice whether I wanted
to be brown or not. I was and I had to deal with
it. ... There is a lot of racism out there, even
from very nice, well meaning people who can be the
most generous and wonderful people and yet they
can unwittingly and unknowingly, they can
perpetuate the same racial behaviour. Its a lot of
ignorance and a lot of, I think, accepted social codes that people do it unquestioningly and so therefore perpetuate these racial stereotypes and everything. ... In Canada it's a lot more subtle. It's kind of swept under the rug and I think even worse than death. Racism is a taboo subject. Nobody ever talks about it, you know. And it's worse and it's everywhere. It's more prevalent here and I think as such, it's harder to combat or even to identify the problem in Canada than anywhere else in the world, because people are so nice. They are so low key. They are so soft spoken. They don't go around throwing bricks or burning crosses on your lawns, you know. But this is what people forget. It's just as much here. In fact, it's more here. You read it in the Sun everyday. Everyday there's something about racism and the letters go back and forth, and for and against, and for and against. There is racism. There is no racism. Come on guys, you know. Wake up.

Another immigrant woman commented on the effect of racism in her life,

No, it doesn't damage me at all because, see, I'm not proud of it or anything. I just know that this is me. This is my identity. I'm not going to change it for your, this thing, or I'm not going to stop being me because you're saying something damaging about it, or because you don't understand it. That's the bottom line. You don't understand. So eventually I hope that you get some understanding of it. If you don't, so be it. I'm not going to go to that level, unless something violent is done, of course. Then I'll have to react. But otherwise I don't think that its something worth considering.

For a child or teenager whose identity is just forming and where the pressure to fit in and the desire to belong are intensified dramatically, racism can be devastating. A woman who had lived in a small town in her youth described, with awareness, her process of growing up with racism in its various guises, the damaging effect of internalized racism, and currents acts of empowerment and reclamation of the self.
Even when I was really young, like six, I know like kids used to call me names and sort of harass me in the playground because I was different, because I had brown skin. ... It was easier for me to just sort of put those people into like, you know, a separate category. Okay, they’re just mean. They’re not the norm. ... But when I got to be a teenager, that’s when you start realizing everybody’s dating, but who do you want to date? The people who look like the girl in the Ivory Snow commercial or the Noxema commercials, which is not like us. Then you also start realizing, you know, you get your social cliques and you see where your position is there ...

[How did you deal with all of that during that time of your teenage years?] Just denying it mostly.  
[Did you want to be white then?] Oh yeah, everyday. And all my friends used to tell me, well we don’t consider you Indian. You’re just white. You’re like one of us because I mean, they’d like make a slur at somebody else who was Indian but then they’d turn to me and say, you’re not Indian. ... ... when I was in high school, I um, I was anorexic for a while and bulimic for a while. Where it was just, do anything to be accepted by them. To be, and part of that, being accepted by them, was that I always thought I had to be that much better than white girls. That much skinnier. That much prettier. That much smarter. ...  
[So how have you been dealing with it now?] I refuse to make white people feel comfortable around me. If they want to, that’s great and if they don’t, I don’t go out of my way to put them at ease. And probably a little more provocative where I, I just feel like I’ve taken enough shit and I’d like, I just want to be upfront about it. I can’t stand the sort of patronizing smiles that I get from people. They’d say, oh I love spicy food. I just feel like kicking them and say, you know, this is really not what I’m about, and if you’re going to be talking about my spicy food, then you might as well admit that you’ve got stereotypes. ... Now it’s just anger and whereas before it was like, it was just festering inside me, seething and it was destructive and it was all sort of inward. Now it’s outward. I know it’s not me. It’s much more healthy. ... I’ve finally finally come to terms with it. It’s, this is not me. It’s your’s and I put it back there onto
their plate. ... I guess not being let into this society as an individual, sort of forced me to look at, first of all, do I want to? What, it just showed me a different side of human nature and it also sort of forced me to look at the things that I value in myself and I just had to learn to sort of find a way to express who I am, past all of those assumptions and stereotypes ... Well I’m sure you know, it’s not easy.

When asked about her experiences growing up in the British Columbia interior, another second generation woman responded,

I hated it. I hated it with a passion. I hated it because everything that I learned in this society taught me to hate myself. I mean, what I saw on tv was always white images. Never anyone else. ...

[When did you know you were different?] I think after I came to Canada. As soon as I came. Because I look around me and everyone is like, white. That was, not necessarily that I was different, but they were all different than me. That’s what I first saw, right. Like snow? ... When I wake up in the morning, I don’t look at myself as my brown skin. I don’t see that. I see me. But I know that society sees this before they see anything. ...

[How did you go about the process of liking yourself again and figuring these things out? What did you do?] Okay what happened was, like if I had, all that stuff about language and knowing where you’re from and stuff, if I hadn’t had the parents that I had, forcing, well it wasn’t forcing, but we all spoke our language. Our parents always stressed that, if you lose your language, you lose everything. It’s part of who you are. You lose your culture. You lose your identity. ...

So I had all this really wonderful stuff, and then I had this stuff that I had to deal with from the white society. Media. Everything. So for me, it all sort of, I just sort of pushed that aside and it all came together. Who I was was okay. ... Then being here in Vancouver seeing so many people of colour was just amazing. I’m not alone, you know. So that was really earth shattering for me too. ... That was like a reawakening itself, just to be around people of colour, which was just amazing. I loved it.

Racism from without can insidiously become racism from
within. External threats and derogation become internalized and the target of racism then comes to feel detestable to herself because of her race. She may also begin to alienate herself from racially similar others and view them with contempt. A woman who grew up in multi-ethnic Vancouver and is currently active in anti-racism politics, described her process of internalized racism.

I have to say, until I was about 16, I had completely internalized my racism. That I blamed my parents and I would look at my family like, like I said earlier, everyone else was normal and my family was deviant, and that had a lot to do with the colour of their skin. That we were deviant because we were Indian. That somehow there was something worse about Indian men and that I wouldn’t be called a Paki obviously if I was born in a white family. So there was a lot of internalized racism. I actually attribute my grandmother, my mom’s mom, when she moved to Canada, with getting me over that. That she, when I saw the kinds of abuse that was happening to her, like that’s when it became intolerable for me. I tolerated it happening to children and to my parents. Like not tolerated it but that, there was something extra horrific about it happening to my grandmother. I would hear a lot about her growing up in India and how wonderful it was for her. She would tell me about the history of India and stuff like that and I think that its directly attributable to her that I got over that. ...

[When you talk about internalizing your racism, at what point did you realize you were different?]

Quite early on. Right away. Right away moving to Canada ... My kindergarten teacher was a total bitch so I noticed right away. Immediately like the taunts started. So it was quite apparent. And just witnessing what was happening to my brother and to my parents. It was quite clear what was going on. And you know, grafitti and all that kind of shit. Watching Archie Bunker. ...

[At what point did you realize you were internalizing the racism?]
When I met my grandmother.

[How old were you then?]

She first came here when I was 12, and I had a lot of resistance to her until I was about 13, 14. But then I would say I completely stopped internalizing it when I was about 16.

[What happened for you with that, the stopping internalizing it?]

I remember calling another South Asian boy a Punjab, and he looked at me and then he said, well who the hell do you think you are? And it really stopped me in my tracks. It was just like, what the fuck am I doing? It was when, to the point when I had internalized so much that I was angry at anyone that was South Asian for being visible, which made me visible. That was the natural outcome of it to call someone that, that you yourself were being hurt by. ... and I think that’s why so many children internalize it, is the only way to get out of it was to continue to deny any of your Indian heritage. To not wear Indian clothes. To not go to temples or gurdwaras. To not have other South Asian friends. To be as non-South Asian as you could.

A woman with a mixed racial background also talked about her process in dealing with racism.

I did internalize that to a certain degree.

I didn’t want my father to cook curry before a high school dance cos I didn’t want to smell. I didn’t want to smell like someone. So, and a few times in high school, I mean, I was well liked. I mean that was the thing. There was only like two or three people of colour in the school. ... We were gregarious and people liked us so therefore, there was this sense to over-achieve. I mean, in retrospect, I realize that there was kind of like, make sure everybody likes you and that way you protect yourself from being victimized in that particular way. So that’s the kind of circuitous racism. And when I was young, I pretended to be Italian sometimes because it was cool to be Italian and there was a lot of Italians actually where I lived. ... I would say that I just got back from Florida, or something. If I was in the malls, mall, and my friends didn’t want to reduce the chances of picking up guys or something, there would be this explanation for why I looked the way I looked.

[What do you think of all that now?]
Well I’m still sort of working on how, I mean, because I only dealt with people who were white, and maybe because all my friends were always white, I do sort of think, I do stop and ask myself, to what extent have I become really comfortable in the role of trying to sort of bring a race consciousness to a group of white people and how does that impact who I’ve become friends with now? So I mean, I am sort of constantly, not, I’m aware of a kind of internalized racism maybe at work, though I don’t think it’s as cut and dry as a lot of people think it is. But I do think that those experiences did effect me and I did have shame. I did have shame about being different. ... I’m still sort of working out how those sort of formative experiences have impacted the person that I am. But I think that I’ve kind of dealt with that, I think, well to a certain extent, I think I’ve dealt with the shame and that racism, and now I’m sort of, I’m proud but I’m not sort of pretending to be any more Indian than I am.

Several of the second generation women acknowledged that they internalized the racism and that they had or were working through it, understanding it, expelling it, fighting it. As part of the developmental process of identity formation, ethnic identity was being forged as they came to terms with racism and its internalization. Many were revaluing their heritage, slowly integrating or reintegrating aspects of their culture within themselves. In doing so, they also assert themselves against racist attacks and innuendos. A second generation woman spoke out about racism. She remembered the first time she was confronted with it.

Like when I was going to pick up my older sister from elementary school, I think I was about 4 years old, with my mom. I remember having a pack of gum in one hand and holding my mom’s hand with the other one. This, two kids came on bikes, these boys, and they yelled, give me a piece of your gum you Punjab,
or something like that. I was so terrified. That was the first time that anyone has said anything because I wasn’t in school yet or anything. I just remember the fear. It was just so much. My mom didn’t say anything. She just held my hand and kept on going. That was the first time that happened to me. In high school, some guys drove by and said something. Then I actually fingered them and I’m not the type of person that does that. So I was really upset. Even through work now, you can’t believe the comments that patients or families say. ... Directly to me. Not about me. You know, it’s not you but you know, other people like that, other Indians. Like one was saying that, her mother was going to go into a care facility and I was giving her information ... She said, oh you have to take off mother’s jewelry, her ring and her bracelet and her. The patient said, oh I don’t want to do that. Like she’s had it on always, right. Then she said, oh but you know, there’s lots of Indian people working there in clean up and things like that. I said, pardon me. Before I used to just let those comments go, but now I’ve made, I said, it’s not fair to myself if I do let them say things like that. ... So I confronted her. I said, that’s a generalization that you’re saying. Not all Indian people are like that. ... So I hear lots of comments like that but now I’m saying, no I’m not going to accept it. It doesn’t matter what type of a relationship I have. I’m going to let them know that I don’t like it.

Growing up in Canada between two cultures and dealing with the malevolence of racism is a struggle not only for the children, but also for their parents. A first generation mother spoke about her efforts at combatting the racism her daughter faced:

It would break my heart that she was facing the discrimination. She was going through it. ... Like she would come home and tell me, mom somebody called me that and somebody said that to me. But there were incidents that, for once, one time she had told me that, I was giving her a bath one night when she was just a baby, then she told me, mom give me a real good scrub today. I said, why? She said, well I want to be, I want the colour
white, shiny white. I said, why? Well, she said, because I want to be beautiful. I said, who told you that only white is beautiful? Well, she says, no I don’t want. I want to be beautiful. So I asked her, don’t you think I’m beautiful? I’m pretty? Yes, you’re pretty. So, I’m black. Yeah. I said, don’t you think, like we were very close and even in those days to my sister. I said, don’t you think your Auntie is beautiful? Yeah, she’s really beautiful. So she’s dark like me. Yeah. I said, don’t you think is pretty? ‘s her cousin. She says, yeah ‘s really pretty. I said, well she’s like me. Oh. So that was the end of that conversation. She never asked me again anything about colour, discrimination again. I guess it must have made an impact on her.

Another mother spoke about raising her daughter as a Canadian with an Indian heritage.

The fact that I’m bringing her up here, I feel I have to give her the best parts of the Indian culture and allow her to imbibe the best parts of the western culture, and teach her well enough not to confuse the two. ... I think that she has to realize inside the house, the culture we practice may be very different from the kind of culture that is discussed in her school. But it’s just that, that is just different because we are helping her to find culture in the sense, the values and this thing, and something which is going to help her on the inside as a person. ... because that’s the identity she’s going to grow up with. And if she wants to, we’re practicing Hindus and this is the kind of food and this is the kind of values, it’s all part of our culture. The food and everything is part of our culture. So we have to teach her that just because she’s different doesn’t make her anything less. She shouldn’t be ashamed of it. ... They will go through a stage when they just want to be like their friends and we have to allow them to be that, and then teach them that you will be more comfortable, if you feel uncomfortable, that this is what you fall back on. ... I will never expect her to be Indian a hundred percent because she was born in Canada. She’s going to be Canadian, sixty percent. Forty percent, okay. You can teach her the culture and values and hope that she will at least take the important salient features of it.

Later, she responded to a question about what made living in
Canada difficult by discussing racism and how she hoped to deal with its impact on her daughter.

... I find that generalizations are made that we are clannish or we don't want to get into the mainstream society here. We are not friendly people. That we are criminally inclined or something, just because of one incident, to bar the whole community. Or because we wear certain types of clothes, they assume that you're a certain kind of. Anything racist or violent, this thing. That is about, because I don't feel that the threat is there. I don't feel threatened in any way. I feel safe. ... But sometimes I feel, you read a letter to the editor or something like that saying that, only children of white Christian origin have to go to B.C. public schools, something like that, that bothers me. I think that's the worst part. You think you're part of this society and somebody comes up and says something like that. I am able to dismiss it and say, that is just a small part of the population. I don't have to worry about it. But it worries me, you know, because I'm not going to be facing the outside world as a vulnerable child. It's more a worry for my child than for myself, because she'll have to go out there and she's going to be a minority in a majority. Somebody could say, you are this, or you are that, or you don't belong here, or you're not white and Christian so you don't belong in this school. I think it would be very damaging for the child. ... I don't think I can protect her when she's very young, when she's too young to understand. I just have to make sure that she's a very confident person, or confident child on her own. And she's able to understand rudeness or someone being rude or being mean or being vindictive towards her as something abnormal, and that it's nothing to do with her. As long as she removes herself from the situation she's going to be fine. So all I can do is to make her an emotionally strong person. She comes home and tells me, mommy this is what happened, this is what somebody said to me, and I can tell her, it has nothing to do with you. ... So you just have to make your children feel that if somebody is rude to you, it's not your fault. So what else can I do, because I cannot control what other parents tell their children. Or if some child has overheard something in a mall maybe, or some rude children talking among themselves, and he's overheard his siblings say something, or she has heard something, and comes and tells her, you
don’t belong here, go back to Hindu-land, or something like that to her, it’s not her fault and it’s not that child’s fault. It’s, the child who said it has had that atmosphere. So it’s something we all face.

Meta-themes

Some of the women’s stories returned again and again to a particular theme that was like a thread weaving in and out of their narrative. These are meta-themes that were predominant throughout their story at the time of the interview. Some of the meta-themes were actually a vital part of a woman’s life, part of her identity, such as religion or lesbian orientation. There were meta-themes involving a great deal of suffering as well as resilience that highly impacted their lives, such as physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, alcoholism, or severe conflict within the family, either with in-laws or between the generations. The meta-theme of identity politics also infused some of the narratives and even fueled some women’s lives.

Although religious beliefs and practice were important to many of the women interviewed, the meta-theme of religious identification was predominant in two of the narratives. For one young Pakistani woman, Islam was the basis of her identity. Islam appeared to be a driving force in her life through which she carved out both a political and religious identity. Islamic beliefs and the reinterpretation of the
Koran were highly influential in various aspects of this woman’s life, such as her perspective on marriage and relationships, education and career choices, political activity, and her identity as a Muslim woman. Throughout the interview, she stated her beliefs about various issues and when asked why she had these beliefs, she commented that it was consistent with her Islamic beliefs or, “because it would be against my interpretation of Islam” or “un-Islamic”. She wore hejab in the last year of high school and the first two years of university, and now wears hejab to the mosque and hopes to wear it again fully in the future. Hejab is Arabic and denotes Islamic form of dress, where a woman covers her hair as well as the rest of her body (some Islamic communities cover their hands and face as well). When I asked her what hejab meant to her, she said,

Well for me, it means a lot of things. But the basic thing is that it’s a part of Islam. I wanted to be that. I wanted to be more Muslim. You can’t be more Muslim, but I wanted, I thought it was a part of Islam that I was avoiding and I didn’t want to avoid it anymore. So I did. For me, it means a lot of things. It means like, liberation from body image, hegemony, and from sort of a liberation from all the concepts around that. A place where, because for me it means that for women to be seen for who they are and what they do, and not their bodies. So it’s a liberation from the concept of being a sex object. So I did for three years and it was really difficult. It was good and bad. Then I ended up stopping. But I totally intend to do that again.

[How come you stopped?]
Because I think in the context of here, it’s very hard because people stop, cease to see you as a human being. Like non-Muslim people, like at
school, cease to see you. They see you as this raving Muslim fundamentalist and they cease to talk to you in terms of as a human being. Because there's so much stereotyping. And clearly these are not good enough excuses to stop, but it's like, it just was, became very difficult to get on with living. ... Because I think that there's such intense Islamaphobia in this society that it was very hard. Specifically it was very hard for people to see me as a Muslim woman who chose to wear hejab, but who would also want to work at the Women's Centre, and who would also sort of be actively involved in gender, race, and class politics. It was just something they couldn't get.

The other woman who was strongly religiously identified was devoutly Sikh. Her religious faith and daily reading of the Guru Granth Sahib (sacred scriptures of Sikhs) sustained her throughout years of suffering in an abusive marriage and subsequently difficult divorce. She was a fighter rebelling against the patriarchal oppression in her marriage. When I asked her what allowed her to resist her husband's beliefs and demands, she replied,

This is what it is. To me particularly, personally is my religion, because I was very much into it, reading all the time, trying to understand, trying to practice on it. This religion is very refined, very independent, and very much in favour of women. The reason people not doing it, they're not practicing right. Either they don't understand the meaning of the book, what they are reading, or they don't want to practice it. ... There's no such thing in the Holy Book, anywhere written that not to respect women. The founder of the Sikhism start that religion from women, that equality, and people still not practicing it. That is people's fault. That's not religion's fault. They're not practicing it.

Being lesbian and a woman of colour pushes one further along the edges of marginality. Two women tell their stories
I began the interviews by asking both them if they were out with their families. One of the women, born in a South Asian community in the diaspora and raised mostly in Canada said,

They know that I know, its kind of unwritten. They know that I’m lesbian but they don’t, we don’t necessarily, we haven’t talked about it ever. ... I think as a lesbian I feel, I try to be out as much as I can. But then at times and places, it’s not safe to come out. ... again it’s that unwritten or unsaid thing. People just assume, women that I work with, South Asian women that I know, they know that I am but it’s not really talked about. ... It seems to be okay but there’s homophobia all the time. ... I mean in the South Asian community, it’s also a way to discredit your work in the women’s community.

Of Punjabi descent and minimal identification with Sikh religion or affiliation with the Punjabi community, another woman commented on her parents’ reaction.

I came out to them when I was I’d say twenty-two. I did it because I didn’t want to, I wanted to be honest with them and I didn’t want them to have all these assumptions about what my life would be like or what I was like. Because one always assumes that you’re straight, right, no matter what. So just to clear things up and to be honest with them, I just got it out. It was a bit difficult, I think, for them both, for a little while, but then, they thought about it. I never had much of, I was never very close to my father so you know, he didn’t have much to say about the whole thing. And my mother, I think she really thought about it for quite a while. She was okay with it then. ... It wasn’t a shock in the way, they didn’t express it by yelling or shouting and stuff. There was a lot of silence as they sort of worked things out for themselves.

Both women have felt marginalized in both the mainstream and the South Asian community, including the community of
politically active South Asian women. While their immediate families appear to have come to some level of acceptance, most of their relatives do not know that they are lesbian. Safety remains a primary concern. Finding an alternative and supportive community of other women of colour, and other lesbians of colour, remains very important to them.

There were stories of physical and psychological trauma in some of the women’s narratives, stories that were tragic and infuriating, that gave rise to sorrow and compassion. Three immigrant women had suffered from physical and emotional abuse by their husbands. One of these women had a history of childhood sexual abuse and one of them was later battered by her adult daughter when she immigrated to Canada. Their stories were painful to hear, but the narratives also illuminated their resilience, strength, and determination.

After an arranged marriage and romantic dreams dashed on the wedding night, a woman’s nightmare began after she arrived in Canada to live with her husband.

He was very violent. It was two years, very badly. ... I wanted to run away from there, like the first year, but I again knew that I just got married. I can’t go back to ... People would talk. So I put up with a lot of garbage. The first two years a lot, for three years I would say. ... My in-laws would tell me, you shouldn’t complain. There are other women here and there are women ... whose husband don’t even cook them food or shelter and they live contentedly. Look at, you’ve got a house. ... I came to believe, maybe I am lucky. I shouldn’t complain. ... After three years I left him and I went to (country of
origin) to my parents. Then I told them everything because for three years I hadn’t told them anything, what was happening to me. ... But my father had this, he went into a quiet kind of period. Like he was, he became very disappointed kind of, with the whole thing, you know. Because it’s a matter of integrity ... One day the bell rang at my house and I opened the door. It was him. He had come from Canada to get me. ... My father became in a very good mood. ... So then the whole family started, started advising me sort of that I should go back. I mean, they didn’t literally push me but there was a lot of pressure. ... They said, well you know, sometimes for children you have to do this. ... I thought, maybe they’re right you know. They’re not happy keeping me here now. So I went back. But my life was awful after I got back again because then he took revenge, you know. ... Then I left him again. Afterwards, a few times. I left him again after a while but that time, I wouldn’t go back to ___ because I was angry at my parents that they hadn’t really, why did they send me back. So I just made, tried to make it out with a friend ... but there were a lot of financial problems. ... So under financial pressures I went back to him. Then I decided that I’m not leaving him ever again because I felt this is, when I went back with him again, my life became more miserable. ... Then I kind of mentally tuned myself off, putting up with no matter what. Marriage is the thing for me. I have to just stay there. ... And I was just craving for love. ... I started praying for him to die. Like that was my way of just escaping everything. All of the day, night, day, night, day, night, pray for him to die for last I don’t know how many years. ... Now he’s doing much less. He’s just punching me now. Before he would hold the knife at my throat and you know, but now he’s decreasing. That kind of made me feel that I must, I’m such an ungrateful person. Look at him. He’s changing so I should keep giving the marriage a chance. For my kids. Those kinds of concepts. The family is together. Its better. Its better. Its better.

After fourteen years of physical and verbal violence, which the children also witnessed and at times were direct recipients of violence, she was finally able to leave this abusive relationship.
When she was in India, another woman had been beaten by her husband and she did not leave him at that time. She said, 

*I was not in any position to do anything about it. My parents were right there. Its a big stigma in India if a daughter is out of her marriage, no matter what the reason. So I put up with it at that time.*

Her husband then immigrated to Canada and she followed several months later. Within four days of arriving in Vancouver, with her baby, she left him after a violent episode. She had no relatives and no friends in her new city, nor did she have any means of supporting herself. She could only depend upon "the kindness of strangers". With the help of a counsellor, she immediately obtained a job and living situation that provided her with income, shelter, safety, and anonymity. She eventually divorced her husband and believes that she would have done this even if she had remained in India.

*I would have still gone through with it because I wasn’t going to stay in that marriage. But it would have been more difficult for my parents. But being away, it made it easier. The thing is, they don’t mind. They have not minded. They didn’t mind then. They don’t mind now, me leaving him. If anything, I think it’s the opposite. My parents, my father feels very responsible for having put me through all of that because it was an arranged marriage.*

*[What do you think it was that allowed you to leave that marriage?]... I’ve always hated somebody else imposing their strength on another weak person. So to me, that type of use of strength has always been just totally, just I, it just totally drives me insane. That if somebody is violent. So I had such a deep seated hatred for, or some, I just can’t stand it. I cannot stand that. So that was one thing that was totally unacceptable. It was totally even unthinkable for me to stay in something like that. ...
Why would it have been important for you to tolerate that for your parents' sake?]

Because it’s, they would have had to have taken social stigmatism. They would have had to have taken social derision and innuendos. Everybody would have said, look what their stupid daughter is doing. You know. It’s supposed to be, the thing is, in India, according to Indian mythology, your reincarnation is the way of humanity, so each soul appears and reappears in this world some millions hundreds and thousands of times. So what you get and what your lot is in one lifetime is only a part of what you are. It’s not you, the be all and end all of you. So just because you’re suffering for something in this lifetime or in your human lifetime does not mean that your soul is supposed to be destined to be married to that person again and again and again in different lifetimes. So that is the thought behind, or was behind not accepting divorce because whether you, you can divorce a person in your human life but you can’t do that in any other life form. But even in India its changing now.

[At that time, would the community have censured your family despite the fact that there was violence going on?]

Yes, no matter what reason, its unacceptable.

[You tolerate that violence?]

Yes, women do. Women do, that’s right. It’s considered to be, you’re reaping the rewards or the fruits of your previous sins in your previous life.

There are some stories that seem almost unfathomable in their scope of human malice. A woman now in her fifties and recently emigrated from the Punjab has lived a tragic life. Because her father was in the army and absent from home and her mother had taken up with a lover, this woman was married off without a dowry to any family that would have her. She had an arranged marriage to a man who was violent, neglecting, derisive, alcoholic, and adulterous. Her story was one of people, whether family, in-laws, or strangers, constantly
exploiting her. Even when she found generosity and compassion from a stranger who became like a father, she lost him to accidental death. Yet despite the malevolence she has suffered, she has picked herself up and started over again and again. She left an appalling marriage as well as her children, and in solitude earned a degree and respectable job, eventually regaining connection with her children. She immigrated to Canada after early retirement and moved in with her daughter, who became physically and emotionally abusive towards her, keeping her isolated, penniless, and trapped. She described some arguments with her daughter, which appeared to be the result of her wanting to work and take English classes.

She said, today you are asking for pants, tomorrow you are going for dating. You will ask for dating tomorrow. I said, I lived alone all my life. I can marry again, in India. I never need any, their permission to resettling, but I want to meet you children. So I never think about those things. Are you blaming me? Wear only white clothes, she commanded me. Only white clothes, grey colour, and light brown colour. Not other, even print too. ... She said, according to Indian culture, mothers live like this. This is not true. I’m not coming from village. ... Then there are two or three relatives. They are ladies’ mothers, live with them. Then my daughter show me, look they’re also mothers. They are living all the time in house. They never think about outside work. So this was the clash between us. ... I told her that I’m not robot. I’m not slave. I’m your mother. ... I’m more educated. I know I have problem with English but I am not uneducated, illiterate. Its my right too, how to live? I have right.

With the assistance of a counsellor, she eventually arrived at
a transition house, her body bearing the marks of assault by her daughter. In time, this resilient woman found a shared living situation, learned English, and is now working as she has always wanted to, earning an independent living.

These three immigrant women were direct recipients of physical and emotional abuse, but there were also women in the second generation who witnessed their mothers being battered by fathers who were violent and often alcoholic. They watched their mothers suffer and protected them. It was vital to these women that they chose partners who respected them as equals and were not abusive or alcoholic. They were convinced that they would never tolerate battering and would leave a violent relationship. Some of these women also emphasized that they did not want their children raised in a destructive environment because the abusive family dynamics had been so damaging for them.

Although alcoholism was a theme raised in several narratives, it was especially predominant in one woman’s story. She was one of several people who had the misfortune of consenting to an arranged marriage rife with deception. Although she had looked forward to her marital arrangement and moving to Canada, she soon discovered that her in-laws had not informed her about many important matters, one of which was that they expected her to change their son’s life. She was married and then arrived in Canada to find that
he was an alcoholic. He had no job. He had nothing, like no house, like nothing. He was living in a basement, sleeping on a mattress. He had two plates and a frying pan in his kitchen. And no job. He was on unemployment and he used to work in a mill and he got laid off and he was on unemployment. He went to India to get married and then he came back. He was looking, I was with him, a pregnant wife. He didn’t have $10 in his bank account. I was sitting there pregnant and he was looking for jobs. ... I was just, I just stayed in our dark basement. It was totally different from what I imagined. ... I was totally depressed. Totally depressed for at least eight to nine years of my life in Canada. I became suicidal and with my husband’s drinking and his lack of attention and his lack of support at home. ... For the first six, seven years, I constantly lived to change him. I was so badly codependent that every aspect of my life involved changing him. He wasn’t going to change. Nobody changes. Meanwhile I’m totally depressed and then I started drinking with him.

After her husband absconded with their children to India, she left the house, sought treatment at a detox centre, and then moved into a transition house. Through sheer willpower and hard work, as well as the help of counsellors, she pulled herself out of her turmoil and in time, gained meaningful employment, purchased a house, was reunited with her children, and separated from her husband. From her perspective, at least seventy percent of Indo-Canadian community is alcoholic, or even a little bit more that that. ... The men who are here are more alcoholic than men back home. Back home, men drank but alcohol is very expensive. Firstly, it’s very expensive. Secondly, their lifestyles are a little bit different. Out here I think our community feels more trapped. Men feel trapped and so do women. The immigrant community. I shouldn’t say that about people that have been raised here. They have their own problems but they don’t feel trapped. They might feel trapped at home but they do have certain outlets. ... But people, but the immigrant people certainly are seventy
percent alcoholics. They're dependent on alcohol more than anything else to deal with their problems. Because first of all, the language comes in. Secondly, they're not comfortable with the community they're living in. They have no recreation. I see our community's face changing a lot now. But back about, say about ten years, twelve years ago, our community was quite sparse and then we, people did have that feeling of being trapped. They had nothing else to do other than go to each others' homes, sit inside and drink. Women would sit around the dinner table and men sit in the living room, and all they do is drink.

This resilient woman consented to the interview in part because she wanted to tell her story frankly and perhaps thereby, to give other women hope that they too have the resources to change their situation and their lives.

Severe conflict within the larger family context, to the point of emotional abuse and verbal threats, also presented as a predominant theme in a small number of the narratives. There were two women who had extremely strained relations with their in-laws. One of these women had suffered for eight years, often silently, under the tyranny of her parents-in-law. She refused to conform to their demands for absolute obedience and subservience. The in-laws rejected her, psychologically victimized her, and made numerous attempts to separate the couple. However, she and her husband were committed to each other and he was especially supportive when he witnessed his parents' abusive behaviour. After much struggle and financial abuse on the parents' part, she and her husband finally left the in-law home, and they have been
living independently for the past several years. The other woman emigrated alone from Northern India, seeking education and work opportunities. She is living alone and engaged to a second generation Indian man. This resourceful and courageous young woman has had to endure the derision and threats, both to herself and her family, of her fiancé’s father, who she thinks deems her unworthy of his only son because of her independent stance.

There were two other women who had highly conflictual relationships with their immigrant parents. As a teenager, one of the women thought of her house as “The Prison on ___ Street”. She and her sisters were raised to think independently, however it seems that her parents could not tolerate the questioning and rebellion that accompanied independent thought. She was able to survive the strain of this double-binding situation only by leaving home with great bitterness. Her relationship with her father has been severed and she remains ambivalent about her mother. Although there were difficulties and rigid restrictions during her teen years, the other second generation woman’s extreme conflict began when her parents pressured her to accept an arranged marriage. She consented with grave misgivings, declined at the last minute, and she, too, moved out of the house.

One day it just happened that my parents left the house and I was supposed to go to work, and I just said, now or never. You’ve got to do
something for yourself or you’re going to get stuck doing something that you don’t want to be set up in. So I packed up all my stuff and technically I moved out, but to my parents, it was, I ran away.

Her parents, particularly her father, who was alcoholic and physically abused her mother, were concerned about community censure and family honour at the expense of their daughter’s well-being. She became fearful for her life. Because other people were reluctant to get involved she had very limited support. Eventually, due to economic limitations and emotional blackmail, she returned home and has found strategies for coping with the situation.

Some women have developed a political consciousness, either because of the sexism and racism that they themselves have experienced, or because of having witnessed their mother or other women in their family being physically assaulted by their husbands. Identity politics, based on anti-racist and feminist perspectives, as well as active organization and political agitation, were driving forces in their lives and a constant in their narratives. Although many of these women viewed themselves as feminists, they rejected mainstream feminism as being primarily white and middle class, and, therefore, not speaking to their own experiences as working class women of colour, preferring gender analyses inclusive of race and class issues.
Other themes

Returning momentarily to the metaphor of the painting. The completion of this section requires a few more strokes of the brush. One more theme that bears consideration is that of immigration adjustment or acculturation, a topic integral to this study and related to many of the other themes. Adjusting to living in Canada was very difficult for some immigrants and involved minimal strain for others. English fluency, post-secondary education, and knowledge of or previous travelling in the West prior to immigration prepared women so that relatively minor adjustment was required. Language was a key to reducing the stress of adjustment. Without the English language, women felt helpless and isolated: just running simple errands was stressful. Even with English fluency, if the immigrant woman was without friends or relatives, and her husband worked or studied long hours while she was home alone, the adjustment was trying. If there were any conflicts in the marriage or living with the in-laws, acculturation was either very problematic or simply receded into the background because family discord took the foreground. Whatever their circumstances, many of the women described how they learned to survive as immigrants. I asked one woman if her roles as wife and mother had changed as a result of living in Canada. She said,
I have had this discussion with others too. I think I probably would have been a little more accommodating and a little more submissive probably if I was there. I don’t think it has anything to really do with Canada as such. I think it’s more to do with the fact that we were alone here for the first, without any family, the family influence or interference. Because you know, when you survive on your own, we came as students, we were poor. You learn to survive. You have, as I said, I felt this thing, I think I’m a human being. I’m an individual. If somebody treats me otherwise, I don’t think I’m going to sit and be quiet about it. I probably would have been a little less vocal and a little less patient with people. ... I don’t think it’s just with me. I’ve had this talk with other friends of mine, other ladies of Indian origin...

Some of the second generation had insight into the survival struggle involved with immigrating to Canada. One woman explained what she had learned from her parents:

Realizing what I have learned from them, that they’ve had to really sacrifice a lot of things in the sense of coming as young people to a country where they just had to make it. So I think what I learned from them was having to really be adaptable, to be resourceful ...

When I asked how she would want her daughter to live, she said,

I don’t know what it will be like in the 21st century, but really to not be really preoccupied with goals and ambitions and success. As a second generation, that was sort of automatic. That’s what our parents came here for so we needed to be successful. We needed to be the teachers and the lawyers and do all of that. But I think for my kids, and for me now, career is important but not really that. ... I think one has to have a good job and that means one has to have a good education. I would rather see my child do a Ph.D. in something obscure rather than, you know, really, than you know, be a stock investor or something like that. ... And also to be able to travel and do their own thing.
With the strain of survival in a new country no longer an issue, perhaps the next generations will not bear the burden of success for their parents’ sake.

Briefly, other themes that were of concern particularly to the first generation included: the creation of a circle of friends to substitute for the lack of an extended family; respecting and caring for elders or seniors in their lives, as well as learning from their wisdom; and questions of home and belonging, and feeling like “misfits” “back home” due to Canadian acculturation and a prolonged absence from their place of origin. Additional themes raised by the second generation included: leaving home and living on their own, either for education or budding independence; the eye opening experiences of travelling; sexuality; and South Asian women role models. Both generations also elaborated on their relationships with partner, mother, father, or sibling, focusing on connections or disconnections, and issues of communication, honesty, and trust.

There were so many themes, all of which were interesting and each of which furnished separate pieces of the mosaic, permitting some kernel of understanding of the women’s stories. The author has a definitive hand in deciding which themes are included in this text for expansion and which themes are excluded, possibly to the disappointment of some.
readers. The themes already presented were those which appeared with great frequency, had emotional resonance in the women’s lives, or seemed most pertinent to the larger scope topic of women living between cultures. However, it cannot be denied that the author’s own perspective played a part in which themes were presented (e.g., “racism, internalized racism, and the developmental process of ethnic identity formation”). Such is the nature of interpretation.

**Conflict Resolution Dilemma Results**

The Conflict Resolution Dilemma (CRD), administered after the Family Roles Interview, generated quantitative and qualitative results. The CRD included a vignette about a woman unhappy in her marriage and required participants’ resolution of Geeta’s various marital conflict dilemmas. Statistical analyses were conducted on the CRD concerning the issue of where the control in resolving the dilemma lay, whether internally (the self), externally (the husband and/or family members), or both (internal and external), in relation to predominant voices between the generations. The voices were collapsed into green voice; green and purple voice; green, pink and purple voice; pink and purple voice; and purple voice. Three 6 by 2 contingency tables were generated and Pearson’s chi squares for exact probabilities calculated.
A significant difference was found only for internal control (see Table 5: Appendix F), where the majority of the second generation who viewed the resolution as stemming from within the self (e.g., she can upgrade her education and eventually work, save money and divorce her husband) also had predominantly purple voices, whereas the first generation were fairly evenly distributed among the voices ($X^2 = 10.00$, df = 4; exact $p = .0247$).

The other statistical analysis approaching significance entailed the comparison of internal control with collapsed external plus both. Generations were combined by collapsing into predominantly purple voice versus all other voices, generating a 2 by 2 contingency table (see Table 6: Appendix F). The women with predominantly purple voices were almost twice as likely to have internal control than those with a predominance of other voices, while those with other voices tended towards external resolution or a combination of internal plus external ($X^2 = 4.398$, df = 1; exact $p = .0505$).

Other results for the CRD were generated through frequency counts and qualitative analyses. With respect to the outcome or resolution of the dilemma, the responses of the first and second generations are similar. The conflict resolution questions were designed to incrementally push limits and indeed, the results were consistent with those limits. As the marital scenario moved from unhappiness, to
loss of love, to affairs, to physical assault, women from both generations responded initially with various strategies for resolving the situation and then became increasingly more likely to consider the situation unresolvable and dissolving the marriage as necessary. All of the women suggested that Geeta separate from her husband if he was battering her, for her own safety and dignity, as well as the children’s.

The CRD was also utilized as an opportunity to learn from South Asian women themselves what they considered to be viable interventions in resolving such interpersonal dilemmas. Many of the respondents suggested independent strategies for resolving the conflict; however, they also suggested seeking assistance from other persons. It was interesting to observe that the women were more likely to suggest the intervention of professionals or non-family members (43/51 participants), than they were to suggest family of origin intervention (33/51 participants). These “outside” people included counsellors and therapists, transition house workers, lawyers or legal aid, doctors, religious persons, and elders or respected persons in the community. When the women suggested intervention by a professional service provider, they sometimes required that the worker have cultural sensitivity.

Family of origin intervention (e.g., seeking advice or direct intervention from parents) was sometimes qualified with the assertion that the family member must be supportive of the
woman (8 qualified responses). If there were any risk that the family member held beliefs that a wife must stay within a marriage despite battering, and/or would not ally themselves with the woman (e.g., by coercing her to remain in a destructive marriage), then they stated that family intervention should not be considered. It was sometimes preferred that a family member be a woman, an elder relative, or extended family, and not parents. The in-laws were less frequently suggested as persons to seek intervention from (15/51 participants). Regarding in-law intervention, they stated that the wife should inform her husband’s parents of the marital situation and request that they speak to their son, reprimand him, and persuade him to change. Again, intervention by in-laws was qualified by two of the participants.

Friends were persons less frequently sought for intervention (19/51 participants); and the friends proposed were primarily the wife’s female friends. There were three suggestions that the wife seek help from her husband’s male friends, especially his South Asian friends. The first suggestion was that she speak to the wives of his friends to convince their husbands to approach her husband. The other two were that she solicit their mutual friends.

There were also some participants who did not propose the intervention of anyone else (6/51 participants; 5 were first
Two said that if Geeta was a traditional Indian woman, she could not seek help from family or outside agencies because of the shame, and that she was trapped within this marriage. However, these two women, like the other four, suggested that leaving this marriage was the solution and any attempts to resolve the conflict prior to separation could be done without assistance.

Finally, there were various important considerations in resolving or dissolving the marriage. Children were one of the most important considerations in both committing to or leaving the marriage (34/51 participants). For the sake of the children, they must have a father and the family must remain intact; therefore the couple, (usually the wife) must find ways to resolve their marital problems. On the other hand, for the sake of the children's safety and protection, and to prevent them from the trauma of witnessing domestic violence and their father's contempt for their mother, the wife must separate from her husband and take the children with her.

Independence was the next most important consideration in either remaining or leaving a marriage (24/51 participants). It was often suggested that Geeta could educate herself and/or work and develop independence within the marriage and gain fulfillment through her own aspirations, and this could
possibly improve the marriage or Geeta would be satisfied enough that she could remain in the marriage. Because economic dependence on the husband prevents many women from leaving abusive relationships, gaining independence through education and work was also seen as a strategy towards leaving the marriage.

For the second generation, love and its presence or absence was a primary consideration, more so than for the first generation (11/26 and 2/25 respectively). This finding is consistent with a study on love and marriage which found that in Eastern nations including India and Pakistan, love was the least important prerequisite for establishing and maintaining a marriage, as opposed to Western nations where love was very important (Levine, Sato, Hashimoto, & Verma, 1995). Reflecting their western upbringing in the importance given to romantic love, in contrast to the traditional notion that “love will grow after marriage”, the second generation often said that if Geeta no longer loved her husband, then there was no basis for remaining in the marriage. First generation women mostly said that love was not the foundation of a traditional marriage and certainly less important than maintaining the family unit. The issue of izzat was raised as a consideration in remaining within the marriage despite the wife’s dishonour through the husband’s adultery or
Reasons for leaving the marriage, particularly if the husband was having extramarital affairs or physically abusing the wife, were the threats to: fidelity and the importance of trust in a relationship (26/51 participants); the woman’s dignity and self-respect (16/51 participants); the right to safety and freedom from domestic violence (10/51 participants; all second generation); and self-fulfillment and happiness (8/51 participants).

Meetings With Community Representatives

As a method for further establishing validity, meetings were held with two representatives from South Asian organizations: the Vancouver and Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Support Services Society and the Indo-Canadian Women’s Organization. Each representative met with the author for about 90 minutes to discuss the salient results generated by the interviews. In addition to assessing the consistency between the results and the representatives’ own experiences gained from working with South Asian women, these meetings also provided an informal way of returning information back to the community, a practice not always followed in research projects. A formal report distilled from this text will be distributed to their organizations, and others, in order to
provide the community with access to this information.

The representatives found the results of this study to be consistent with their own observations in working with groups (e.g., meetings with youth, workshops, community and organizational meetings) and individual therapy with clients over the years, as well as with their own experiences as South Asian women living in Canada. As one representative said, the findings were “right on track”. This same representative noted that the five voices are similar to her conception of South Asian women’s developmental process as they acculturate.

The demands of izzat was considered to have a very strong influence in the community. One of the representatives emphasized that it is the interpretation of izzat that creates problems, not izzat itself. To paraphrase her, pride, not family honour, leads to downfall. The other representative, herself from the second generation, observed that second generation women identified more with the themes of izzat and overvaluation of sons, and that the issue of amanat was perhaps more of a concern in India and for the first generation than for the second. She also suggested that the differential socialization of females and males was due to izzat and not amanat.

The question of interracial marriages weighs rather heavily upon the community. There seem to be difficulties in
finding mates for the women. For, indeed, the "suitable" young men are dating interracially, leaving young South Asian women without potentially eligible partners, and so these women are turning to non-South Asian men. This in turn raises concern about cultural integrity and the transmission of culture to the next generation, as well as the problem of racism for the second generation and their potentially mixed race children. One of the representatives suggested that while parents struggle with their children’s choices, the burden of responsibility rests upon the parents to be more flexible and change some of their traditional ways and assumptions. The second generation require “tremendous help” and their parents’ flexibility may narrow the generation gap and diminish the suffering of both parents and children.
CHAPTER SIX
DISCUSSION

The results of the present study are mostly consistent with, and extend upon, existing Canadian literature. The abundance of information gathered from the narratives provides further elaboration on the issues and challenges facing first and second generation South Asian women living in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia in the 1990s. Although no longer struggling to survive like their early ancestors who journeyed to Canada aboard ships, South Asian women continue to contend with the conflicts arising within their own community as the process of acculturation affects individuals and families. The friction between "modernity" and "tradition", between the salient values and expectations of two cultures, continues to expand the gap between the generations, and to a lesser degree, creates gaps within the generations.

The arranged marriage system in its contemporary form of arranged introductions remains a source of conflict for some when coercion is involved. However, many of the first generation who themselves had traditionally arranged marriages preferred either to permit their children to find their own partners (some even to date, although this is a sensitive issue for many) or to be involved in arranging introductions.
The second generation, many of whom dated openly or secretly, either refused to participate in the arranged marriage system or accepted their family’s introductions. Interracial relationships are problematic for some first and second generation women; however, unlike prior studies (Naidoo & Davis, 1988; Ghosh, 1981a; Wakil, Siddique, & Wakil, 1981), there were a number of women in both generations who married or dated interracially, or were accepting of interracial relationships for their children.

Consistent with the ethnographic findings in previous literature (Wakil, Siddique, & Wakil, 1981; Srivastava, 1974; Ames & Inglis, 1973), the second generation are challenging traditional gender and age based roles and expectations, indeed, more vociferously than youth in the 70s and early 80s. As teenagers and young women, many wished to and some did rebel ardently in order to live like their Canadian counterparts. Having liberal parents, active involvement in women’s groups at university or in various communities, or engaging in women’s studies, have furnished these women with support and analyses as they strive to resist. However, unless a family was accepting or already marginalized in the community, resistance was often at the cost of embittered family relations and/or alienation from the community.

The foregoing is a brief summary of some of the results that reflected previous literature. The following sections
will both summarize and discuss other aspects of the information gathered from the narratives. This will be followed by discussions on clinical implications and the limitations and advantages of this methodology.

**Narrative voices**

Green, pink, red, purple and orange - these colours have moved beyond mere paint pigment to the meaning of values in this study. Green is a voice that speaks traditional values uncritically: of not conceiving of questioning parental demands; of following a husband’s footsteps; of kitchen as her territory; or of the corrupting influence of Canadian society on her children. Accommodating the expectations of parents or heritage culture, the pink voice gives herself some space to manoeuvre and negotiate - to have a little bit of the host culture - without fundamental change to traditional values. Often angry, hurt, and confused, the red voice protests and struggles with her conflict between internal or external conservative values and demands, and her rejection of those same values. Resisting and criticizing traditional values, the purple voice incorporates alternative values into her lifestyle and identity. Finally, from a somewhat different perspective, the orange voice looks upon traditional values with a fresh outlook that neither rejects nor endorses them,
viewing them as acceptable within specific contexts. The voices are not considered in light of a progressive developmental stage theory. It is not better or worse, or developmentally more advanced to have one voice rather than another. Regardless of whether a woman chooses to accept her traditions or subvert them, her choices are considered equivalent in value. Voicing the narratives is a method to assist in understanding the women and their lives, and not an exercise in judgement.

The pattern of voices that emerged in this study was, to some degree, consistent with expectations. The first generation and not the second generation, spoke with predominantly green voices, reflecting these women’s formative experiences within the traditions of India. That some of the immigrant women also had green voices with pink and purple voices suggests the influence of other values either in their country of origin or due to acculturation: influences that led to some questioning with accommodation or rejection of traditional values in some areas of their lives. Almost half of the second generation had predominantly purple voices or purple voices with mostly pink, and some red and green voices; this likely reflected the influence of their between-cultures socialization. Hence, the second generation criticized and abandoned traditional values, or criticism was accompanied by accommodation, conflict, or unquestioning acceptance in parts
of their lives. All but three of the women who had predominantly red or some combination of red with purple, green and/or pink in their narratives had experienced painful interpersonal circumstances. These women made up 10 of 51 narratives (5 in each generation), a rather substantial number; they were in conflict with others and/or within themselves, whether they challenged, endorsed, or accommodated some traditional values. It is interesting to note that of the first generation, four had conflicts with husbands and one with in-laws. In contrast, the second generation included only one woman who protested the expectations of future in-laws, while the others experienced conflicts with either their parents or internalized parents. The orange voice was often a difficult voice to interpret, appearing twice and only in combination with the purple voice. This suggests that perhaps the orange voice is not entirely separate but an aspect of the purple voice. However, although the orange voice was not predominant in narratives, this voice appeared with some frequency in association with themes (e.g., arranged marriage, interracial relationships).

Although predominant voice results indicated that the first and second generations hold differing beliefs and practices about gendered roles in the family, socialization either on the subcontinent (or other non-western countries) or in Canada, may not have been the only influential factor in
this difference. There were both age and marital status differences between the generations which may have impacted on voice. The first generation on average tended to be from an older age group than the second generation. In addition to a cohort effect, the majority of the first generation were married or had been married, whereas the second generation were predominantly single. These factors have an impact on experience, such that it may be easier to resist (purple voice) in principle than in practice. However, the narratives of the second generation did include painful internal and external struggles, peaceful negotiations, and direct challenges of cultural beliefs, and none contained predominantly traditional beliefs. Despite the ten to twenty year difference between the present study and previous ethnographic studies (Wakil, Siddique, & Wakil, 1981; Ames & Inglis, 1973), these results are consistent with the prior studies examining socialization patterns of immigrant families. The second generation maintain a between-cultures status, in conflict with the traditions of their parents and the “westernizing” influences of their peers and general Canadian society.

Many of the women, both in the first and second generations, told stories of resistance to traditional expectations; however, it is difficult to ascertain whether they are generally representative of women in the South Asian
population here in Canada. The South Asian community is heterogeneous and perhaps these women represent only a certain segment of the community. Although the author had expected some immigrant women to have predominantly purple voices, finding an almost equal number of predominantly green voices (7/25) and predominantly purple voices (8/25) had not been anticipated. Many of these predominantly purple voiced first generation qualified their interviews with the comment that they were not “typical Indian women” (i.e., traditional, oppressed, and passive; often also meaning uneducated, rural, and lower class). However the “typical Indian woman” may be imaginary (Mohanty, 1991; Trivedi, 1984) - an uncomplicated stereotype that disintegrates the moment we hear the full and complex stories of these women’s lives.

The sample presented here is of necessity somewhat selective. The women who were interviewed did so voluntarily - they wished to speak out. One woman had said that she agreed to the interview because she wanted others to know her story to inspire hope in extricating oneself from painful interpersonal circumstances. Also, women who are not fluent in English are not included in this study. Nor are the women who may have wanted to tell their stories but could not, for whatever reasons. For example, the author asked one man if his wife could be interviewed and he politely declined, joking about how she may leave him if she spoke to the author. So
there are many other stories and voices that are not included within the boundaries of this text.

As with most research investigations that are snapshots taken at a particular time in a fluid process, the developmental stage of both identity and acculturation at the time of the interview may have also influenced voice type. A few years down the road of change, the person whose narrative contained intense conflict (red voice), perhaps because of extremely contentious relationships with either parents or partner, may later speak with a voice suggesting successful resistance and extrication from intolerable circumstances (purple voice). Or in contrast, a woman who hoped to accommodate her traditional in-laws’ beliefs, despite her own challenges of gendered hierarchies and roles (pink voice), may later find that negotiation is not possible and that she is trapped and compromised (red voice). Or a woman’s narrative that suggested a revaluing of cultural traditions (orange voice) may have been diametrically opposed to those beliefs (purple voice) if the interview had taken place some years earlier. Life circumstances, interpersonal experiences, educational exposure, or years of acculturation in Canada, to name a few conditions, may have an impact on voice - on beliefs and practices - at any point in time in these women’s lives. However, what is important here is not any one woman’s voice at any one particular time, but the variety of voices
available.

The intersection of gender and race

In considering the multi-layered theme of South Asian women's position in the family and within the culture, the author is about to step into a political quagmire and struggle with the discourse on South Asian women's oppression. The controversy plainly stated is, which is more important (or oppressive) - sexism or racism? Based on the stories of the women in this study, and the author's interpretation of their narratives, sexism within the South Asian community and the mainstream society, as well as racism from the host culture and even within their community (internalized racism and racialism) have both had serious implications in their lives. One or the other may have priority in various situations but prioritizing is not necessary as they are intricately interwoven with each other. The discussion on women's roles within the family and community is then surrounded by two brackets, that of patriarchy and of racism, and these two brackets may shift in position as to which one may be nearer to the centre or that they may be equally situated.

Previous studies and analyses of South Asian women living in the west conducted by South Asian women and non-South Asians have been criticized for locating gender oppression in
South Asian culture and hence deemed colonialist in their assumptions (Dua, 1992). One such example is the previously cited work in southern Ontario (Naidoo & Davis, 1988: Naidoo, 1980) that described South Asian women as characterized by "duality" (i.e., "traditional" and "contemporary"). Indeed, an analysis of the impact of racism was lacking in this and other studies (Patel, Power, & Bhavnagri, 1996; Khosla, 1981; Wakil, Siddique, & Wakil, 1981), and findings of "contemporary", "modern", or "westernized" South Asians begs the question: does liberation equal assimilation?

The present study found a similar "duality" in the women's narratives in that many of the first and second generation women valued some aspects of the "traditional" notions of family and marriage, as well as personal development in the pursuit of education and career, and furthermore demanded or wished for equality in their relationships. The present study also found that most of the women struggled with prescribed gender roles, regardless of whether they valued, negotiated, or resisted traditional assumptions, and many spoke out against sexism in their community. If they did not have the language to analyze their experience, they articulated their discontent in the plain language of emotional protest. However, there were also women who did not consider themselves oppressed and highly valued their roles as wife and mother within the family, and some of
the women who held traditional values were women with power in their families and in their lives.

Some of the themes presented in the previous chapter, such as izzat, being amanat, the ideal of the subservient wife (pativrata), and mother-in-law/daughter-in-law conflicts, all exist within a patriarchal framework. In her article, Mani discusses the gendered nature of cultural conflict in the South Asian diaspora, commenting that, “there is no rupture in patriarchal power with migration, merely its reconfiguration” (1993, pp. 33-34). This may be due in part to the patriarchal structure of the societies they migrate to: Canadian society supports many patriarchal values.

Gender issues in the community undermine the status of women, not culture as some would imply. Cultural traditions provide the context within which to exercise the oppression of women and the tools to undermine them. For example, violence against women occurs in most cultures; however, there may be distinct cultural manifestations of such misogynist violence, such as dowry burnings or female infanticide in India. Sex selection has been “imported” to Canada (Thobani, 1992), as has the murder of daughters-in-law. The prohibition against dating is aimed at females, and the conflict between the demands of izzat and the fact of amanat places women in a position of responsibility without power.
The very real presence of institutional and everyday racism surrounding the patriarchal family structure and community is a powerful force in South Asian women’s lives. In Canada, racial prejudice and discrimination arises in the form of what some academics term, "democratic racism" (Henry & Tator, 1994).

In a society which espouses democratic values such as equality, fairness, tolerance, social harmony, and individual rights, the existence of racial prejudice, discrimination and disadvantage is difficult to acknowledge or accept and therefore remedy. There is a deep attachment to the assumption that in a democratic society individuals are rewarded solely on the basis of their individual merit and that no one group is singled out for discrimination. Consistent with such liberal, democratic values is the assumption that physical difference such as skin colour are irrelevant in determining status. Therefore, those who experience racial bias or differential treatment are seen to be somehow responsible for their state of being, resulting in a “blame the victim” syndrome. This conflict between the ideology of democratic liberalism and the racist ideology present in the collective belief system of the dominant culture creates a dissonance in Canadian society. (Henry & Tator, 1994, p. 2)

“Peaceful violence” or what this author names, “nice Canadian racism”, permeates the everyday lives of South Asians and other people of colour, and it is often so subtle and indirect that it is visible only to the recipients but invisible to others, and therefore the existence of “nice Canadian racism” is easily denied. An excerpt from one of the women’s narratives quoted in the previous chapter further
illustrates this point.

There is a lot of racism out there, even from very nice, well meaning people ... it’s harder to combat or even identify the problem in Canada than anywhere else in the world, because people are so nice. They are so low key. They are so soft spoken. They don’t go around throwing bricks or burning crosses on your lawns. But this is what people forget. It’s just as much here. In fact, it’s more here.

South Asian women in Canada then live in a society that on the surface espouses democratic liberalism, but the underneath festers with racist ideology. It is on this point where the prioritizing of racism over gendered hierarchies becomes a struggle for some South Asian feminists.

For white feminism, the home is the locus of oppression as it is here that patriarchal power reproduces and reasserts itself. For women of colour on the other hand, the home is often a site of shelter, providing refuge from a violent, white, racist environment (Jiwani, 1994, p.37).

The unfortunate reality however, is that racism can unwittingly accentuate a patriarchal agenda by forcing a community to take an adamant stance for survival as a cultural group and, thereby, justify retrenchment into the rigidities of “tradition” (Espin, 1995). Traditional expectations of women may be amplified further as the community resists “westernization” by the host culture. As many of the women interviewed have pointed out, some segments of the South Asian community in Canada are more tradition-bound than Indians in India. Although it is a matter of survival against racism and
assimilation, it has created intolerable situations for many women. There are those who are neither safe inside nor outside the home. While a woman may find refuge from racism in her home, she may be subject to the beatings of her husband who is himself defeated by the racism he suffers and further threatened by his loss of power as his wife demands independence outside their doors. This home is no shelter when her husband must assert his assumed authority as "lord" in his household in the form of violence. Some of these women have received help from professionals outside of their home, and sometimes apart from their community. And indeed, some have had to leave their community because they were shunned, unsupported for their defiance of "tradition" - for refusing to accept oppression in their home and community.

**Clinical implications**

In providing clinical services to South Asian women, children, and youth, either in the form of therapy, counselling, or psychoeducation, a sophisticated understanding of their culture and psychology is necessary. Often, the women interviewed who had either sought or considered seeking assistance from non-South Asian professionals preferred to work with someone who had some knowledge and sensitivity about their cultural beliefs and practices. Those who were
disappointed in their work with non-South Asians found that these professionals or front line workers imposed a western framework that was inappropriate and insensitive. Some however, were ambivalent about seeking help from a professional or front line worker within their own community; this reluctance appeared to revolve around issues of shame, concerns about confidentiality, and what appeared to be generational and class conflicts. On the other hand, those who were satisfied with the provision of services from a South Asian person welcomed the relative ease with which they could engage in counselling or therapy because they did not have to explain themselves or their culture.

Although the Conflict Resolution Dilemma results indicated that most of the women interviewed suggested divorce when presented with a wife battering situation, separation and divorce were not always the first and easiest solution. The attitude towards divorce is changing; separation and divorce rates have risen (Gupta, 1994). Education and active awareness-raising about domestic violence is becoming increasingly prominent within the community. As more women are recognizing that wife assault is a crime, and that they have the fundamental human right to live a life free from fear and violence, they are charging their husbands and leaving violent relationships. However, as indicated in the results, it was the second generation who were more cognizant of
women's/human rights. Furthermore, although the women in this study who had been abused by their husbands were separated, divorce still bears a stigma for most South Asian women and is a highly difficult and complex decision for them to make, especially for the first generation. The family (the immediate and extended family) and the maintenance of the family unit or marital relationship remain important considerations.

Due to family and community pressure to stay within the relationship, women may seek treatment rather than leave. In a local community newspaper, Bobbie Garcha in an article on "Escaping Abusive Spouses" in The Indo-Canadian Voice (February 3, 1996), stated that

the ultimate solution for most is to work through the problem so that they can enjoy a healthy family life. If both parties are willing to try and a solution is in sight, help is available to bring the husband and wife back together again - the best case scenario for most Indian couples.

This is a common opinion and there are culturally specific services available for women and their husbands in the community (both voluntary and court-mandated). As many of the women interviewed emphasized, suggesting independent living to a traditional South Asian woman is loaded with Western assumptions and not an immediately feasible option because traditionally, she has not been raised to be independent. The steps towards practical/financial independence such as gaining
English fluency, education, job training and eventual employment, can be undermined by cultural barriers to psychological independence. If a woman chooses to leave an abusive relationship, separating from her husband may also include leaving the family and social exile from the community; hence, the psychological consequences of this "independence" for her identity are likely to be devastating because of her interdependence with family. A professional providing psychological or practical assistance to such a woman must have an understanding of these psychological dynamics.

... no social worker, psychologist, psychiatrist or counsellor can claim to help women if their approach to this problem fails to empower the victims of male violence. Counselling aimed at saving the marriage, irrespective of the cost to women, is known to cause a great deal of psychological and emotional stress to women, often driving them to the point of suicide and insanity. The primary goal of counselling ... must be sanity, security, and interest of women; the counselling must help them to stand firmly on their feet and enable them to make the decision to stay with their husbands or not from a position of strength; it must also help women in overcoming the shame and guilt they may feel for breaking-up their family (Thakur, 1992, p. 31).

Family systems therapy would be a primary consideration in the provision of clinical services. If family members are willing to engage in therapy, those present may include the marital couple, or children and parents, or even involve grandparents and other extended family members. Understanding
the intersection of gender and race may be crucial, especially in situations involving, for example, wife battering or a suicidal teenage daughter struggling with pressures from family, community, and mainstream society.

For South Asian youth, the developmental stage of identity formation may be complicated by questions of ethnic identity and the issue of racism and internalized racism. Developing a sense of who they are in the world is a complex process for youth, in general, in Western industrialized societies, and for South Asian youth (and other visible minorities), in particular. Although issues of belonging and sameness affect everyone, the questions and process may be different for youth caught between cultures and raised in a racist environment. Although some may skillfully negotiate between the two cultures and integrate them, forming complex identities as some of the second generation have, others may experience painful conflicts, their identities rather nebulous and floating, turning to one world and then the other, confused by both. Teenagers struggling between the cultures, between parental and peer expectations, often experience anxiety, depression, and even suicidal ideation and gestures (Gupta, 1994). The difficult process of identity development is further complicated by the effects of racism. Many of the women who were raised in Canada remarked upon their struggles with racism and internalized feelings of inferiority and
worthlessness. Some found that the process of "recovering" their identity was not complete until they could begin reclaiming their ethnic identity.

Identity development does not occur in splendid isolation but within the context of family and community. Further to the point regarding racism and identity, Rezai-Rasht provided in her observations of the school system that:

[tthere is a] tremendous amount of pressure ... placed upon minority female students to assimilate into the dominant western culture. ... such demands [are] the result of systematic racism resulting from the colonial experience. Sometimes, the attempts to assimilate may lead to students' alienation and a loss of identity (i.e., the anglicization of one’s name, the rejection of one’s first language or of the language spoken at home, the contempt held for one’s parents because of accent, religion, and/or culture, the need to date boys in order to prove that one is different from one’s parents, and so on). This, in turn, may lead to conflicts between the students, their parents, and their larger cultural community.

(Rezai-Rasht, 1994, p. 78)

A problem arises when an educator, counsellor, or therapist, oversimplifies this conflict as merely rebellion "against the perceived repressive culture of their communities". The intersection of sexism and racism again dominates the picture. Although a teenage girl or young woman may be struggling with her identity and appears to be like an average Canadian youth in the throes of individuation from family, it is critical not to assume that she is like a "typical" North American white youth. The problem of racism and internalized racism
surrounds and invades her, as do gendered issues within her community and sexism without. Furthermore, the importance of family for her must not be underestimated despite her wish for separation. She may want to be her own person and not confined by restrictions which she views as archaic, however she may wish to maintain strong connection with her family.

In working with children and adolescents who may have recently immigrated to Canada, it is important to assist them in making the links between their two worlds, both in terms of where they have come from and where they are currently, and the worlds inside and outside their home. The use of the symbolic language of art may be especially useful for those who are not yet fluent in English (and are working with a therapist non-fluent in their language), or for young children. If engaging in play therapy, the importance of having toys or dolls that are multicultural (i.e., different skin tones and eye and hair colour) must be emphasized. Conditions of safety would not be met if a form of racism is perpetuated by providing toys representing only white people, or even “Cowboys and Indians” to a visible minority child. The subtextual message is that they are not worthy of being represented and if they are represented, it is stereotypical and denigrating.

In the Lower Mainland as the population of ethnically diverse peoples expands further, there is a great need for
psychologists, therapists, and counsellors who are from different racial backgrounds and who have training in working with children, adolescents, families, and adults from different cultures. Mainstream clinical psychology programs are seriously lagging behind other programs in multicultural courses and training, and in the recruitment of visible minorities. It is time to provide training beyond the superficial aspects of multiculturalism, training that challenges students and professionals to face their own racism.

**The methodology of this study**

Bridging and crossing boundaries is a daily lived reality for the author and attempting to bring together two apparently opposed philosophies and methods presented an interesting challenge. Although parts of the outcome, such as the statistically significant differences between groups on voices and various themes, may resemble traditional empirical (i.e., experimental) research to those who choose to view the results through those lenses, the ideological implications and methodological approaches are starkly different. Feminist research does not rule out quantitative strategies, only the assumptions of strict positivism. Although having statistical significance allowed for more confidence in the resulting
differences between the generations, the women's words embedded in the hermeneutic circle - the qualitative results - provided the deeper understanding of their life stories. The following will be a discussion of the limitations and advantages to this research methodology, and future research directions.

Monumentally labour intensive. That is the major limitation in conducting a study utilizing qualitative methods given the demand for rigour in mainstream psychological research. The average qualitative study includes from 5 to 20 participants, in contrast to the fifty required for this study. As it was an exploratory study, 10 to 15 in each group (a total of 30) may have been adequate, especially given that after 20 to 30 interviews, most themes had already emerged, voice patterns appeared fairly established, and less new information was being gathered.

The arduous task of transcribing 51 in depth interviews was very time consuming. Transcribing should at best be a shared task, or a remunerated job in the hands of a skilled typist. Fifty-one transcribed interviews translates into over 1500 pages of raw material and there was, sadly, more information than is presented in this text. The rather long results chapter does not do full justice to the women's stories.

Assistance from other interpreters was needed to fulfill
the requirement of reliability in interpretation and this in turn led to increased labour and time consumption in the form of training and collaborative group meetings. However, the benefit gained from working with others on the narratives rather than in isolation far outweighed the labour involved.

Other limitations to this study include the lack of interview data from women who were not fluent in English. Because of the voice method, it was inappropriate to interpret the translations of narratives, and since the interviewer/author is not fluent in any South Asian language, those who could not speak English fluently were not included in the research. The findings in this study may not be generalizable to these women and furthermore, their experiences are absent from this study and may well have revealed yet another voice or other important themes.

Because this study did not include hypotheses (typically required in traditional quantitative research) or specific questions that could be statistically analysed, and instead took an exploratory route, venturing through themes and voices, there are no definitive conclusions supported by numbers. In this study, the author chose not to rely on statistical proof, but rather, on descriptive explanation.

Despite the substantial effort invested in this study and the various limitations, there were many advantages to this research strategy. Reading for voice in the narratives rather
than conducting only a thematic content analysis (or computer-generated content analysis) allowed for the intricacies of the women's stories and voices to emerge. Interpreting predominant voice types, such as Green Voice, or Green-Purple Voice, or Pink-Red-Purple Voice, permitted the presentation of further complexity. The interpreters were not required to categorically force the voices into only one of five predominant voice types. For example, narratives that held superficially opposing values, such as beliefs in traditional family life and independence, were not reduced into one misfitting label. Beliefs about one aspect of life did not have to exclude or obscure beliefs about other aspects of life, and the voice types reflected this. Participants in psychological studies are not clean-line paper cut-outs and their lives do not, necessarily, have to be diminished into simple categories.

The interpretive method utilized in this study provided elaborate information regarding the concerns, expectations, hopes, and struggles of first and second generation South Asian women, expanding upon previous research with mostly immigrant South Asian women (Naidoo & Davis, 1988; Khosla, 1981; Ghosh, 1981a; Naidoo, 1980). For example, the present study found that first generation women are not necessarily lacking in self-identity and individualism, nor do they generally conform to traditional gender roles and
expectations. The second generation face numerous difficult issues arising from their bicultural position, such as their struggles with izzat, dating, interracial relationships, gender roles, and independence versus family. Furthermore, racism affects the second generation differently, impacting upon the process of ethnic identity formation. Finally, an important finding in the present study are the five voices. Moving beyond the dichotomy of the “traditional-contemporary” duality, this study revealed the multiplicity of voices, as well as the complexity of the women’s subjectivity.

The qualitative approach allowed for the narrative of these women’s lives to emerge. Given the space to tell their stories, their voices were heard and the women became more visible. An advantage of narrative research is the nature of discovery, which preconceived quantitative research may not permit. In this study, unexpected issues or themes emerged that the author had no previous knowledge of (e.g., izzat, amanat), and these themes then became vital to the understanding of the women’s experiences.

The qualitative results in the form of quotations in this method of interpretation can provide a rich experience to the reader. By “listening” to the women’s actual voices in the narrative excerpts quoted in the previous chapter, the reader is drawn into their narrative, into their world; and so the
reader understands from the inside, listening closely to parts of their stories, rather than standing outside at a distance. Reading their style of speaking, their hesitations and eloquence, their grammatical slips and uneven English, their colloquial language, the oft repeated phrases or quirks of speech characterizing a particular woman, and words resonating with emotion - these readings have, to some degree, the power to pull the reader into the relational space. Although the reader does not have access to all of the texts, the reader is not limited by relying only on summarized and quantified results. Although necessarily reduced and selected by the author, some access to the women’s voices through the use of extensive excerpts has the potential to bring the reader into a partial relationship with the narrators, providing a different nature of understanding.

One of the advantages of this research method is the inclusion of the community in the form of consultations, participation, and flow of information. Much of academic psychological research forms questions that have distant, if any, application or value outside the confines of academia and often utilize the university “subject pool” to determine analogue results. A feminist research strategy begins in the lives of women, and it follows that approaching their communities is a starting point. This study began with consultations in the community, asking the question: would
this research be important and have any practical utility for the community? In addition to attending conferences held by the community, the author met with representatives from the Vancouver and Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Services Society, India-Mahila Association, MOSAIC, and South Asian Women’s Action Network (SAWAN) to discuss this study, gain their insights and concerns, inquire about salient issues in the community that required investigation and understanding, and enlist their assistance. These discussions influenced the author’s conceptualization of this research design. The study will be ending with the return of information to the community, a final and important part of the research method. This was already begun in the process of validating results and indeed, the two representatives referred in the previous chapter commented on the importance and practical nature of these results. They and others in the mental health community to whom the author has informally communicated some of the results, would like the findings to be accessible in the form of a report or through presentations. The author will develop a report to be distributed to the South Asian organizations with which the author had contact, and this report will also be available to other organizations in the South Asian and mental health communities. The author anticipates making formal presentations to both communities. Furthermore, because it was important for some of the women to have their
stories known by others, each participant will receive a copy of the report (a condensed version of this text) and, without having met, be sharing some of their stories with each other and possibly other individuals in the community.

Although the administration and analysis of questionnaires would have been far more expedient, the in-depth interview and interpretive approach have provided abundant material. Without aiming to support theory or impose unacknowledged assumptions, these interviews have permitted exploration and the telling of stories - of remembrances and recollections, and future hopes and visions.

Narratives are a particularly valuable research method when the concepts being explored are "new territory" for participants and/or researcher. In addition to its value as a research tool, retelling the life-story, including the migration (particularly if it was motivated by some form of persecution) has been shown to have a healing effect (Espin, 1995, p. 228).

Sometimes after an interview, a chance meeting in the city, or through word of mouth, the author found that many of the women who participated gained benefit from the interview. They found it thought provoking and an opportunity to re-evaluate their lives and beliefs. One woman said it was like a free therapy session and others found the interview empowering. It gave them voice. The interview may have propelled one woman into crisis but she worked through it with the assistance of her therapist, who had initially suggested
she be interviewed because she was ready and needed to tell her story. Another woman requested copies of the transcript and audiotape and gave them to her mother for Mother’s Day.

As this was exploratory research, both in terms of methodology and in addressing gender based roles and acculturation experiences between the generations, there are various directions for future research. Quantitative research could be conducted to further examine gender roles and acculturation between the generations. Quantitative and/or qualitative research could investigate individual differences or family context factors that may be associated with (or predict) each voice. The psychological effects of racism on identity formation could be more systemically studied. Another research project would be to examine more closely the mother-daughter relationship, as well as the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationship in South Asian families. Research with South Asian men regarding their perspective on male roles within the family and their pertinent issues should yield interesting results. This interpretative method could be utilized with other South Asians such as those who speak only Punjabi or with adolescent girls. Other cultural groups could be interviewed and voices explored to determine the applicability of this interpretive framework with other ethnic communities.
**Concluding remarks**

The reader has now finished reading interpretations of the narratives and excerpts from the stories of the women in this study. The author extends one final invitation to the reader. Following the example of Parita Trivedi, the author invites you to

conjure up a picture of a [South] Asian woman: what comes in your mind’s eye? Reflect on it for a moment: write it down: draw it. Have the words “passive, submissive”, been part of your portrayal? Have you imagined a woman beaten down and subjugated by the arranged marriage system - a woman ruled by the wishes of her family - a woman not able to assert her own ambition and desires - let alone fight against poverty, degradation, repression? (Trivedi, 1984, p.38)

If the reader had started out imagining this picture of South Asian women, as the author admittedly had, having only perused certain literature and without having yet held conversations with many South Asian women, you, with the author, may no longer consider this portrait as an authentic illustration of South Asian women. While there are women who suffer unbearably, many dying as victims of systemic and everyday oppression, there are also those who fight injustices on the Indian subcontinent. We also now know of some of those who resist in Canada, on public streets and in private quarters; as well as women who live with joy and security in the lap of tradition. Yet, while tradition may bring comfort, the ease of holding onto and being supported by traditional
values is increasingly shaken by the bicultural second generation.
APPENDIX A

FAMILY ROLES INTERVIEW

Spousal roles

Did you have an arranged marriage? If not, how did you meet your husband and decide to marry?

If not married: What do you think about arranged marriages? Will you have one? If not, how will your parents be involved in your choice of spouse? Are you allowed to date? Whom can you date?

What are your ideas or thoughts about marriage? (What does marriage or being married mean to you?) How did you come to these ideas?

Is divorce an option for you? Why?

When we were growing up, we got many ideas about marriage from our parents. What are your parents' beliefs? How are your beliefs similar? different? What did you learn about marriage from your parents?

What do you want to teach your children about marriage?

In some wedding ceremonies, the bride and groom both carry lit candles and then they light another candle together and blow out their own. This ritual symbolizes oneness or union in the marriage. What do you think of that?

Do you have any pictures in your mind of what an ideal/good wife is?

Do you think you meet/would meet the ideal? Describe how you do/don't meet the ideal.

How did you come to these beliefs about what the wife is supposed to be? Did you ever think differently?

What do you think your husband believes a wife should be?

What are the differences and similarities in your's and your husband's beliefs?

How does your culture picture the ideal wife? What beliefs of yours are similar and different from your culture's?

What is the ideal husband supposed to be like? How did you come to this belief? Do you think he meets the ideal? Describe how he does/doesn't meet the ideal.

How do household duties get divided in the home?
How do you think a woman's life changes when she gets married? How do other people perceive her when she gets married?

Has marriage been what you thought it would be?
What would life be like if you were not married? Would you prefer to be married or single?

What do you think your mother's/daughter's beliefs about marriage and the role of a wife are? And what do you think of her beliefs? What would you like her to think?

Daughter
What is a good daughter? Do you think you are a good daughter? Why?
Where did you get these beliefs from? Who taught you this? Did you ever disagree?
What is your relationship like with your mother? How are you different? similar?
What do you like about your relationship with your mother? What would you like to be different in your relationship with your mother?
If you had a daughter, what would you expect from her?

Daughter-in-law
What is a good daughter-in-law?
Where did you get these ideas from? Who taught you? Did you ever disagree?
Do you think you are a good daughter-in-law? Why?
What is your relationship like with your mother-in-law?

Mother
If a mother: What is it like being a mother?
If not a mother: Would you like to be a mother? Why?
What do you see as the best and worst things about being a mother?

What does the ideal/good mother look like? Do you think you meet/would meet the ideal? Describe how you do/don't meet the ideal.

How did you learn what it means to be a mother? Who taught you? Did you ever have disagreements?
Do you or would you mother differently from your own mother?

Did you/would you work/study outside of the home as you raised your children? Did you want to work? What was that like working/not working and raising your children?

How do you think a woman's life changes when she becomes
a mother? How do other people perceive her when she becomes a mother?

What role does/would your husband have in parenting? How would you describe the ideal father? Does/would your husband meet the ideal? Why?

If you didn't have children, how would your life be different? Would your life be different if you had a son? (if no son)

Do you think there are important differences in how you should raise boys and girls? If so, how would you raise them differently?

(If no children) If you did have children, how would your life be different? Would it matter to you whether you had a son or daughter?

(If have a daughter) What is your relationship like with your daughter? How are you similar? different? What do you like about your relationship with your daughter? What would you like to be different in your relationship with your daughter?

(If you had a daughter), what would you wish for your daughter? Would you want your daughter to live as you have or would you want her to live differently? How and why?

Woman

What does it mean to you to be a woman? Do you think there are important differences between men and women?

In your culture, is there a way that women should be? What are the best and worst things about being a woman? How did you learn what it means to be a woman? Who taught you? Did you ever have disagreements? Would you prefer to be a man? Why?

Have you ever done anything that is considered inappropriate for a woman (break the rules)? Why? What happened? How did it feel?

Acculturation experiences

First generation:

How did you make the decision to come to Canada? What was it like for you when you first came to Canada? And how is it now? Do you still consider ____ as "back home"? Have you gone back to India? Would you want to live there again? Why?
How is living here different from ____?
Did you ever want to be white?
What is your preferred country?

Do you think that there has been a change in your role as a mother because of/since coming to Canada?
What would have been different in your role as a mother if you had remained in India? your role as a wife? a daughter-in-law?

Second generation:
If born in India: Do you remember your early years in India? How is living here different from ____?

Have you been to India? your mother's home town? If so, what was that like for you? If not, why?
Would you have wanted to grow up in India? Do you want to live there?

What has it been like for you growing up in Canada? What have you liked about it? disliked?
Did you find yourself straddling two cultures as you grew up? What was that like for you?
Did you ever want to be white?

If you had grown up in India, what would that have been like? What would have been the same? different?
What would have been different in your role as a daughter if you had grown up in India? your role as a wife? daughter-in-law? mother?

First and second generations:
At a fundamental level, do you think of yourself as Indian/South Asian? Canadian? Indo-Canadian? neither? How would you describe yourself in terms of ethnicity? How did you decide this? How do you feel about your ethnicity - proud? embarassed?
Are you involved with your ethnic community in any way? Do you socialize with people outside of your ethnic community? Other asians? Canadians?

What is important about family?
APPENDIX B

CONFLICT RESOLUTION DILEMMA

Geeta, in her late thirties, has been married to Sanjiv for several years. They have two children, 8 and 10 years old. Throughout the marriage Geeta has been at home, looking after the house and the children. For the last few years Geeta has felt increasingly unhappy in the marriage relationship. She finds her husband demanding, self-centered and insensitive as well as uninterested in her needs and feelings. Geeta has several times tried to communicate her unhappiness and frustration to her husband, but he continually ignores and rejects her attempts.

QUESTIONS FOR THE CONFLICT RESOLUTION DILEMMA

Do you see this situation as a problem? Why?
What do you think Geeta should do? Why?
Are there other ways for her to deal with this situation? What are they?
   If Geeta no longer loves her husband, what do you think she should do? Why?

   If Sanjiv has been having brief affairs with other women and Geeta finds out, what should she do? Why?
   If Sanjiv has been having an affair with another woman for many years and spends his weekends and holidays with her, but won't leave Geeta because it would look bad for him, what should she do? Why?
   If over the years, Sanjiv has physically beaten and injured Geeta, what should she do? Why?

At what point do you think Geeta should leave her husband? What do you think needs to happen in order for her to leave?

If Geeta is an English woman named Betty, what do you think she would do?
APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Number: ________________________________

Address: ________________________________

Phone number: ________________________________

Contact through: ________________________________

Translator: ________________________________

Birthdate: ______________ Age: __________

Place of birth: ________________________________

Place of growing up: ________________________________
(urban or rural?)

Arrival in Canada: ______________ How long: __________

Immigrated with: ________________________________

Citizenship status: ________________________________

Generation: ________________________________

Parents' birthplace: ________________________________

Arrival in Canada: ______________ Ages: __________

Husband's birthplace: ________________________________

Husband's birthdate: ______________ Age: __________

Arrival in Canada: ______________ How long: __________

Husband's generation: ________________________________

Length of marriage: ________________________________

Children & ages: ________________________________

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Who is living at home: ____________________________________________

Languages spoken: ____________________________________________
Languages written: ____________________________________________
Language spoken at home: ______________________________________

Religious affiliation: __________________________________________
Husband's religious affiliation: _________________________________
Parents' religious affiliation: _________________________________
Importance of religion: _________________________________________

Ethnic identification: _________________________________________
Ethnic involvement: __________________________________________

Occupation: __________________________________________________
Highest level of education: ______________________________________
Husband's occupation: _________________________________________
Husband's education: ________________________________________
Current SES: _________________________________________________

Parents' occupation: _________________________________________
Parents' education: _________________________________________
Parents' SES: ______________________________________________
Parents' caste: ______________________________________________
APPENDIX D

WOMEN BETWEEN CULTURES

In this project, I would like to learn more about the experiences of first and second generation women of South Asian origins. I am interested in how you understand or look at yourself, your roles within the family, and your experiences as a South Asian woman living in Canadian society.

Your voluntary participation will take approximately two hours. You will sign a consent form that indicates that you are willing to participate in the project. The project itself involves an interview and one short questionnaire. The interview will be strictly confidential. You will be asked questions about your background, your thoughts on different family roles, and your experiences in Canadian culture. If you start the interview and then decide that you don't want to finish, that is alright.

The interview will be tape-recorded because it is easier than writing down everything that you have to say at the time of the interview. The tapes will not be identified by your name but instead will have a code number. They will be stored in my home in a locked filing cabinet. These tapes will be heard by myself and transcribed. Transcribing the tapes gives you more anonymity because your voice cannot be identified. The transcriptions will be read by two other researchers. At the end of the project, the tapes will either be erased or given back to you if you want them. These procedures are to ensure that all information remains anonymous and confidential.

After your interview, I will be available to talk with you about the project in more detail. I welcome any comments that you may have about the project.

Thank you for your interest and your participation in the project.

Karen Tee, M.A.
Psychology Department
Simon Fraser University
INFORMED CONSENT

The University and those conducting this project subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort and safety of respondents. This form and the information it contains are given to you for your own protection and full understanding of the procedures involved. Your signature on this form will signify that you have received the document described below regarding this project, that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the document, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the project.

Having been asked by Karen Tee of the Psychology Department of Simon Fraser University to participate in a research project, I have read the procedures specified in the document entitled:

WOMEN BETWEEN CULTURES

I understand the procedures to be used in this project. I understand that I may withdraw my participation from this project at any time.
I understand that the information I give will be anonymous and confidential.
I also understand that I may register any complaint I might have about the project with the chief researcher named above or with her supervisor, Dr. James E. Marcia, or with the Chairman of the Psychology Department, Simon Fraser University, Dr. Chris Webster.
I may obtain a copy of the results of this study, upon its completion, by contacting Karen Tee, Department of Psychology, Simon Fraser University.
I agree to participate by completing an interview and one questionnaire as described in the document referred to above, during the period:

______/_____/19___ in ________________________________

NAME (please print): ________________________________
ADDRESS: _______________________________________
SIGNATURE: _______________________________________
WITNESS: _______________________________________

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Transcribed interview narratives are to be interpreted with the use of this Interpretive Reading Guide, and in conjunction with reading relevant material and interpretive training by the author. The work of Brown and Gilligan (1992); Brown, Tappan, Gilligan, Miller and Argyris (1989); Packer (1989); Mishler (1986; 1979); Juhl (1980); and Hirsch (1967; 1976) were instrumental as theoretical and methodological models in the development of the Interpretive Reading Guide.

The following are instructions for guiding the interpreter in reading narrative texts and for the process of understanding the narrator and listening for voices. Narrative interpretation involves multiple readings of the transcribed narrative, listening to the audiotaped interview, using different coloured pencils to track the narrative voices, and noting observations on the "Observations" sheet, and themes and voices on the "Summary Worksheet".

**First Reading**

On the first reading, the narrative is read while listening to the audiotaped interview so that the voice and nuances of the narrator is heard, bringing the narrator alive.
The narrative is read once over to establish the story and place the interpreter within the whole narrative. At the end of each section of the narrative, the interpreter is to pause to consider her understanding of what the narrator is saying. On the Summary Worksheet, the interpreter records themes that will be returned to upon subsequent readings. On the Observations sheet, the interpreter notes metaphors or images, observations regarding inconsistencies, patterns, revisions and absences, and the emotional tone(s) within the narrative. In addition, the interpreter is to reflect upon and record her own responses to the narrator such as identification with or distancing from the narrator, feelings of delight, anger or sadness, confusion about or resonance with the narrator's story, and the interpreter's own values, judgements and assumptions which arise in response to the narrative.

**Second Reading**

On the second reading, the interpreter tracks the narrative for different voices. There are five voices: green, pink, red, purple, and orange (see Narrative Voices section below). Each of these voices are traced by the corresponding coloured pencil. These voices are tracked as the interpreter carefully reads the transcript, paying attention to the processes that may underlie or surround the voices, as well as the recursive interplay of parts and whole.
**Third Reading**

On the third reading, the Summary Worksheet is again utilized. The interpreter records which voices speak in the six sections of the interview. Then the interpreter locates theme-voice links. To do this requires reading over the narrative and noting the themes previously recorded and the voices associated with them (literally underlining them).

**Fourth Reading**

The fourth reading is again a wholistic reading informed by the readings for voice and theme. This reading brings the parts back into the context of the whole. This final reading is for making sense of the narrative, determining inconsistencies or contradictions, noting what might have been previously missed, noticing the absence of a voice, and confirming the interpretation.

**Narrative voices**

In order to hear and understand the narrative voices, the narratives are to be read with care, attending to content such as stated beliefs and behaviors, descriptions of relationships, assumptive frames, and emotional nuances of both the narrator and interpreter. “Reading between the lines” and listening to process are also necessary.

The voices which may be heard in the interview narratives are labelled by colour. The labelling of a voice other than
by colour brings up various connotations for interpreters so
colour naming is an attempt to control the biases and
assumptions of the interpreters.

**Green voice:** (Green pencil) This voice speaks of the
acceptance of traditional cultural and/or parental values with
little or no criticism. This voice maintains core traditional
beliefs without questioning. There is a sense of assumption
that tradition simply is so. It is the way that it is and
must be adhered to. It is a voice that is certain, secure and
comfortable in the traditional belief system. There is
composure in this voice. This voice may note "Canadian"
values for the purpose of experiencing the participant’s
distance or outright rejection of them. The green voice also
indicates that the narrator "toes the line" and does not break
essential rules. Often this voice speaks a number of
consistent themes pertaining to the maintenance of traditional
gender roles within the family and society.

**Pink voice:** (Pink pencil) This voice speaks of the
acceptance of traditional values but with some change that has
been negotiated with either the family or community. The
fundamental value remains but it has been altered slightly.
It is a voice of accommodation, speaking with a certain pride
in having brought about some change, although traditional
values or assumptions remain. The pink voice is confident in
compromise and skillful negotiation.
Red voice: (Red pencil) This voice protests traditional values but is bound by it. Conservative values are questioned and perhaps rejected but significant changes do not follow criticism. In this voice, there is a strong sense of conflict, frustration and sometimes defensiveness, but the speaker is either unable to or will not break from tradition. She is fighting but bound. The narrator is trapped either by her behavior and emotional responses, or by external circumstances such as husband, family, or community.

Purple voice: (Purple pencil) This voice criticizes and rejects traditional cultural and/or parental values, and holds different values. Unlike the pink voice, there is a fundamental shift in the belief system. This voice speaks of wanting to or having made changes in values, attitudes, behavior, roles, or lifestyle. This voice can either: 1) speak of resistance with a sense that the narrator is currently struggling but essentially okay (fighting and free); or 2) speak of difference that has always been part of herself or her family.

Orange voice: (Orange pencil) This voice speaks of having previously rejected traditional values but currently appreciating their worth, without necessarily endorsing them. This voice does not speak of uncritical acceptance but has a different perspective that allows a re-valuing of the traditional belief. The orange voice often speaks of a cycle
of having rebelled against tradition and endorsing alternative values, and then returning to tradition with a fundamental shift in attitude and a new point of view. This is also a voice that may speak of bringing together disparate values. It is insightful and reflective.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Voice</th>
<th>Theme-Voice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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# APPENDIX F

## TABLES

### Table 1

**Voice Descriptions**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voice</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Accepts traditional cultural values with little or no criticism; maintains core traditional beliefs without questioning; comfort and security in traditional values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pink</td>
<td>Accepts traditional cultural values but with some change negotiated with either the family or community; slight alteration to fundamental value; accommodates, compromises, and negotiates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Questions and rejects traditional cultural values but significant changes do not follow criticism; either unable or unwilling to break from traditional values despite criticism; conflicted, frustrated, and angry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>Criticizes and rejects traditional cultural values and hold alternative values; fundamental shift in value system; resisting, making changes, and being different.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>Appreciation of previously rejected traditional cultural values without endorsing them; cycle of resistance to traditional beliefs and then revaluing with a fundamental shift in attitude.</td>
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Table 2

Chi-square Analysis of Generation by Voice Type

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<td></td>
</tr>
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* Chi-square analysis = 18.33, df = 11; exact p = .0310
Tables 3 (a to l)

Chi-square Analyses of Themes: Generation by Voice

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* Chi-square analysis = 25.91, df = 4; exact p = .0000

3b Marriage

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* Chi-square analysis = 9.284, df = 4; exact p = .0204
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* Chi-square analysis = 9.844, df = 3; exact p = .0085

### 3d Dating

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* Chi-square analysis = 13.72, df = 2; exact p = .0007
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* Chi-square analysis = 11.00, df = 2; exact p = .0061

### 3f Living With In-laws

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* Chi-square analysis = 7.992, df = 3; exact p = .0395
### 3g Role of the Daughter

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* Chi-square analysis = 11.12, df = 4; exact p = .0122

### 3h Authority to Parents

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* Chi-square analysis = 12.12, df = 3; exact p = .0018
### 3i Work and Childrearing

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* Chi-square analysis = 16.12, df = 4; exact p = .0002

### 3j Parenting Practices

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* Chi-square analysis = 8.250, df = 3; exact p = .0427
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pink</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Chi-square analysis = 8.000, df = 2; exact p = .0137

### 31 Differential Socialization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voice</th>
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<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pink</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>23</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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* Chi-square analysis = 5.881, df = 3; exact p = .0216
### Table 4

**Frequency of Voices for Statistically Non-significant Theme-Voice Associations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Voice</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Pink</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>Orange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorce/separation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division of labour</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Izzat</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interracial relationships</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial security</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-sacrifice in marriage</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-law involvement</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical abuse</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of daughter-in-law</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority to in-laws</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanat</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
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</table>

*(table continues)*

236
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Voice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty to family of origin</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect elders</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overvalue sons</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motherhood</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transmission of values</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective on children</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal obligations</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal self-sacrifice</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of South Asian women</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations for daughter</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's movement</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurturing others</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaking rules</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communal living</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5

Chi-square Analysis of Internal Control: Generation by Voice Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voice</th>
<th>Generation</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green-Purple</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green-Pink-Purple</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pink-Purple</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Chi-square analysis = 10.00, df = 4; exact p = .0247
Table 6

Chi-square Analysis of Purple Voice Only and All Other Voices by Internal Control and External Control Plus Both

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voice</th>
<th>Locus of Control</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>External + Both</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other voices</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Chi-square analysis = 4.398, df = 1; exact p = .0505
1. The ego identity model based on Erikson’s (1968) psychosocial developmental theory and operationalized by Marcia (1966) may be inappropriate for South Asians and perhaps other ethnic groups that are collectivist societies rather than individualist. Roland (1988), a psychoanalyst who analysed patients in India and Japan, developed an alternative theory on the self. His model of the self is comprised of the individual self, the familial self, and the spiritual self.

Roland postulates that the self in most western cultures, pushed towards separation-individuation (more so for males of course), is predominantly the individual self. The familial self takes up a smaller proportion and the spiritual self even less. In contrast, the familial self is predominant in the Indian psychological structure, and the spiritual self is somewhat greater, with the individual self the least predominant. The Indian experiential sense of self is a “we-self” that is highly relational and boundaries between self and other are extremely permeable.

According to Roland, Erikson’s identity theory may not hold for Indians as autonomy is not encouraged. Marcia (1995) makes the anecdotal observation that in Indian culture, adolescence is not accorded significance as a development stage and identity conflict is curtailed by prescription (i.e., of ideology, occupation, and sexual expression). “In essence, psychological development and functioning in Hindu India does not involve the self-creation of identity as it occurs among Americans. Rather it involves the processes of the familial self and self-transformation” (Roland, 1988, p. 21). However, Roland does note that individualization and individuation is occurring in urban India along with modernization.

The question this raises for the author is with respect to the structural development of self in second generation South Asians growing up in western countries. What are their experiences of identity? If Roland’s theory of the self describes more accurately the Indian self, then how do the familial, individual, and spiritual selves make up the self structure of the second generation who are raised in the collectivist culture of home and individualist culture outside the home? The author however, can only ponder these questions and pose them for the reader since pursuing Roland’s theory of self is beyond the scope of this study.

2. A recent psychological study in the United States with a sample of 100 Gujariti families also examined the traditional-
contemporary/modern dimension in the socialization values and practices of immigrant parents (Patel, Power, & Bhavnagri, 1996). Results from this study suggested that "modern" fathers of girls placed more emphasis on competence and effectiveness in academic and work settings, and less emphasis on manners and politeness (i.e., deference to authority) than "traditional" fathers. Furthermore, although "traditional" fathers were highly "acculturated" or "Americanized" (i.e., preference for speaking English, few friends were Indian), they maintained traditional values and beliefs, expecting their daughters to be deferent to authority. This finding appears to reflect Indian men's duality.

3. One of the original plans for this research involved interviewing mother-daughter pairs, however this was not possible as many daughters have mothers who cannot speak English fluently. There are two mother-daughter pairs in this study, as well as two pairs of sisters.

4. The Openness to Experience and Values Questionnaire derived from the NEO-PI (Costa & McRae, 1985; 1989) that was originally included in the proposal of this study was not administered. Initial participants found the questionnaire cold and jarring and were reluctant to complete it after an extensive interview about their lives. The committee agreed to omit this questionnaire from the study because of participants' reaction and its questionable utility within this methodology.

5. The author noticed the graffiti when she was travelling in Kerala.

6. Unfortunately, several attempts to arrange a meeting with a representative from another organization were not successful.
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hooks, b. (1990). *Yearning: Race, gender, and cultural*


Indians in America (pp. 27-41). Virginia: College of William and Mary.


Lorde, A. (1981). The master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house. In C. Moraga & G. Anzaldúa (Eds.), *This bridge called my back: Writings by radical women of color.* (pp. 98-101). New York: Kitchen Table.


