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Introduction

In all honesty, this is not something I wanted to write. I did not envision spending the bulk of my senior year of college behind a computer screen writing a hundred-page thesis. But like many other scholars, I found myself insatiably curious on my topic of choice – the "true" reason behind problems in contentious Jewish intermarriages. The more I learned, the more I was compelled to shed light on the rampant misconceptions of those "true" reasons. From my own vantage point as a young Jew – and, I admit, a very subjective one – it seemed as though my own family was the foremost promulgator of the misconceptions for the reasons for problematic Jewish intermarriages. The ultimate motivating force behind this thesis was their insistence that the different backgrounds of each spouse will likely result in the doom of that marriage. I have been on the opposing end of that insistence since 2006, when the whole argument started one night in October:

"I don't like kosher cakes. They're dry." Those were the words that ignited the argument that has plagued my young adulthood for the better part of a decade. There was nothing extraordinary about this particular Shabbat, the mandatory day-of-rest in the Jewish religion. As was standard, a cake was brought to the table after dinner, whereupon I declined the offer of a slice. Even more typical, my aunt teased me: if not cake, then what would I eat at my wedding? I countered, "Who says I'm going to have a Jewish wedding?"

Boom. It truly felt as though an apocalypse landed in my grandmother's apartment building. The room grew silent as the fifteen or so individuals who had been playing backgammon or watching television, or drinking chai and gossiping, directed their attention towards my mother in anticipation of her response to such heresy. Unsurprisingly, the rest of the evening was spent trying to convince me that intermarriage would be a mistake I would regret – vociferously, I might add. This may read like a run-on-the-mill "younger-generation opposes tradition of older-generation" kind of story – but this was a real experience. And it is one experienced by many other young Jews in contemporary

America.[1] Other Jews, who have introduced the possibility of intermarriage, have been reprimanded much like I was that evening.

That reprimanding would turn into an argument that would be rehashed almost every Shabbat night: My grandmother, always the first to start, would remind me that "intermarriage is forbidden in the Torah." *Wrong. Technically, the Torah forbids marriage with members of tribes who do not believe in Him. By that definition, Christians and Muslims are A-OK.* An uncle would follow saying, "Whatever the Torah commands, Jewish intermarriages don't work – the divorce rate is higher." *Half true. The divorce rate for Jewish intermarriages – approximately 32 percent – may be higher than that for in-marriages – approximately 17 percent – but that means approximately 68 percent, or* the majority, *of intermarriages do not end in divorce.*[2] Another uncle would insist, "You set the example for all your younger cousins. If you marry out, they might follow suit, and you will break up this family." *False? That is an unverifiable conjecture.* My mother would chime in, "I'm going to kill myself if you intermarry."[3]

Suicide threats included, these somewhat exasperating weekly routines leaned towards the comical rather than the stressful, for they were hypothetical in nature. As might be expected however, these hypothetical arguments lost their humorous charm in time, with no real evidence to support either side. Over time, it appeared as though my family members were more interested in inculcating me with their opinions rather than discussing the truth of the matter. Ever the recalcitrant

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[1] Throughout this thesis, the term America will be used synonymously with the United States – not any other North American or South American country.

[2] The last time this was measured was in the late 1980s in a Jewish Data Bank population study from 1982-1987. Barry A. Kosmin, et al., Intermarriage: Divorce & Remarriage among American Jews 1982-1987, North American Jewish Data Bank, Family Research Series No. 1, August 1989, 1 and 14. Corroborating that evidence is a nationally representative survey conducted by the polling firm YouGov in 2010 that had similar rates for exogamous Jewish marriage divorces (35%) and endogamous ones (16%). The small sample of Jews in that poll prevent us from making definitive conclusions, but the similarity in rates suggest that they are approximately correct. Naomi Schaefer Riley, "Interfaith Unions: A Mixed Blessing," *The New York Times*, April 5, 2013, accessed February 26, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/06/opinion/interfaith-marriages-a-mixed-blessing.html?_r=0

[3] Jewish mothers have a history of employing the threat of suicide to prevent (or warn) their children from doing something. Like them, my mother is only half-joking. Such mothers really mean that their child's intermarriage would make them so depressed they would have suicidal thoughts.

teenager, my stance became more obstinate by the week. Occasionally accompanied by a younger family member, I insisted that there was no reason why intermarriage should not be acceptable and that it is not prone to discord, while the elders of the family argued the opposite. Despite the years of "debate," neither my camp's opinion nor theirs had budged. If either of us were going to sway the opinion of the other, there needed to be some facts.

My first fact-finding spree returned inconvenient results: the evidence from a wide variety of disciplines seems to verify that religiously exogamous marriages are not as successful as endogamous ones.[4] Naomi Schaefer Riley, a former *Wall Street Journal* editor who herself lives in an intermarriage, came to that conclusion after conducting a national survey in conjunction with in-depth interviews of married and once-married couples, sociologists, counselors, and clergymen.[5] Of the observed sociological experiments regarding the happiness of interfaith marriages, all seemed to confirm that conclusion.[6] And the fact that there are so many advice books and workshops for interfaith couples, especially Jewish-Christian ones, corroborates this notion. However, there is not a consensus as to why these intermarriages have not been as successful as their counterparts. This initiated my second fact-finding spree.

It was equally futile. Many Jewish leaders have claimed, for quite a few decades now, that intermarriage is unlikely to be successful because of the differences in the religious and cultural

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[4] An "unsuccessful" marriage will be defined as a marriage that does not meet the standards of the spouses involved, typically marriages that were unhappy, or became separated or divorced. Ideally, there would be well done and numerous studies with statistics on the harmony of intermarriages, but come in few numbers and far between decades –there are none (that I found) which specifically study Jewish-American intermarriage either, which is why this thesis refers to divorce rates as the next best barometer of an unsuccessful marriage, in conjunction with case studies of intermarried individuals. With regards to the time frame of this thesis, there was a change in the criteria by which a marriage was judged to be successful, around the turn of the twentieth century, or perhaps sooner for people in high society. So the qualities of an "unsuccessful marriage really depend on the couple. For some, a lack of financial stability or social acceptance would mean an unsuccessful marriage (institutional criterion), while for others an emotionally unsatisfying conjugal relationship would mean an unsuccessful marriage (companionate criterion). It is possible (and even common) for the success of a marriage to be judged by both institutional and companionate criteria. Marilyn Coleman, et al., *Family Life in 20th-Century America*, (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2007), 16.

[5] Naomi Schaefer Riley, *'Til Faith Do Us Part: How Interfaith Marriage is Transforming America* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2013).

[6] Heer, 1974, Alston, et al., 1976, Bumpass and Sweet, 1972, Glenn, 1982, Reiss, 1980.

backgrounds between the spouses. This idea has been reiterated since 1944, when Montreal's Temple Emanu-el was told "People of similar backgrounds economically, socially, and religiously have a better chance of having a successful union than those whose backgrounds are dissimilar."[7] It still appears in contemporary arguments such as in Doron Kornbluth's 2003 book *Why Marry Jewish?* in which he asserts "divergent religious and cultural heritages pose serious challenges to intermarried couples and lead to significantly higher rates of divorce."[8]

This theory has been the principal reasoning against intermarriage for the better part of the last hundred years. But, what if one shared the same culture as one's spouse? What if the American culture adopted important aspects of the Jewish culture? That is evidently the case as America has become philo-Semitic in the last half-century. The United States' entertainment industry – one assessment of mainstream popular culture – has become littered with elements of Jewish humor, which is most evident on the screen (Seinfeld, Curb Your Enthusiasm, and any Woody Allen film to name a few). The Holocaust has been a popular film genre that has generated many award winning films hailed by both American audiences and critics; in addition, it is an important event reviewed in primary and secondary schools across the country. Jewish delicatessens have become a staple of American urban centers. Clearly, the dominant popular culture in the United States has adopted several facets of Jewishness – and "essential" ones at that. According to a 2013 Pew study on the American Jewry, 73 percent of American Jews believe that remembering the Holocaust is "essential to being Jewish," followed by 42 percent who believe having a good sense of humor is important, and 14 percent who think eating traditional foods is fundamental to being Jewish.[9] It would not be an overstatement to say that to a certain extent Jewish culture has pervaded mainstream America. That,

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[7] Paul Spickard, *Mixed Blood: Intermarriage and Ethnic Identity in Twentieth Century America.* (Madison. The University of Wisconsin Press. 1989). 189.
[8] Doron Kornbluth. *Why Marry Jewish?* Surprising Reasons for Jews to Marry Jews (Southfield. Michigan: Targum Press. Inc., 2003). 45.
[9] *A Portrait of Jewish Americans*: Findings from a Pew Research Center Survey of U.S. Jews (Washington D.C.. Pew Research Center. 2013), 55. accessed on October 5. 2013. http://pewrsr.ch/16fN5U4.

then implies that cultural differences may not be a serious issue if both partners are subsumed in mainstream America, since there seems to have been generations of mutual assimilation.

By the same token, it seems logical to surmise that religion would not be an issue of contention for irreligious couples. As it turns out, a significant portion of American Jews do not identify with the Jewish religion. A 2013 Pew Center Study on the identity of American Jews demonstrated that 22 percent of them are Jews of no religion, which the study categorized as "people who describe their religion as atheist, agnostic or 'nothing in particular' but who were raised Jewish or had a Jewish parent and who still consider themselves Jewish aside from religion."[10] Since a substantial portion of the American Jewry is irreligious and culturally American, marrying someone who is also irreligious and culturally American presumably should not send up any red flags.

Doron Kornbluth, however, disagrees with that conclusion as he elaborates in his book – a small five-by-seven-inch paperback drowned in conjectures. That little nugget is my mother's version of a pocket dictionary. Any time she needs an example for why intermarriage does not work, that is her go-to. The only reason it is worth any mention is that it is widely circulated among Southern California Jewish households – apparently it serves as other people's pocket dictionaries too. The book attempts to validate the cultural and religious difference theory, yet hardly any of the examples in its defense were convincing, since many of them were not even examples of a Jewish intermarriage but of some other type of intermarriage. Kornbluth apparently thought it apt to include examples of Mormon-Christian or Protestant-Catholic interfaith marriages in a book subtitled *Surprising Reasons For Jews to Marry Jews*, which encapsulates the absurdities found in this book. A premise for his second chapter was that word-association games can reveal a person's true feelings and he included one example of a Jewish-Christian couple's therapy session which employed that "technique." This was the couple's reaction: appalled that her Jewish husband linked the words

[10] In fact, "The increase in Jews of no religion appears to be part of a broader trend in American life, the movement away from affiliation with organized religious groups." *A Portrait of Jewish Americans*, 32.

"Jesus" and "cross" to "fake" and "idolatry," she commented it was "no wonder" his "people" get into so much trouble. In livid reaction to her referencing Jews as "you people," the husband retorted by labeling her and her family as anti-Semitic. From examples like this, Kornbluth deduces that some couples in love can convince themselves that they could be happy together despite "serious obstacles in the way." It is true that many couples gloss over their partner's incompatible characteristics – in this case the couple's different religions were those incompatible traits. But that "until this encounter" this couple did not realize that they wanted "nothing to do," with each other's religions, which came four years into their marriage, really seems like an exceptional case.[11] Whether or not this example is an outlier or common for most of the population, it is clear that the couple's substandard communication skills were part of the problem, at least as much as their religious differences, if not more. A person who hurls negative comments directed at his significant other, especially epithets, will only harm his relationship. But Kornbluth never accounts for the possibility of bad communication skills in any of his examples, despite the fact that experts on marital relationships believe it to be "the heart" of martial distress.[12] Kornbluth's book is littered with examples that were really only snippets of an exchange between an intermarried couple and pretends that just that little bit is enough to demonstrate that the problems in that given relationship were linked to intermarriage – which is really an incredible disservice to the complexity and interdependent nature of a relationship.

In sum, that is the way the entire book is written, which is worth discussing because so many Jewish parents might reiterate the faulty logic that Kornbluth employed throughout the book. He included the aforementioned example in a chapter titled, "How Jewish Are You?" which makes the case that a personal attachment to Jewishness grows with age; therefore, marrying someone who is

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[11] Kornbluth, 20.
[12] "Communication is the heart of marital distress." Chris Segrin and Jeanne Flora, *Family Communication*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2011), 237.

not Jewish might seem unproblematic at a young age, but as a person ages and becomes more attached to his background he might develop an antagonistic relationship with his non-Jewish spouse in regards to religion (i.e. the man in the example was sensitive to the phrase "you people," and concluded that he wanted "nothing to do with Christianity!"). However, Kornbluth writes that this encounter, and the man's subsequent epiphany of his attachment to Judaism, happened four years into their marriage. It seems far-fetched that a person could develop so strong an attachment to his roots that in four years he would go from not caring if he will spend the rest of his life with a Christian to shouting "I want nothing to do with Christianity!" We do not know this for a fact, but then again that is because Kornbluth does not tell us. And that is the problem with most of the book as it gives only snippets of scenarios with no citations or context, which fail to convince the reader of his point and ignore the plethora of questions the snippet invokes.[13] Maybe there is something to say about an age-related attachment to one's background, but whatever it is Kornbluth is not saying it, and the subsequent chapters of the book follow the same pattern.

Naturally, after reading *Why Marry Jewish?* (which I found on my bed one day – a perfect example of my mother's subtlety) I remained unconvinced that religious and cultural differences were the problem that explained higher dissatisfaction rates in Jewish intermarriages. The theory seemed to become further invalid against copious examples of couples whose marriages thrived, despite being from different religious and cultural backgrounds. The difference theory proved a deficient lens for garnering a clear focus of intermarital problems. Contributing to my incredulousness was the fact that religious and cultural differences are not considered a reason for American divorce, even though it would be plausible given the American population's diversity. Moreover, the contemporary divorce rate in the United States is between 40 and 50 percent

[13] Most of the examples (of a fiery verbal exchange between an intermarried couple) were only several lines long, and without an addendum it would be impossible for the reader to check the source of these examples to see if they were taken out of context.

(depending on how it is calculated), which is higher than the Jewish intermarriage divorce rate of approximately 32 percent. However, that reason is not applied to explain American divorce rates. What, then, could be behind these unsuccessful marriages in recent history?

As this thesis suggests, understanding the present phenomenon requires gaining a proper perspective on it. In order to do this, one must move his vantage point to a time in the past; one must look at the history of marriage. Esther Perel, a renowned expert on cross-cultural sexuality and a marriage therapist with multiple practices around the world, gave a 2013 TED talk in which she said marriage used to be an economic institution in which a person was given a life partner from which he derived children, succession, social status, and companionship. "But now," she continued, "we want our partner to *still* give us all these things, but in addition I want you to be my best friend, and my trusted confidante, and my passionate lover to boot, and we live twice as long."[14] In other words, contemporary marriage must satisfy all these romantic expectations, in addition to the institutional and social ones that already exist. Despite the comical tone of her comment, these are unrealistically high expectations to have of a marriage, and they can have serious consequences for its longevity and its success. After going over several case studies, it became apparent that intermarried couples had those such expectations of their marriage. And, after extensive research on the subject it seems that an emphasis on the concept of romantic love, coupled with an individual ethos, is the root of many American divorces and of Jewish intermarried ones as well. But how did Jewish intermarriages come to reflect the general trend of American ones?

The answer, it seems, is through generational assimilation, which is how Jews came to adopt aspects of American culture and vice-versa. Ever more compelling for successive generations, integration facilitated immigrant Jews and their descendants to acculturate to these standards of romantic love and individualism. Both are promoted extensively in American culture, and in Western

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[14] Esther Perel, "The Secret to Desire in a Long-term Relationship" (TED talk), posted February, 2013, accessed August 14, 2014, http://www.ted.com/talks/esther_perel_the_secret_to_desire_in_a_long_term_relationship

countries in general; the combination of the two induces a predilection for passionately satisfying relationships while paradoxically making it more difficult to attain said satisfaction. Although it owes much in part to the seminal work of Stephanie Coontz, and her book *Marriage, a History: From Obedience to Intimacy or How Love Conquered Marriage*, this thesis is situated within a larger body of scholarship. This thesis drew from interviews, a variety of texts ranging from interpersonal psychological studies to cross-cultural sociological studies, to texts on the history of family life, Jewish immigration, and the United States, in addition to surveys and reports on Jewish American and U.S. population dynamics. All different parts of the same picture, the brush that paints them together is that of the biographical texts of intermarried Jewish couples in the twentieth century. A history of American family life and the institution of marriage provide a clear lens through which to view how passionate love and individualism led many people to unsatisfying marriages. From this, a focused perspective can be teased out to demonstrate how Jews, particularly those who intermarried, acculturated to those standards that would weaken the foundation of their marriage.

As always with history, as often with the story of a person's life, the exact time frame of a cultural trend, popular idea, period or phase can never be unambiguously defined, which is the reason why the time frames in the following sections will overlap. The first section begins with a criminally brief discussion of the history behind the factors that led to the romantic ideal of marriage in the United States: which goes from the Reformation to individualism to self-actualization to the second industrial revolution to the romantic ideal. The second section (which collectively has a time frame from approximately 1870 to 1930) elaborates on the generation of Jews who immigrated to America. Through a discussion of the film *Fiddler on the Roof* the culture and lifestyle of the European Jews who came to the States will be revealed, so that it can be understood how they reacted when they came to American shores and decided whether or not to assimilate. Then, the culture into which they had to assimilate will be discussed, which at the time was undergoing a transformation from Victorian to Progressive. Last, the intermarriage of Anna Strunsky will be analyzed. The third section

(with a time frame of roughly 1915 to 1960) reviews the secularization of those Jews who were born in the U.S. to immigrant parents – referred to as the second generation, as well as the Great Depression culture in which they grew up. What follows is a discussion of the intermarriage of Arthur Miller. The fourth section (with a time frame of roughly 1940 to 1990) discusses the assimilation of the third generation of Jews, the culture of divorce that arose in their time, and the marriages of Fern Kupfer. The conclusion includes an interview and a brief analysis of what this history means for understanding Jewish intermarriage today.

Background

From the Reformation to Individualism

As a Jewish girl, I never thought that the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century ... would have anything to do with my life. But, as it turns out, its long-lasting influences have had an effect on my life. Recall my family's conversation about intermarriage; one of the reasons against it, given by my uncle, was that it sets a bad example for younger members in the family. He was suggesting that I am not only responsible for my fate, but for those of the people around me. However, I find it unpalatable that I am supposed to marry for my family as much as for myself. If I were to get married, I would do it for myself, to satisfy my own needs, and because *I* want to – not because it is what my family wants. And *that* is an individualistic viewpoint – something I have evidently adopted while growing up in the United States. By contrast, my uncle and the rest of my family grew up in Iran, where an individualist viewpoint is not promoted.

Unlikely as it may seem, the Reformation can explain this difference. Prior to the Reformation, the whole of Europe was under the influence of the Roman Catholic Church. But the sixteenth century saw the collapse of that as many European principalities came under the influence of various dissenters, like Martin Luther in modern-day Germany, or John Calvin in contemporary

Switzerland.[15] Among the different doctrines that they promulgated was the doctrine of predestination, which dictated that a person's destiny was solely in the hands of God; therefore, no matter what actions were taken, the living could do nothing to guarantee their eternal salvation. The result was that they began to focus on their present lives, rather than the eternal ones that they were hoping to spend in heaven. How might predestination have anything to do with this subject? A well-known scholar of late medieval and early modern religious European history, Carlos Eire, reveals the answer: "Gone was the communion of saints, and gone too was the chance to earn salvation in the world to come....*This* life and *this* world, then, became the sole focus of religion, as did the *individual* over the community."[16] In time, this new focus on the individual would become an ethos of individuality. It seems as though the forces and world views produced by the Reformation led to the eventual production and dissemination of today's individualist values.

Individualism and the Paradox of Self-actualization

It then comes as no surprise that the countries ranked highest in individualistic cultural patterns tend to be Protestant countries according to research done by intercultural researchers and cross-cultural psychologists.[17] Among emphasized individualist values are comfort, hedonism, personal autonomy, identity based on one's personal attributes, and the expression of rights over duties.[18] The mainstream of the United States is easily recognized as one of the highest-ranking

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[15] Protestants also opposed the Catholic stance on marriage, which forbid clergymen from marrying insisting that marriage was a necessary evil to continue humanity and that it was a second-best existence to celibacy. They contended that marriage was "a glorious estate," and a core foundation of society. This, in addition to the "growing economic importance and political independence of the nuclear family," led Protestant preachers to emphasize the importance of love between man and wife. Stephanie Coontz, *Marriage, A History: From Obedience to Intimacy, or How Love Conquered Marriage*. (2005), 132, 134, and 135.

[16] Carlos Eire, *A Very Brief History of Eternity*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 152.

[17] The United States, Canada, Great Britain, Australia, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, and Denmark are considered individualistic countries. Hofstede, 1999 and 2001, Triandis, 1995.

[18] Stella Ting-Toomey, "A Mindful Approach to Managing Conflict in Intercultural Intimate Couples," in *Intercultural Couples: Exploring Diversity in Intimate Relationships*, ed. Terri A. Karis and Kyle D. Killan (New York: Routledge, 2009), 35-36. Dion, Kenneth and Karen Dion, "Cultural Perspectives on Romantic Love," Personal Relationships vol. 3, no. 1 (1996): 8.

individualist societies, especially when thought of in conjunction with the values of comfort, freedom, and hedonism.[19] An example of this is the value placed on the trait self-actualization, which is "a personality dimension that reflects individualism," according to intercultural psychological sociologists, and is defined as the drive to fulfill one's own potential.[20] It is a psychological characteristic that promotes the prioritization of oneself over others. Evidence from psychological studies suggest that self-actualized individuals enjoy the feeling of being in love more than their peers who are less self-actualized, but paradoxically care less for their partner.[21] That means they would desire personal fulfillment in their marriage, but their personality trait would make that fulfillment harder to achieve. Such psychological studies have suggested that this trait, found to be high in individualistic societies (like that in the United States) could partially explain high divorce statistics.

However, being part of an individualistic society is not tantamount to egocentricity. There are layers of individualism that can emphasize personal need, like that which is found in the mainstream United States, or immediate family need, like that which is emphasized in Sweden.[22] These layers reflect a difference in psychological attitudes versus sociological attitudes towards individualism. According to the cultural love sociologists Karen and Kenneth Dion, "there are differences within a given society concerning the extent to which individuals personally endorse prevailing cultural ideas or [isolated] ones."[23] Thus, psychological collectivists can be found in individualistic societies, and psychological individualists in collectivistic societies. People who go from a collectivist society to settle in an individualist one can be tested for acculturation to the values found in an individualistic society (i.e. self-actualization, hedonism, etc.) as a sign of assimilation. The results of sociological

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[19] Stella Ting-Toomey, 37.
[20] Dion and Dion, 13.
[21] Ibid., 14.
[22] Ting-Toomey, 36-37.
[23] Dion and Dion, 13.

research have signified that those values or attitudes "can be viewed as key indicators of different modes of acculturation."[24] But what might a prototypical U.S. personality trait have to do with the romantic love considered vital for a successful marriage?

They are incompatible, and yet paradoxically promote one another. Self-actualization, a mix of ambition and self-prioritization, can be seen as the root of the second industrial revolution, which is what spurred the change in family lifestyles that allowed the economic conditions in which romantic ideals were cultivated. The idea that *if one tries hard, one can succeed in America* has been a widely circulated notion: if one has the drive, he can achieve; if one realizes his ambition, he can do anything. The United States is supposedly the world's oyster for ambitious people who want to take it. Whether or not that is actually true, successful entrepreneurs who took themselves from rags to riches displayed enormous ambition and self-actualization, especially in the period of the second industrial revolution in the late nineteenth century, which is important in this narrative for the changes it wrought on family life.[25]

The Industrial Revolution and the Romantic Ideal

The expansion of railroads in the second half of the nineteenth century gave way to the rise in urban living, which is the next crucial concept for understanding the institution of marriage. Cities were developed wherever railroad stops were created, and many of them grew into bustling urban centers. Additionally, the Northeast industrial plants provided solid job opportunities that were preferable to the onerous work for subsistence from farm life – the type of life most Americans had

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[24] Ibid., 12.

[25] Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller both grew immensely successful in this period, and much of that was attributed to their individual drive (and ruthlessness) to succeed – in other words, their self-actualization. Carnegie emigrated from Scotland as a moneyless teenager and by the 1890s dominated the steel industry and had accumulated a fortune worth hundreds of millions of dollars, while John D. Rockefeller rose from a modest beginning to become the byword for enormous wealth. Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty! An American History*, 3rd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), 592 and 593.

led. As Americans migrated from small, rural towns to metropolitan areas, and as a household became less a productive unit and more a consumptive one, the pragmatic reasons for marriage were no longer necessary. Those reasons were prominent in the Victorian era of the nineteenth century, and included a steady sexual partner for conceiving children, help with farming and housework, and personal security because, "when households were primarily production units – making their own food, clothing, furniture, and even shelter – it made sense to marry so that there would be someone to help make ends meet."[26]

The modern era of the early twentieth century witnessed a change from the previous Victorian era of the late nineteenth century, whereby the household became the place where the fruits of production would be consumed. The esteemed social historian, Elaine Tyler May, confirms this shift: "After 1900, the communal values of [the Victorian era] were seriously shaken by the rise of urban culture, which brought altered sex roles and post Victorian expectations of marriage and family life."[27] To elaborate, the mature industrial system in the United States that resulted from the second industrial revolution demanded less manpower to activate the economy. As a result there was a shift to urban lifestyles, which meant women and men working in the cities did not need a partner or children to help with farm work, or an institution to organize sexual companionship, or even help in creating a home's food, clothing, and furniture, since all of those could be purchased in a city.[28] Thanks to the abundance from a maturing industrial system, an increasing portion of the upper middle class dramatically benefited, as necessity no longer demanded a stable job and as higher education allowed for a delayed entry into the work force, whereby "youth" was stretched beyond physical maturity.[29] This new youthful leisure class pioneered a new style of romantic courtship

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[26] Coleman, 16.
[27] Elaine Tyler May, *Great Expectations: Marriage and Divorce in Post-Victorian America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 49.
[28] Coleman, 16.
[29] May, 40.

defined by consumer spending and amusements.[30] Ostensibly, this was the cause for the rise among the youth in adherence to the notion that romantic love was the primary rationale for marriage.[31]

It then comes as no surprise that "Romantic passionate love has been found to be a critical component in the 'falling in love' stage for many individualists"; and this is one reason why individualists think it is "a disastrous action" to get married without falling in love first, according to the research of intercultural communication scholar Stella Ting-Toomey.[32] What she and others in her field have found is that the term "love" has different connotations in different cultures. In an individualist culture, love is perceived to be an emotional state one "falls into," and has a "suddenness of onset," like when someone says, "it was love at first sight."[33] Individualists report this emotional state to be a feeling characterized by "a glowing feeling," in which "problems seem to vanish," which is enhanced by the desire to "be with the person all the time," because one is thinking of that person all the time.[34] Individualists tend to perceive love as "any intense attraction that involves the idealization of the other [i.e. they seem "perfect"], with an erotic context," the experience of which is "*expected* to be all consuming, fulfilling, and transcendent [italics mine]."[35] Since the mainstream American culture is an individualist one, it makes sense that "in the United States…intimate partners desire to 'lose' themselves in a romantic love-fused relationship."[36] This may be a reductive description of romantic marital expectations of love, so the following serves to clarify what "love" means in an American or individualist context.

Family historian Stephanie Coontz describes the association with love and a successful marriage as many Americans have come to understand it:

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[30] May, 62.
[31] Ibid., 62.
[32] Ting-Toomey, 38.
[33] Dion and Dion, 7
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid. The word expected was not italicized in the reported research, but here it will be because expectation is a critical component behind the increasing divorce rates in the United States, as will be demonstrated in the following sections.
[36] Ting-Toomey, 38.

> First, they must love each other deeply and choose each other unswayed by outside pressure. From then on, each must make the partner the top priority in life, putting that relationship above any and all competing ties. A husband and wife, we believe, owe their highest obligations and deepest loyalties to each other and the children they raise. Parents and in-laws should not be allowed to interfere in the marriage. Married couples should be best friends, sharing their most intimate feelings and secrets. They should express affection openly but also talk candidly about problems. And of course they should be sexually faithful to each other.[37]

She further asserts that the love recipe for marital happiness, which prevails in contemporary Western countries, is unprecedented. This romantic ideal of love became the heart of the post-Victorian expectations of marriage that elevated passion over pragmatism. However, this concept of love is not a universal one. Only certain people subscribe to it, and those people tend to live in individualistic societies: "The ideology of romantic love centers on pursuing personal fulfillment and following one's personal wishes, even if they oppose those of one's family and kin. This ideology is less likely to be encouraged in collectivistic as contrasted with individualistic societies."[38] Specifically, this ideology is a result of the mature industrial society that allowed the conditions for its dissemination, which is why it prevailed in industrialized Western countries around the turn of the twentieth century. The notion of romantic love was conceived of before 1900; however, it was in the 1900s that the United States witnessed the first time an abundance of people could afford to prioritize romantic love, because of the effects of the second industrial revolution, the prosperous 1920s, and the extremely prosperous post-war years.

For those who were not in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century – specifically, for those who were in secluded eastern European villages – the romantic concept of love was not a requirement for marriage, let alone something that was sought after. That is the setting for the next section: it was the Old World of the Jewish immigrants who would later come to America and be introduced to its romance infused culture.

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[37] Coontz, chapter 1.
[38] Dion and Dion, 8.

The Old World, the New World, and Anna Strunsky

From the Immigrant Jew's Old World to the New World (1870-1929)

Before 1880, the Jewish population in America was mostly composed of German and Sephardic Reform Jews, but by 1924 Eastern European Orthodox Jews constituted the majority. The dramatic change in demographics is due to the mass migration of Orthodox Jews out of Eastern Europe. About 2.3 million came to American shores in those years.[39] Their descendants have continued to be the lion's share of the Jewish American population, which is the reason the Eastern European brethren and not their predecessors are the subject of this thesis.[40] The 1971 motion picture *Fiddler on the Roof* may serve as an apt example for their lifestyle and culture prior to their immigration to the United States – their New World.[41] The film depicts the fictional life of Tevye, a poor Orthodox Jewish man living in 1905 in a rural Russian village split between his fellow coreligionists and their Russian compatriots.

As the film portrays, Jews self-segregated due to the oppression in tsarist Russia: they clung tenaciously to Orthodoxy over Reform, to Yiddish over their nation's language, and they abstained from the social and cultural life of their resident country.[42] To a certain degree, the bubble that encased their communities was self-imposed, however it was also Polish and Russians policies that kept Jews from living in main cities. Permission to live outside the designated provinces in eastern Poland, and western or southwestern provinces in Russia, were only granted to a few Jews. Most were confined to an area known as the Pale of Settlement. Within the Pale, Jews lived in small towns,

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[39] Spickard, 173.
[40] Before 1880, Reform Jewish Germans immigrated to the U.S., and before them Sephardic Jews immigrated. But neither of these groups came in numbers as large as those of the Eastern European Jews. That is why this thesis omits a discussion of other Jews – because they were a smaller portion of the Jewish-American population.
[41] *Fiddler on the Roof* was based on "Tevye the Milkman," a series of stories written by Sholem Aleichem in the 1880s, which effectively was a portrait of the changing society of the Orthodox Jewry. The film *Sholem Aleichem: Laughing in the Darkness* provides a wonderfully insightful look at the history of the society behind the author who so meticulously painted that portrait.
[42] Spickard, 167.

villages, and cities, the smaller of which were the *shtetlekh*.[43] Small and relatively autonomous, life within these Jewish towns was governed by "communal concerns," rendering the ethos of the *shtetl* a collectivistic one, which is an important distinction to make since many of them moved into a country dominated by an individualist ethos.[44]

The shtetl became known as "the Old World" as its inhabitants emigrated from their homes in Eastern Europe. An established collectivistic culture existed there amongst its primarily Orthodox residents. The Orthodox Jewry exemplified the collectivist tendency to draw boundaries between an out-group (i.e., "one of them") and an in-group (i.e., "one of us"), which can be demonstrated in a scene from *Fiddler on the Roof*.[45] An hour into the film the Jews are at their local tavern celebrating a betrothal, when a singing voice slices through the midst of their celebration. The scene cuts to reveal a group of Russian men at the opposite end of the tavern singing a toast to the Jews on their cause for celebration. The spatial arrangement of the scene alone demonstrates the Jewish tenacity for distinguishing the Russians, "one of them," from the other Orthodox Jews, "one of us." Only when Tevye hesitantly accepts the extended hand of a Russian (after drinking much vodka) do they cross that partition and start dancing together. This scene accurately depicts the gravity for Orthodox Jews of mixing with those outside their own group.

To interact with gentiles, let alone to become romantically entangled with one, was evidently of dramatic consequence to Orthodox Jews. There were Yiddish terms for outsiders like *shiksa*, a non-Jewish girl who might woo a Jewish boy away from his family; or *goy*, the derogatory version of gentile. A pertinent example can be seen in the film when Tevye's daughter informs him she wants to marry her gentile beau. He reminds her that she must not forget who *she* is in relationship to who "*that man* is," because "he is a *different* kind of man" and "as the good book [Torah] says, 'each shall

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[43] Susan Glenn, *Daughters of the Shtetl: Life and Labor in the Immigrant Generation*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990). 9 and 13.
[44] Glenn, 9.
[45] Ting-Toomey, 36.

seek *his own* kind.'"[46] Tevye's words are reflective of Orthodox Jews' obstinacy in distinguishing themselves from outsiders. In order to maintain the integrity of their identity, they refrained from blurring the line between who was "one of them," or "one of us"; they kept interaction with gentiles to a minimum and forbid intermarriage.

Marrying out of the faith was *strictly* prohibited by Orthodox Jews in Eastern Europe and was accompanied by harsh consequences, as Tevye reminded his daughter in the movie. Tevye had let his two eldest daughters get away with breaking some traditions – like not using a matchmaker, or asking for his blessing rather than his permission to marry – but he refused to accept the intermarriage of his third daughter. He gravely warns his daughter that although their world was changing "some things do not change for us [Jews]. Some things will never change," referring to the proscription of marrying a non-Jew.[47] When she disobeyed him and married a gentile, Tevye did what was the custom of the time – he treated her like she was dead, effectively disowning her.

True to Tevye's words, the taboo on intermarriage has not changed, and still exists within Jewish communities.[48] However, other aspects of life in the Old World were beginning to transform. A fine example of this is the matchmaking tradition: the Old World initiated marriages through the use of a *shadkhen*, a matchmaker, the medium through which parents could select a new addition to the family. Whether a potential spouse would bring *yiches*, or prestige, to one's family was the benchmark against which the suitability of a spouse was determined. One woman recalled, "Although affluence and influence were considerations of importance [in picking a spouse], *yiches* usually involved learning and scholarship."[49] In the Old World, an individual would let a parent

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[46] The quotations, and scene descriptions, are taken from the film and not a script so point of emphasis (which I italicized) may not be exactly written the way it is in the script. All quotations from Fiddler for the remainder of the thesis come from the following source.

[47] The year in the movie is 1905 and change was upon Europe. Socialism was spreading fast, and the Russian Revolution would soon take place. Orthodox communities were suffering from state sanctioned raids called pogroms. In addition, there was a movement within the Orthodox youth for secularization, which undermined many traditions of the Orthodox and their way of life.

[48] The reception to intermarriage essentially remains the same among Orthodox Jews to this day.

[49] Miriam Shomer Zunser quoted in Glenn, 37.

arrange a marriage that would bring prestige to the family, so the family as a whole could move upwards on the social ladder. That represents the Jewish practice of placing group needs over individual wants and desires – yet another example of the collectivistic tradition.[50]

Even so, that was starting to change around the early twentieth century. According to historian Keren McGinity, marriage as an economic and social arrangement had "begun to break down in the Old World," where young adults would ask their parents permission to marry a person of their choice. In the movie, Tevye's eldest daughter exemplifies this trend. She begs her father not to condemn her to a life of misery by freeing her from the arranged marriage he had just settled. Then, she and her beau beg him to grant them permission to marry. When he refuses, they tell him that they had given each other a pledge to marry one another.[51] Rendered incredulous by this revelation, Tevye exclaims, "[You] must be crazy! Arranging a match for yourself?". He continues, "Where do you think you are? In Moscow? In Paris?...*America*?" The three places he lists were regions without the tradition of arranged engagements and, not so coincidentally, those societies leaned more towards individualism.[52] His questions are demonstrative of the collectivist tradition enshrined within Orthodox communities, in which an unarranged marriage was "unthinkable!"

Choosing a mate for oneself, was something Teyve considered "unheard of." and "absurd," because arranged marriages used to be the norm in the shtetl and falling in love used to be an afterthought. In *Fiddler on the Roof*, Tevye and his wife recall that they met each other on their wedding day for the first time. Their parents told them that they would "learn to love each other" after they married, which is something traditional collectivists observe according to Stella Ting-Toomey, an intercultural communication theorist. For collectivists, the concept of love is different from the individualist one: being "in love" requires "time to develop" and "long term commitment,"

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[50] Ting-Toomey, 36.
[51] He initially refuses because his daughter's suitor is "a poor tailor," which was the least respected occupation for a man within Jewish communities. Religious scholars were the most respected, followed by wealthy men.
[52] Individualism and collectivism lie on a continuum, and thus, there are varying degrees of each.

whereas individualists tend to identity love by its suddenness of onset, as if they fell in "love at first sight."[53]

Evidently, Westernized ideas of romantic love had begun to infiltrate the shtetl in the 1880s.[54] Jewish girls increasingly begged to be released from arranged marriages and would instead ask for permission to wed a person of their choosing. By the beginning years of the twentieth century, these ideas took hold as one girl took one look at her suitor and told her mother, "You marry him. I am going to America!"[55] Her intended was a butcher from another village nearly twice her age. Years later, this woman's granddaughter would write of the incident "It was all very *Fiddler on the Roof*."[56]

Similarly, it could be said that all the dramatic changes wrought on the Orthodox Jewry were "very *Fiddler on the Roof*." Though set in the year 1905, the chronology of the film should be interpreted as analogous to a thirty-year span. From a historical vantage point it becomes clear that the film's story line progresses as if it started in the 1870s and ended in the first decade of 1900, with some anachronism. The customs become more progressive, mirroring the effects of historical change on the shtetl. First comes a young university-educated socialist who offers to give educational lessons to girls, something more scandalous in 1870 than in 1905. Then the marriages of Tevye's three daughters successively become more progressive: his eldest daughter marries a man of her own choice, the second marries without permission, and the third intermarries. Then the Jews are evicted from the town by royal edict, because the tensions that would soon culminate in the Revolution of 1905 are being felt and Jews were considered socialist "trouble-makers."[57] Meanwhile Tevye is struggling to make a living, which mirrored the widespread poverty from economic duress in this

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[53] Ting-Toomey, 38.
[54] Glenn.
[55] Fern Kupfer, *Leaving Long Island...and Other Departures* (Ames: Culicidae Press, LLC., 2012), 31.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Though very few in the movie were Marxists of any kind, many Jews had joined the socialist movement by the first decade of the twentieth century.

period brought by similar royal edicts. Such decrees restricted Jews to fewer and fewer provinces in the Pale, whereupon competition was increased. These transformations in the dynamic of Jewish life were brought by ideas that originated outside the shtetl, and were bolstered due to economic conditions that fostered leaving the shtetl, bringing Orthodox Jews closer to the outside world.

These ideas abruptly disrupted the Jewry's isolation, which until the 1870s had remained essentially undisturbed. *Maskilim*, the name of the movement that started in the 1870s, promoted westernized educations for Jews of both sexes as a way to modernize Jewish societies, which was essentially the first real effect of the Enlightenment to reach Eastern European Jews.[58] The infiltration of some Westernized ideas (i.e. romantic love, self-fulfillment, and Marxism) in conjunction with a movement that advocated the adoption of those ideas, undermined the collectivistic bedrock of Orthodoxy within the shtetl. Further, this middle class movement was a prelude to the rise of socialist Jewish intellectuals who expanded on the movement's critique of traditional cultural norms to promote better economic and legal conditions for Jews.[59] The dynamic of the Eastern European Jewry was clearly changing, and these transformations would exacerbate once those Jews came to America, for Jewish immigrants would constitute a large portion of the socialist working class in the United States.

By the turn of the century there were many compelling reasons for Jews to emigrate; they were either running to the New World or from the Old World. Those who ran to it were individuals whose values were remodeled to Western, individualistic standards. One girl explained that only in America could she "fall in love and marry."[60] She had strayed from the

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[58] Glenn, 35.
[59] Ibid. The traditional culture, as Sholem Aleichem so pithily worded, viewed the modernization of their city neighbors in negative terms: one of his characters expressed that the modernized industrial towns of "bustle and smog" were monstrosities that men had "dignified with terms like 'progress' and 'civilization.'" *Sholem Aleichem: Laughing in the Darkness,* directed by Joseph Dorman (Filmmakers Library, 2012), accessed March 10, 2014, http://movies.Netflix.com/.
[60] Glenn, 46.

Old World's collectivism – discernible because she spoke of "love" before "marriage," the opposite of a collectivist's concept of love. Young socialist Jews, looked ahead to the prospect of a democratic society "free from the stigmas of class," which existed as much in the shtetl as it did in Imperial Russia.[61]

Those who ran from the Old World found that they could no longer lead a safe, sustainable life there. There was a "gnawing fear" of *pogroms* – state sponsored violent riots inflicted upon Jewish neighborhoods, which led some to emigrate.[62] Many left due to the pitiful economic opportunities in the Pale. The financial condition of the Jewish masses is immortalized in *Fiddler on the Roof*'s famous score "If I Were a Rich Man." Poverty-stricken as most of them were, they "eked out" a living in artisanal trades and small commercial enterprises, in the words of historian Susan Glenn.[63] But even eking out an income became difficult in the period between 1880 and 1910, when the restrictions on residency in the Pale were tightened: Jews were uprooted from their homes and forced to move into a small selection of provinces in the Pale.[64] They lived their lives as petty artisans, shopkeepers, tailors, etc; these are all professions that were wiped out with industrialization, making the shtetl even more impoverished.[65] Mary Antin's summary of the decision to emigrate, included here in full, is reflective of the predicament experienced by millions:

> It was not easy to live, with such bitter competition as the congestion of the population made inevitable. There were ten times as many stores as there should have been, ten times as many tailors, cobblers, barbers, tinsmiths. A Gentile, if he failed in Polotzk [her hometown], could go elsewhere, where there was less competition. [But] A Jew could make the circle of the Pale, only to find the same conditions as at home.[66]

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[61] Glenn, 45. Recall Tevye from *Fiddler on the Roof* who refused to wed his eldest daughter to her sweetheart because he was "a poor tailor," the lowest station for a man in the social hierarchy of the shtetl (from Footnote 51).
[62] Ibid., 43.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid., 13.
[65] *Sholem Aleichem: Laughing in the Darkness.*
[66] Mary Antin, *The Promised Land*, 22 quoted in Glenn, 44.

Mary Antin left the Old World for the New, along with over two million Jewish immigrants. They came to America, believing it would be the Promised Land, which is the phrase that Antin would choose for the title of her memoir. As it was the name of her narrative, the backdrop to her biography, so it was the setting to their stories, the theme of their tales. The concept of a promised land would determine the Jewish American experience; how a Jew would interpret that idea would define his way of life in the New World and possibly that of his descendants.

The New World: to Assimilate or Not to Assimilate?

To some, America held the promise of religious tolerance and the freedom to continue traditions without persecution. Generally, it was the older immigrant Jews who demonstrated an attachment to their traditions. Most of them "wanted to maintain a distinctive Yiddish cultural life while penetrating individually into American society and economy."[67] While many accomplished this, they did so at the expense of their reputation. They appeared alien-like in the eyes of Americans. A description of them appeared in Jacob Riis' 1890 *How the Other Half Lives*: "The manner and dress of the people, [and] their unmistakable physiognomy, betray their race at every step....Men [have] queer skull caps, venerable beards, and the outlandish long-skirted kaftan of the Russian Jew."[68] These tenements were located in the Lower East Side of Manhattan, the mecca for Jewish immigrants. It was where most of the 2.3 million Orthodox immigrants settled.[69] Wanting to remain close to what was familiar, Jews settled with coreligionists in neighborhoods that were far removed from the "uptown" world of gentiles.[70] With them, these Jews brought their Orthodox culture and

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[67] Irving Howe quoted in Spickard, 180.
[68] Jacob Riis, How the Other Half Lives, quoted in Christopher Bigsby, *Arthur Miller: 1915-1962* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 3.
[69] Spickard, 173. There might have been more, but the number of immigrants was cut off at 2.3 million because of the 1924 Immigration Act, which virtually suspended all immigration.
[70] Glenn, 56.

their segregationist mentality. To outsiders like Americans, these Orthodox Jews appeared to be "unclean, uncultured, [and] impoverished" people who were "given over to bizarre religious practices," and who decided to stake out a campsite in their city.[71] But to immigrants, though unsettled by the urban scale, these Jewish neighborhoods offered a large degree of "comfortable familiarity."[72] They were replete with Yiddish-speaking vendors, push-cart peddlers, shops with Hebrew and Yiddish signs, and all its inhabitants wore the familiar traditional Orthodox garb that repelled Riis.[73] It was as if the Jews staked out a neighborhood to construct a surrogate shtetl, allowing them to live their dream of continuing their traditions without persecution. A young immigrant who grew up within the social environment of a substitute-shtetl would likely adopt the lifestyle and values of his surroundings, perpetuating the Orthodox tradition. And because most immigrants congregated in Jewish enclaves, they had fewer opportunities to acculturate, preserving the integrity of the Jewish culture from oblivion.

Later generations of immigrants tended to be further acculturated than were earlier generations. This distinction is important since sociological research has shown that there are generational differences within the perceived desirability of dating – and of love – as a basis for marriage. According to those results they concluded that those attitudes "can be viewed as key indicators of different modes of acculturation."[74] Meaning people who go from a collectivist society to settle in an individualist one (like these Orthodox Eastern European Jews did) can be tested for acculturation to those romantic values as a sign of assimilation.

Likewise, this thesis proposes that intermarriage is also a barometer for acculturation, especially to those values. It demonstrates the intermarrier's flouting of his Jewish parents' tradition that forbids intermarriage. Essentially it means he has abandoned that collectivist value of

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[71] Spickard, 173.
[72] Glenn, 56.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Dion and Dion, 12.

overcoming his own desires for the good of his family (or the good of the Jewish people in terms of continuity). In its stead, he has adopted the individualist prioritization of fulfilling his own desires over any obligations to a group. From this it becomes clear that not very many Orthodox immigrants acculturated, because their intermarriage rate was less than 1% for either sex.[75] Evidently, one of the reasons was because the Orthodox immigrants continued to limit their contact with the American mainstream by living in isolated neighborhoods. There are no statistics that have determined how many of these Jewish intermarriages broke up, making it impossible to conduct a comparison of exogamous and endogamous marital dissatisfaction on a population scale for this period. However, case histories of intermarried couples can be analyzed to determine whether they lend evidence to support this proposition.

The case of Anna Strunsky, a Jewish Russian immigrant who in 1906 married William English Walling, a Protestant American from an affluent family, serves as evidence in support of this theory. However, to understand the extent of her assimilation and how it affected her marriage, it is important to first observe the culture into which she assimilated. Cultures, multifaceted as they are, can never be defined unambiguously, which explains the overlapping dates to which they are attached in the following sections. Ironically, that suits Anna Strunsky relatively well for she was a product of both the Victorian and Progressive eras in which she lived, cherry picking whatever ideas and attitudes she liked from each. Landing on American shores in 1886 with her family, Strunsky immigrated right before the turn of the century as the country was moving from a Victorian era into a Progressive (or "Modern") era. These distinguished eras refer to the different, but often overlapping, ideas that permeated the cultures of their times.

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[75] Spickard, 182.

Victorian to Progressive: A Changing American Culture (1890-1929)

Marriage had a special place in the Victorian mind. It was where sentimental love was to be realized, but not sex. Sex was conceived to be impure and mutually exclusive from love; it was (incongruously) perceived as something that would taint women, even mothers who were believed to be the angel of the house – the purest being in the home.[76] It was where women and men were separated into different spheres, into public and domestic spheres, or that of breadwinners and homemakers. This established the breadwinning love-match marriage that held over into the twentieth century as an ideal, though some aspects of it (mainly the different spheres and lack of sex) began to be challenged by progressives at the turn of the century.

The Breadwinning Man and Domesticated Woman

A woman's place was in the home with her children, while a man's was in the public economic sphere, as was perceived by Victorian society. The social standards of American culture all but forbid married women from working, which was a sharp contrast to the custom of the Old World in which wives would share the breadwinning role with pride. The custom in the United States dictated that men bear the burden of the family's living. One woman explained the social opinion behind that paradigm: "To be the mother of a child, and to have a 'job' [on the side] was not to be thought of, unless one were at the same time a widow or the wife of a very ill-paid workingman."[77] This male provider love-match ideal, which dominated the American mainstream well into the 1960s, was a holdover from the Victorian period, roughly 1840 to 1900. This ideal required that wives stay strictly within their domestic domains. In other words, it was only socially acceptable for a married

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[76] Understandably, the awkward incongruence with which sex was held in relationship to marriage, made the marital bed a bit of an uncomfortable necessity. That perception of sex as an impurity not to be inflicted on the mother of one's children meant many marital beds were rarely visited. And it constructed a very stiff interaction between men and women as the norm.

[77] Elizabeth Stern, *I am a Woman – and a Jew*. 1926. Reprint. (New York: Arno Press, Inc., 1969), 84.

woman to work, if and only if it was a last resort, and even then the woman would be showered with palpable pity.

What changed in the period that followed – the Progressive era – was the surge of "radical" institutions in society. It seemed that the term "modern," within the first two decades of the twentieth century, developed into a vogue word and was used adjectively to describe new lifestyles, political associations, behaviors, and traditions. The locus of modernity was in Bohemia: places where Bohemians – or those who rejected conventionality – resided. There were a variety of small hubs around the country but particularly well-established ones were in San Francisco and New York's Greenwich Village, among other cities.[78] One such institution was The Crowd, "a floating alliance of the left and the literacy" based in San Francisco, sometimes referred to as "the seacoast of Bohemia."[79] Such an institution fit within a grander social circle of writers and artists who tended to align on the left (or socialist) side of the political spectrum, were well educated, and had principles for proper behavior that were "unconventional" by Victorian standards. The milieu of this lyrical left, recognizable by the 1910s, was in discussion clubs, experimental theaters, and published magazines that fused the radicalisms of its day – socialism, sexual freedom, female emancipation, to name a few. "Exuberant individualism" was flourishing in certain niches of this bohemian society, particularly in that of the "lyrical left," according to United States historian Eric Foner.[80] Among these progressive and "radical" members of society, bohemians and socialists chief among them, a reaction would form against one aspect of the Victorian paradigm – the wife's confinement to the domestic sphere.

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[78] Foner, 694.
[79] James Boylan, *Revolutionary Lives: Anna Strunsky & William English Walling* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), 5.
[80] Foner, 694.

Bohemia - Emancipation, Sex, and Socialism

"Socialists and feminists" called for fundamental changes to the family to emancipate wives from household "drudgery," a popularized term that meant hard and menial work.[81] That is what they believed household duties to be, and they alleged that women were subjugated by it. Such enslavement to the home, they argued, had hindered women's individualism – another emphasis of Progressive-era cultural thought. These feminists did not just share their opinions, but as activists transformed their ideas into a reality: An organization by the name of the Feminist Alliance, constructed "revolutionary" apartments with "communal" kitchens, daycare centers and cafeterias, so women would be free from the "constraints of the home," which was something many feminists advocated.[82]

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, whom United States historians regard as a prominent and "prolific feminist social critic," argued women were oppressed within the home, because housewives were little other than servants to their husbands and children.[83] Gilman believed that prevailing gender norms condemned women "to a life of domestic drudgery," which left them unable to experience freedom or contribute to society.[84] This argument was articulated in her widely influential book *Women and Economics* published in 1898, in which she hinted at another trend in female emancipation – the growing sense women had of their individual and intellectual worth. She wrote, "Few girls today fail to manifest some signs of this desire for individual expression," since they want to do "their own work for the sake of personal expression."[85] Gilman's conjectures about increasing independence among the most recent generation of adult women seemed to be substantiated by what historians eventually called "the new visibility of women" at the turn of the century. There was a

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[81] Coontz, 203
[82] Foner, 693.
[83] Ibid., 690.
[84] Ibid. 682.
[85] Charlotte Perkins Gilman, excerpt of *Women and Economics* in Foner, 690.

conspicuous presence of females "in urban public places," as they either engaged in leisurely activities or worked.[86] It seemed that younger women near the turn of the century were defying their parent's Victorian values of separate spheres, as they left the domestic one designated for women in favor of the public one designated for men.

However, there was not a similar reaction against the man's confinement to the public sphere, presumably because the role of the male breadwinner was not subjugated like that of the female housekeeper. Throughout the twentieth century, a man's role in a marriage was to be defined by economic input. Satisfying this gender-specific role was expected to be his "male pride."[87] In her memoir, Elizabeth Stern's "modern" husband insisted he be the breadwinner. Even "modern" men who adhered to features of Progressivism clung to the male provider ideal from Victorian times. Despite her being a married woman, this modern husband said she "must do anything [she] wanted to do, just as he did what he chose," demonstrating some respect for the worth of a woman's work, "only, he added, *he* must earn [their] living."[88] Because Stern's memoir was more a quasi-autobiography than an accurate personal history, it is possible her husband never said those things, yet those exchanges reveal the ideal marital dynamic of her time. She told her son "I have to publish [this] book! It makes me what I want to be [and] it shows our family as I want people to see us."[89] It seemed that Stern wanted to project the image that she was a woman in a modern marriage founded on romantic love with some evidence of Victorian qualities, like the male provider, and some aspects of feminist ideology, like the integrity of a married woman's work. That was her vision of an ideal matrimonial relationship in the 1910s, as it was more or less for the American mainstream.[90] There

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[86] Foner, 683.
[87] Stern, 108.
[88] Ibid., 78.
[89] T. Noel Stern, *Secret Family* (South Darmouth, 1988), 191 quoted in Ellen M. Umansky, "Representations of Jewish Women in the Works and Life of Elizabeth Stern," *Modern Judaism*, no. 2 (May 1993), 174, accessed January 19, 2014, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1396091
[90] The book was published in 1926, but the aforementioned quote was in the part of the book that described the earlier part of her marriage – à la 1910s.

is, of course, a restricted meaning to "mainstream," since the masses did not have the abundance of resources to either read the literature that promoted these ideas or to afford that kind of lifestyle.

Most of these idealizations were confined to small slices of the population, "the most well-published group, to be sure, but not the most representative," as said by historian Stephanie Coontz.[91] She was referencing those in intellectual, academic, and bohemian circles – typically people who resided on the upper rungs of the economic ladder. The masses could not afford a marriage without practical benefits.[92] The 1900s and 1910s are not decades remembered for their widespread wealth, but for the consolidation of it within a few entrepreneurial and banking families.[93] Very few people could afford to support a household with a single wage, or without the "drudgery" of female homemaking. Outside of those groups, unpaid housework was still "commonly regarded" as a woman's "inevitable vocation."[94]

Despite its commonality, or perhaps because of it, feminists fought against this status quo – and they had the younger generation on their side. Alongside female domestication, they argued against female chastity. Rejecting the Victorian convention of separate spheres, men and women, in typical bohemian fashion, began to socialize on more equal terms in the first two decades of the twentieth century, and threw off the etiquette of the previous century that had made opposite-sex interactions so stiff. One journalist quipped that it struck "sex o' clock" in the United States during the Progressive era.[95] Indeed, there was a growing openness about sex that spread beyond intellectuals and bohemians; mainstream culture was "saturated with sex."[96] The *Ladies' Home*

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[91] Coontz, 183.
[92] Though the idea that all Americans should aspire to this was reflected in the 1923 U.S. Supreme Court decision that established marriage as one of the "privileges...essential to the orderly pursuit of happiness." Coontz, 256.
[93] Those families reaped the benefits of the (corrupt) political and economic climate of the Gilded Age. With mergers, acquisitions, and monopolies, a few American families gained control of a large, and lucrative, portion of American resources. Progressives founded their platform against this corruption in the early years of the twentieth century, and fought back against the consolidation of wealth among so few.
[94] Nancy Cott, *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 167.
[95] Foner, 694.
[96] Coontz, 198.

Journal championed sex education, and in 1916 Margaret Sanger opened the first public birth control clinic in the country.[97] Those are two examples of the widely disseminated sex information in the early twentieth century.

Thanks to the unprecedented access to information about sexuality and birth control in the 1910s and 1920s, the sexual tensions and fears that had plagued Victorian marriages were relieved.[98] For many women it dispelled their fear of dying during labor. Since birth control dissociated the link between intercourse, pregnancy, and the possibility of death at childbirth, the ramifications of intercourse were no longer so terrifying to women. Advancements in medicine and in physiological knowledge also debunked the widespread belief that an orgasm was a seizure.[99] With a better understanding of sex, women felt more comfortable engaging in it and enjoying it.

This new emphasis on sexual pleasure "upped the ante" for a successful marriage; starting in the 1920s, some began to say that a marriage without satisfying sex was unsuccessful.[100] Historian Nancy Cott argued that "sex appeal" replaced "submission" as a wife's foremost duty to her husband.[101] That idea was reflected in the popular culture and mass media of the day: a woman could buy a book for just ten cents entitled *How I Kept My Husband*, which gave instructions for performing oral sex.[102] In the 1920s, however, this emphasis on sex coexisted with Victorian odes to the home, and the mother or the "angel in the house."[103] That means the domesticated unsexualized mother, an ideal from the 1800s, was still prevalent in the 1920s. Anna Strunsky, whose life spanned both the Victorian and Progressive eras, adopted some ideas from each, mainly Victorian stiff sexuality and Progressive female equality. What welded her principles together was her socialist

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[97] Ibid., 197.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid., 198
[100] Ibid., 201.
[101] Cott, 167.
[102] Coontz, 204.
[103] Victorian mothers, remaining primarily in the home, were commonly praised as the angel in the house in the poetry and literature of the day. Coontz, 198.

ideology and romanticization of the love marriage. The construction of her guiding principles evidently owed more to her contact with American society than her Jewish background.

Anna Strunsky (1877-1932)

Elias Strunsky's daughter Anna, would become a bit of a celebrity in her youth in San Francisco for her intelligence (and outspoken socialism), and later for her intermarriage in 1906 to William English Walling, who came from a prominent and affluent American Protestant family.[104] The marriage broke up in 1932 and the problems in it can be traced back to the conflicting expectations that Anna and Walling had of each other. Those expectations were founded in the romantic-based Progressive circles in which both of them ran. Anna's formative years in the United States best demonstrates how her contact with Progressive principles developed her convictions and standards, which were too hard to fulfill in her intermarriage. Her education is the key to understanding her life and her intermarriage, and it begins with her father's inclinations towards secular educations.

Elias Strunsky, an Eastern European Jew, was inspired to emigrate in the mid-1880s after reading Alexis de Tocqueville in Russian translation.[105] The title of Tocqueville's work that inspired Strunsky was presumably *Democracy in America*, which among other things highlighted the United States' economic opportunities, something that was lacking in the Pale of Settlement in Russia. And Elias Strunsky was not a man shy of economic achievement; he was described as a "worldly Jew and businessman."[106] A worldly Jew of the 1880s, who could read a secular language like Russian, despite living in an Orthodox community within the Pale, is reminiscent of the *maskilim* influenced individuals of the period. Ostensibly, that was Elias Strunsky's guiding principle for he favored

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[104] She was known as the "Girl Socialist of San Francisco." See the image of the newspaper cutout here: http://spartacus-educational.com/USAstrunsky.htm
[105] Boylan, 6.
[106] Ibid.

economic achievement over religiosity, and evidently sought to integrate himself in the outside world (which was the core ambition of the *maskili*). There really is little room for doubt that this is the reason he moved his family to the Lower East Side of New York in September of 1886.

The maskilim movement advocated secular education for both sexes in order to "modernize," or integrate with the larger world of gentiles, which seems to have been a goal of his.[107] Elias Strunsky favored an education for both his sons and daughters; and his daughter Anna, proved extremely smart. Only six years after immigrating, she was deemed the brightest student at Public School 49 in New York, praised for "her scholarship, her fluency in languages, her writing (she had already been published in a magazine), and her sweet temper."[108] Anna continued to receive a higher education at UC Berkeley, and Leland Stanford University, at a time when fewer than ten thousand American women a year were able to enter colleges.[109] Clearly, she lived above the standards of the United States' mainstream. Moreover, she was eventually drawn into elite American reformist networks of artists, writers, socialists, feminists, and bohemians. No better example of this can be found than in the context of her education.

Interaction with Reformers and Progressives

Anna was noted for forming "strong friendships among the faculty." of her schools.[110] This becomes particularly important when considering the reputation of her school: Stanford was one of the "new wave of universities, John Hopkins and Chicago among them, that were nurturing the reformers-to-be of the Progressive Era."[111] It is even recorded that Anna took a class from one such reformist-teacher.[112] Another influence from Stanford University came in the form of Jack London

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[107] Glenn. 33.
[108] Boylan. 7.
[109] Ibid.. 8.
[110] Ibid.. 9.
[111] Ibid.. 8.
[112] Ibid.

who she met there, and who introduced her to "The Crowd," the literary bohemian society.[113] Understandably, her biographer credits Stanford for "authenticating Anna" as an intellectual: "She now moved capriciously and comfortably in [San Francisco's] Anglo-American literary culture, less a foreigner than a slightly exotic Californian-American."[114] Jack London described her as "a Russian, and a Jewess, who has absorbed the Western culture."[115]

To solidify the point: not only did Anna consider herself an American, but discriminating Americans also did. When Anna joined San Francisco's Socialist Labor Party around the age of sixteen, she joined the "American" branch – "the term used to distinguish a *nonimmigrant* local" branch [italics mine].[116] Evidently, those who were born in the United States did not consider her an immigrant, even though she definitely was.

Around the age of fifteen, about a year before Anna joined the Socialist Party, the Strunskys moved from New York to San Francisco in 1893.[117] Their new home was where her father would host an evening of debate, among "a flow of participants in the world at large," for whom the Strunskys habitually held their doors open.[118] Among them were exiled "messengers [of] revolutionary socialism," anarchist Emma Goldman, who became "great friends" with Anna, and classmates of the Strunsky children.[119] Those exiles found their hub in the local American branch of the Social Party, which "was notable for its advocacy of women's rights."[120] It seems that feminist topics would be discussed in addition to Marxist ideology at the Strunsky dinner table.

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[113] Boylan, 5. "The Crowd": Anna Strunsky Walling autobiographical writings, folder 393, ASWY quoted in Boylan, 5.
[114] Ibid., 11.
[115] Ibid., 19.
[116] Ibid., 8.
[117] Ibid., 7.
[118] Ibid., 8.
[119] Ibid. Emma Goldman, *Living my Life: Two Volumes in One*, (1931; repr., New York: Cosimo Classics, 2011), 227, accessed March 14, 2014, http://books.google.com/books/reader?id=K2pGiUPgA5EC&printsec=frontcover&output=reader&source=gbs_atb_hover&pg=GBS.PA4.
[120] Boylan, 8.

By her own account, these were Anna's most formative years: she recalled them as "perhaps the most romantic and most precious memory" of her life.[121] Those dinners were common occurrences, so the sustained contact with "radical" ideas was bound to influence Anna. And so it clearly did, for she joined the same American branch of the Socialist Party as the exiles and adopted their feminist ideas against drudgery for the remainder of her life. Looking back Anna recalled, "From these personalities I got more than I ever got out of books or halls of learning. Here were truly formative forces – meeting people in intellectual councils, budding genius, refugees, revolutionaries, broken lives and strong lives, all made welcome, *all met with reverence* and warmth [italics mine]."[122] It is irrefutable that her reverence for these characters led her to jump on their bandwagon. Anna referred to these interactions as her "best school," meaning what she learned from these people shaped her principles and faith more than any other education.

However, she might have underestimated how much she absorbed from her education in poetry. Jack London once wrote of Strunsky to a friend, and among high praise mentioned that "Browning," was her favorite poet – but whether he meant Robert Browning or Elizabeth Browning is unknown.[123] Thankfully, the difference is not all too great, for Robert and Elizabeth were involved in one of the greatest perceived romances of their time – a true romantic marriage. Elizabeth, a poet famous for her romantic poetry, wrote in flowery prose of the sentimentalities from the experience of being in love.[124] Robert, on the other hand, was in the Victorian period (in poetry there is a distinction between Romantic and Victorian time periods). His poetry was more raw than flowery, yet it is evident that he still appealed to the romantic ideal to some extent. It appears both the Brownings, in addition to the influential characters she grew up with in San Francisco, would form her convictions and expectations of life and marriage.

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[121] Anna Strunsky, quoted in Boylan, 8.
[122] Boylan, 8.
[123] Ibid., 9.
[124] Elizabeth Browning, *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, http://www.online-literature.com/elizabeth-browning/

Expectations and Problems in the Walling Marriage

One of those expectations, was to do no drudgery in the home. She remembered how she "did endless drudgery" for the Socialist Labor Party in her college years, for which she later lamented giving her "precious time": "time for which my soul and my young fiery senses had other uses all together."[125] Mirroring the advocates of the Feminist Alliance, she called for a "Revolution in the home" in a five-page essay on her views of marriage. She believed the "function of [a] woman as home-keeper, home-drudge, or house-manager," needed to change because "that eats away our intellectual life, our poetry, our comradeship. [Therefore,] the home must be kept by both men and women."[126]

This is ostensibly why she told Walling that she would not want to be a typical homemaker. And she expected that he would respect her wish, for he was "arguably one of the most open-minded men of his generation" and "he was committed in principle to the full participation of women on equal footing with men in public life."[127] He wrote to his mother after the wedding explaining that "Strunsky was not a 'maid in waiting' and would not be a professional wife," but he did not mind that because he was "accustomed to hiring others to do the menial tasks in life anyways."[128] Naturally, Anna was annoyed and disappointed in her marriage as she progressed into more and more of the menial drudgery she never expected to do. It became a contentious issue when Walling would negate any responsibilities to the house by reserving time for himself to go out, not wanting to "tie himself up," which left Anna with the responsibility of taking care of the home and children.[129] And when she verbalized her frustration, Walling felt henpecked. In the end, when push came to shove,

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[125] Anna Strunsky, quoted in Boylan, 10.
[126] Anna Strunsky, quoted in McGinity, "Immigrant Jewish Women Who Married Out," 284.
[127] Leon Fink, *Progressive Intellectuals and the Dilemmas of Democratic Commitment* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 182.
[128] McGinity, "Immigrant Jewish Women Who Married Out," 280.
[129] Ibid., 284.

his "radical romantic love yielded to the conventional expectations of gender roles associated with marriage," making him "resentful of those like his wife who did not so easily bend with the wind."[130]

In fact, many of Walling's original open-minded beliefs backtracked toward the conventional when push came to shove. In politics, he and Anna shared a socio-political belief: "Initially, Walling represented what might be termed a socialist-idealist stance, drawn from a mixture of middle-class progressive and classical socialist thought."[131] To clarify, it was "an eclectic blend of European Marxism, the American equal rights tradition, and a romantic populism flavored with a Russian Narodnik [populist] twist."[132] Anna, who was an avowed member of the American Socialist Labor Party, and who certainly appreciated equal rights for a woman's work and a woman's role, in addition to her being a defender of the romantic ideal of marriage understandably thought that she had found her match made in heaven. However, push came to shove during World War I (which in general was traumatic for the socialist mission) caused Walling to relinquish his "youthful dreams of socialist democracy" in favor of "a more attainable liberal nationalism." The First World War transformed him into a win-the-war-first Wilsonian who would repudiate antiwar pacifists.

If a tapestry depicting their wedding can be considered an analogy to their relationship, then by the time World War I happened, ten years of fluctuating love and disappointment had frayed their embroidery, but left it intact. The war was the event that started to pull the strings out. Understandable though that is, it seems Walling was a tetchy character. Under the impression that Anna was involved in a public antiwar statement, Walling wrote her "I think your proposal to attack in the back those who are giving up their lives for democracy, peace and anti-militarism is criminal to the last degree…Neither I nor mankind, nor the genuine idealist and revolutionaries of the world will forget or forgive what your kind has said and done in this great hour."[133] Their daughter, six at

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[130] Fink, 182.
[131] Ibid., 117.
[132] Ibid., 122.
[133] Walling, quoted in Fink, 169.

the time of the war, remembered that it was the first "great difficulty" for her parents: "When my father lost his temper, he raised his voice, and [there was] a lot of raised voice" during that period.[134] His temper had detrimental effects on the harmony of their relationship.

For Anna, "an authoritative note in his voice," would "depress" her, for she interpreted it to mean something that "is not loving – [for] it is not to be found in the spirit of a comrade."[135] Soon after their wedding date, she began to experience what would define the rest of their marriage – "their silent dialogue of love and disappointment."[136] Her incredibly high expectations followed by so quick a disappointment was a hard blow to the success of her marriage. She expected to experience the romantic ideal of love in her marriage, not only because she was a proponent of it, but also because her initial interactions with Walling proved promising in that regard.

When she first met Walling, sparks flew, and it seemed she had finally met the passionate love that would meet her expectations for marriage, and for her devotion to the working world. They met when they noticed each other at a picnic, in which they "talked long into the night," which provides the sense of intimate seclusion that romantic love requires.[137] Then in 1906, Strunsky went to St. Petersburg where Walling joined her. The turbulent environment of the period preceding the Russian revolution no doubt added to their excitement and adrenaline, especially the moment in which they witnessed the shooting of a student who refused to sing "God save the Czar." Since both of them were members of the Socialist Party, this tragedy united their passion and ideology into an emotion they both shared. It was in this moment that their love "blossomed," and their romance was "ignited."[138] In Strunsky's own words, it "was the occasion which forced our love to our eyes and

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[134] Anna Walling Hamburger, quoted in Fink, 169.
[135] Anna Strunsky diary entry, quoted in Boylan, 115.
[136] Boylan, 123.
[137] McGinity, "Immigrant Jewish Women Who Married Out," 278.
[138] Ibid.

lips," making them feel "born again."[139] Anna's expressed sentimentality reflects the suddenness of onset and transcendent impression of love, to which Anna Strunsky and William English Walling adhered. News clippings revealed that Anna reportedly, "defended passionately the ideal of marriage based on [the] romantic ideal."[140] Thus, she expected that hers would be a loving marriage. Yet, the times she and Walling experienced discord, especially the multiple times it happened over a "trifling matter," would substantially subtract from that, especially because Walling would often raise his voice.

She viewed the success of her marriage in terms of the love shared by the spouses – and hers fell short of her own standards. This was due to their lacking communication, which left her feeling lonely and unnecessary. Shortly after their wedding, her journal entries reflected loneliness due to Walling's inaccessibility, coldness, and faultfinding.[141] The "love" in their relationship never fully satisfied her as she wrote, "I must cut my heart in two, must starve myself, in order to have a little of him – no full meal on the board, no deep drought."[142] This was not the engrossing, romantic conjugal loyalty that would remain impervious to external forces she imagined when she married him. Before they wed, Anna wrote that "He said he would show the world how a man a can love, that I would be well beloved." Given that he said he would love her, in the manner of the romantic ideal, she expected him to; and when he fell short, it was disappointing and it made Anna believe that her marriage, with regards to love, was not a perfect success.

Walling was often frustrated, and would raise his voice because he was constantly under pressure from his brother to restrict his spending habits and so money became a contentious problem throughout their marriage as well, especially in the 1920s. After an indicting letter from Walling's

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[139] Anna Strunsky Walling to her family, 1 July 1906, ASW Yale, box 11, folder 153, reel 10 quoted in McGinity, "Immigrant Jewish Women Who Married Out." 278.
[140] "They Were in Love: Friend Pays Tribute to Jack London." *New York World Telegraph*, n.d., ASW Yale, box 37, folder 435, quoted in McGinity, "Immigrant Jewish Women Who Married Out," 281.
[141] Boylan, 119.
[142] Anna Strunsky, quoted in Boylan, 10.

brother, Anna explained perhaps somewhat disdainfully to her mother-in-law that the recent drop in their finances was Walling's fault: "So to my mind whatever difficulty exists arises mainly from the fact that English, who is a genius, was not a bread winner and never intended to be one."[143] That letter was written in 1926, and given the unprecedented prosperity of the 1920s, men were expected to be the primary wage earners now that they were given the chance to fulfill the love-match ideal as the male provider.[144] Yet, Walling thought himself above wage work and had essentially spent his entire inheritance by the time the stock market crashed. Consequently, he found himself under financial pressures in the middle of the Depression, and he took it out on his wife. Even from the beginning of their marriage, their relationship faltered because of the extent Walling valued money.

A few months after their wedding, Anna's relatives needed financial assistance, but Walling "made the transaction difficult," as described by his biographer, James Boylan.[145] His resistance to share made it clear to her that what was his was not also hers. A cathartic diary entry reveals Anna's emotional reaction to the realization that her husband did not want to share with her: "And at this point precisely [,] the pain comes in – I begin to feel estranged from him, distanced by a brutal fact, that he has and I have not, that there is a barrier." She expected there to be a barrier separating the world from her and her loved one; she thought her marriage based on romantic love would have a boundary around them, not a barrier between them.

Their relationship was not a very loving one, and no one can ascertain the extent to which they made love. But, Anna Strunsky remarked to her daughter that their marriage remained "unconsummated."[146] What, exactly, she meant by that is questionable, since it could not literally

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[143] Anna Strunsky Walling in letter to Rosalind Walling in 1926 quoted in Boylan, 264.
[144] Coontz, 209.
[145] James Boylan, 121. Within this marriage, this incident is the only clue of a religio-culturally based difference. If her desire to assist her family member is a result of her Jewish culture's collective tendency to take care of group members, then this might be a culturally influenced issue in their marriage, since his Protestant (individualistic) background has no such convention.
[146] Boylan, 119.

have remained unconsummated, for it if did then the children of their marriage would have belonged to a different man – and not to Walling. Whether she meant the children had a different father, or their marital bed was not *often* consummated, both denote the lack of love-making between this husband and wife, whose relationship became seriously strained right before the sexual revolution of the 1920s. Walling's mistress, who he took in this time period, can be put into context in that regard.

Part of her romantic ideal was a lifelong marriage, which is one reason why she wanted to remain together after he requested a divorce (to be with his mistress), even though she expected fidelity in his love. Even after he died, she called him "my love, my joy, my Only One."[147] Furthermore, as progressive as she may have been, divorce was not regarded well in society. "Divorce equaled disgrace," in the words of one modern writer of the Progressive era.[148]

Until 1917, when there was a serious crisis in their relationship, it was the loneliness and haphazard moments of love that was troubling the two of them. Following the war, it was politics. Then in 1929, with the stock-market crash, their relationship experienced a cataclysmic crash due to the drop in Walling's finances. Perhaps worst of all, he found new love with another woman. By the time their marriage dissolved in 1932, their tapestry hung by threads; entirely unraveled. It is clear that the distress they experienced in their intermarriage is due to the failure of the high expectations they had of it. It had definitively less to do with cultural and religious differences.

Secularized Jews, Post-war Culture, and Arthur Miller

Of course, it is reasonable to think, "Well Anna Strunsky was an exception." That is undeniably true – she was part of the less than 1 percent that intermarried; she was clearly very integrated into radical portions of society; and her parents were not even practicing orthodox Jews, all of which were rarities in her time. But it should not be thought that such cases as hers were as rare

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[147] Anna Strunsky, quoted in Fink, 178.
[148] Elizabeth Stern, 12.

in the future. The rates for intermarriage grew in the second generation in tandem with the second generation's acculturation. Definitive statistics on the rates of intermarriage in the early twentieth century are scarce, but scholars suggest that about 10 percent of American-born Jewish men and 7 percent of women intermarried within the second generation.[149] The distinct rise in the rate of intermarriage from less than 1 percent to over 7 percent reflects the assimilationist mentality that existed in the minds of second-generation Jews.

The Second Generation Secularizes (1930-1960)

The trend of assimilation is more readily apparent in the second generation of Jews, though it was not uniformly applicable to the entire second generation, who were generally born between 1910 and 1940.[150] By the time these Jews had reached twenty years of age (from 1930 to 1960) the degree to which they had acculturated would be determined. As it turns out, a substantial number did, but not enough to constitute a visible plurality in the Jewish American population. As late as 1939, almost sixty years after immigration from Eastern Europe began, Americans still perceived Jews as "alien," even if the proportion of Jews who fit the Orthodox description was smaller.[151] The Eastern European Jews had come in so many numbers and had established so conspicuous a presence in Northeastern urban cities of the United States that it was possible to speak of Jews and have in mind only the Orthodox Eastern Europeans, even decades after their immigration.[152] Remarking on their distinctive nature, a Bostonian woman made the comment that "what keeps the Jew alien is his alien culture, his alien tradition, his fierce pride in belonging to [his] race."[153] To a certain extent her comment held some truth. Many second-generation Jews viewed Yiddish as an unfortunate residue

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[149] Spickard, 182.
[150] Ibid.
[151] "I Married a Jew," *Atlantic Monthly*, January 1939.
[152] Spickard, 173.
[153] "I Married a Jew."

of their parents' foreign culture.[154] A child of Jewish immigrants wrote to a Jewish advice column in 1933, the Bintel Brief, lamenting the fact that his parents spoke Yiddish in front of his friends though he begged them not to: "They want to keep only to their old ways and don't want to take up our new ways."[155] His parents, like many others of the first generation, were reluctant to assimilate. Referring to people like them, the same Bostonian woman commented that Jews have retained their "identity as Jew[s] – as an alien, if an alien means one who has not been absorbed into the main stream."[156]

However, the same Bostonian would concede that there were more exceptions in the American-born second generation of Jews. She gave tacit approval to the "large percentage of modern and intelligent young Jews," who looked "with affectionate tolerance on [their parent's Orthodox] habits but eschewed them" for themselves.[157] She was correct in that there was definitely a growth in the number of irreligious Jews in this period, however, a "large percentage," might be a stretch. Temple services recorded less attendance, and sale of kosher meat plummeted about 30 percent (a conspicuous amount!) in the years following World War I, according to historian Henry Feingold.[158] This substantiates that observance of Jewish law diminished among Jews in the inter-war years, which was when second-generation Jews would have been growing up. It seems that, a majority of Jews did not secularize but a noticeable amount did.

Still, it is difficult to ascertain *exactly* how many secularized Jews there were compared to Orthodox Jews (who held on to traditional religious lifestyles), in this period. However, the Pew Research Survey of the United States Jewry published in 2013, titled "A Portrait of American Jews," conducted a generational assessment of Jewish identity. The survey sheds light on a portion of the

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[154] Bigsby, 25.
[155] Bintel Brief, 158 and 159.
[156] "I Married a Jew."
[157] Ibid.
[158] McGinity, *Still Jewish*, 67.

second generation, most of whom were born between 1900 and 1940.[159] The report demonstrates that for those born between 1914 and 1927, 7 percent identified as *Jews of no religion.* (Recall the term means "people who describe their religion as atheist, agnostic or 'nothing in particular' but who were raised Jewish or had a Jewish parent and who still consider[ed] themselves Jewish aside from religion."[160]) By contrast, for those born between 1928 and 1945, 14 percent identified as Jews of no religion.[161] It can reasonably be concluded that within the second generation, there was a trend of secularization that grew as the years progressed; and given that trend, it becomes reasonable to surmise that the second generation was more secular than the first.

Perhaps this difference between the generations comes from the fact that immigrant Jews planned to live in the U.S. "on a permanent basis," which "shaped the psychology of their adaption," according to historian Susan Glenn.[162] With most of their life already lived, it would not be so permanent a residence for immigrants of older ages, who displayed little desire to assimilate. By contrast, it would be very permanent for younger immigrants of the first generation who would spend the majority of their life in this country, let alone for the second generation who would be born here. For that reason, it was more so the younger immigrants who displayed a yearning to become American and to assimilate.[163] The following is an eloquent description that portrays the different ways Jewish immigrants could settle in the United States:

> [The Jewish immigrants] carried their God with them [from the Old World to the New] but for some He would be lost along the way or abandoned on arrival, in the clamour of a society in which ambition and material advance constituted the axial lines. A tension was thereby created between one generation and another. One set about the business of recreating the world they had left behind, with its schuls, ritual observances, Yiddish newspapers; the other [younger one] threw itself into the new

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[159] This thesis utilizes a thirty-year span per generation, while the Pew Survey makes use of a fifteen-year span. And because it was conducted in 2013, it doesn't account for second-generationers who may have already passed away, which might decrease the accuracy of the information. It more accurately represents those of the second generation who are still alive.

[160] "The increase in Jews of no religion appears to be part of a broader trend in American life, the movement away from affiliation with organized religious groups." *Portrait of American Jews*, 32.

[161] Ibid., 7.

[162] Glenn, 64.

[163] Spickard, 180.

life, anxious to claim the possibilities and identity offered by a strange but seemingly welcoming country.[164]

These younger immigrants relied on their old traditions to take them through the adjustment of transitioning to a new life, but they "consciously attempted to interpret their behavior as conforming to the social standards of their newly adopted country."[165] For many, especially second-generation Jews, Marxism was "the source of a displaced passion, as religion might have been for an earlier generation."[166] Their lifestyle, after the immigration gates closed in 1924, would revolve around survival and economic success instead of around Jewish observance or religious education, as was the tradition in the Old World. The children of these Jewish immigrants (second-generation Jews), who would be raised through the 1920s and 1930s, would likely shed their religious identities in favor of ethnic Jewish ones.[167] In this manner, "Jewishness," became separate from "Judaism."[168] By the 1930s, enough Jews had unbraided their religious and cultural identities, so that they formed a conspicuous presence in the mainstream United States, most notably in academia and intellectual coteries.

Max Lerner is one such example of a secularized Jew in academia who shed his religious identity, which meant that religion was not going to be a barrier to his assimilation. In fact, Lerner could be an archetype for the Jewish intellectual, given his primarily ethnic Jewish identity ("I never had much use for Jewish [religious] rituals"), higher education ("He entered Yale in 1919" and was a professor at Sarah Lawrence College), his involvement in the intellectual scene of America as a writer and scholar (he "wrote political articles for *The Nation* and *The New Republic* and scholarly works about Oliver Wendell Holmes and Machiavelli"), and an advocate of left-wing politics (*The*

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[164] Bigsby, 2.
[165] Glenn, 64.
[166] Bigsby, 72.
[167] Arthur Hertzberg, *The Jews in America: Four Centuries of an Uneasy Encounter: a History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 259 paraphrased in McGinity, *Still Jewish*, 67.
[168] McGinity, *Still Jewish*, 67.

Nation is the United States' "oldest weekly [opinion] magazine," and considered a "flagship of the Left").[169] Those were the markers of a secularized Jew that denoted an inclination towards Americanization.

This is not new information however, for contemporaries of the time noticed the trend too. Irving Howe noted that especially among younger immigrants, there was a desire "to be an American, dress like an American, and even, if only in fantasy, talk like an American."[170] If a parent worked hard to be an American, it would ostensibly make it easier for his children to identify as Americans. One man, describing the mentality of his parents who immigrated at young ages, said "They were certainly Jews, but they were trying to become, and in some ways did become, indistinguishable from anybody else."[171] His parents' openness to assimilation cleared the way for his own secularization and Americanization. The name of this man is Arthur Miller. He definitely identified as an American, was born in 1915 and died in 2005, and intermarried three times. Unsurprisingly, the problems in his intermarriages reflect the same problems experienced in American marriages of the period. For that reason it is important to turn back to the history of marriage in this period, and the culture surrounding it.

The Depression and Post-war Culture (1929-1965)

Marriage in this time period, between the Depression and through the post-war years, underwent a transformative stage, which mirrors how American society went through an enormous transformation in this period, as well. The drastic economic effects of the Great Depression "shifted attention away from social and sexual issues to questions of survival," while the affluence of the

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[169] Max Lerner, quoted in Paul Cowan and Rachel Cowan, *Mixed Blessings* (New York: Doubleday, 1987), 102. Cowan and Cowan, 98, and 95. Product Description of *The Nation*, Amazon.com subscription page, accessed February 28, 2014, http://www.amazon.com/gp/aw/d/B000CNEFRE/ref=aw_d_dsc_magazines

[170] Irving Howe, quoted in Spickard, 180.

[171] Arthur Miller, quoted in Christopher Bigsby, *Arthur Miller 1915–1962* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 22.

post-war era brought them back.[172] The result was a transition that was very difficult for couples caught in-between. For them, it was as if their union was born in one world, but was expected to mature in another.

Marriage in Transition: the Depression through the Post-war Era

When the Depression hit, sex appeal and romantic love hit the back burner, as people could not afford to live on love and sex during hard times. For couples who wanted to split up or divorce, it was often not a feasible option; one couple "hung a blanket across the living room to off their individual territory," as an alternative.[173] Because the economic situation lacked optimism, many people only got married if they became pregnant.[174] It was hoped that one's spouse was tolerable at the least, and could contribute financially at best. The ideal situation was still to love one's spouse, but making passionate love the minimum emotional requirement for matrimony was a luxury the populace could not afford. This idea is reflected in the words of one woman who commented on the nature of conjugal relationships during the Depression: "You didn't really have choices. You accepted what you had and made the most of it rather than to think, 'if I had something better, I'd such and so.' Because you knew you couldn't have it anyway."[175] When the economy rebounded after the Second World War, there was a "huge relief" that two decades of war and economic depression were over, which "profoundly" shaped the ensuing "hunger for marriage" and a domestic haven.[176] For the youth who had lived through the 1930s, "the experience of family deprivation during the Depression taught them to prize family as a resource in difficult times."[177] The reason

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[172] Coontz, 218.
[173] Ibid.
[174] Coontz, 219.
[175] Jeane Westin, Making Do: How Women Survived the 1930s (Chicago: Follett, 1976), 46, quoted in Coontz, 218.
[176] Coontz, 230.
[177] Jessica Weiss, *To Have and to Hold: the Baby Boom and Social Change* (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 2000), 25.

those Depression kids reverted to the same male wage-earner, female homemaker model as their parents, was because it was a model whose allure was bolstered by the Depression. If a husband lost his job, his wife would have to seek work, and this threatened the modern ideas of masculinity as it applied to marriage.[178] Because during the Depression, people conflated a working wife with the failure of her husband, it "reinforced the appeal" of the male provider family model; in this sense, the hard comeback of this ideal was a "reaction to the deprivation of the war years."[179]

As a result, the emphasis on a male breadwinner became extremely important. This explains why, at the close of World War II, women had to give up their jobs for the men returning from war. It was something that women did without much of a fuss to keep up the morale and spirits of men. One woman said she "missed the girls at work…but it was better this way because he felt like more of a man when he was supporting the family on his own."[180] With the new job opportunities for men in the post-war era, which allowed a man to fulfill his duty as a provider, what woman would dare stand in his way? This philosophy helped solidify the male breadwinner, female homemaker ideal that came to dominate the post-war era.

Despite the prominence of male providers (an economically dominant position), social scientists commented that marital roles were morphing towards more "egalitarian" ones.[181] Experts said this was a transitional time in marriage, in which values were changing, for which reason spouses should be lenient with one another. There was an apparent transformation towards a "love-based near-equality" marriage.[182] The psychiatrist Edmund Bergler constructed a book in the post-war period on marital problems in which he wrote, "The relationship between the sexes is at present in a period of transition – between the full emancipation of women and man's smoldering rebellion

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[178] Coontz. 219.
[179] Coontz. 222.
[180] Cora Winslow, interviewed by author, quoted in Coontz. 217.
[181] Weiss. 18.
[182] Cootnz. 237.

against that emancipation."[183] He was addressing the small gains that were recently made in legal equality for women.[184] Another marital advisor, Frances Strain, sanctioned egalitarian marriages on the basis that it was "an age of progress in international, racial, and sex equality," which she hoped would manifest "in the marriage field."[185] However, for marriages to adjust from the convictions of the Depression era to those of the post-war era was easier said than done.

One aspect of the "new" expectations in marriage to which couples in the post-war period had a hard time adjusting was the resumption of the importance of sex, and the heightened expectations for gratification along with it. One writer who co-authored a parenting manual believed that the 1950s was a time of "fluctuating sex roles," in which it would be hard for couples to reconcile what was expected for either spouse.[186] As a result of this kind of transitional haziness, she advised couples to "tread a little gently and not build up demands that are out of accord with what the mate is able or willing to do."[187] In other words, she advised couples to be flexible in what they conceived their partner's marital role to be, since it was clearly in the middle of a transformation. The nation's economic rebound is not the only reason sex is credited with making a comeback: "The war had shown women to be autonomous, economically self-sufficient, *and even sexual* [italics mine]."[188] Ostensibly, this explains why sex came back into the marital picture with an increased emphasis on gratification. To show the extent to which sex began to influence the concept of a successful marriage in the post-war conjugal mind: a popular marriage counselor thought that "sexual maladjustment was the main reason for the rising divorce rate."[189] He advocated for "sexual adjustment," in order for marriage to assume its rightful place as "the ultimate in human

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[183] Edmund Bergler, *Conflict in Marriage*, quoted in Weiss, 18.
[184] Weiss, 18.
[185] Francis Strain, quoted in Weiss, 18.
[186] Ibid.
[187] Constance Foster, *Fathers are Parents, Too*, quoted in Weiss, 18.
[188] Weiss, 21.
[189] Coontz, 213.

relationships."[89] Not only does that demonstrate the extent to which marriage climbed in significance in the post war era, but it also reveals the undeniably crucial position that sex now had in it — and only a decade after it was on the backburner.

The Depression had another effect on American marriages. Many became severely disillusioned with the capitalist system, which led them to reevaluate their political alignments. In the face of so much unemployment, Marxism (which galvanized the proletariat or workers) became a popular rallying cry, especially in manufacturing hubs (where there are plenty of workers), and it reordered certain social customs like how to choose a life-partner. Of the Depression decade, Lionel Abel remarked, "In the city of New York — the choice of a party became one of the important spiritual decisions one could make. In choosing a party one would often chose whom one would marry."[91] It seems that it was common in that time, and in that city, to marry someone because they shared the same political convictions. Clearly, in the absence of a strong economy, practically and political preference replaced love as the cohesive substance that brought couples together in matrimony.

Eventually, initiated by the total war economy brought by the Second World War, the economy of the United States moved out of the slump of the Great Depression and into the most affluent period of its history. Through the 1940s, 50s, and 60s, (or "the long decade of the 1950s") "real wages rose rapidly, across the population, fastest of all in the bottom half. [That means] more families than ever before could achieve a decent, if modest, standard of living on the wages of a single male breadwinner."[92] In fact, by the middle of the decade, almost "60 percent of the population" had a middle-class income level, compared with "only 31 percent" in the roaring twenties.[93] This became the first period in United States history in which the male breadwinner

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[89] Robert Dickinson, quoted in Coontz, 213.
[91] Lionel Abel, *The Intellectual Follies* (New York, 1984), 40, quoted in Bigsby, 170-171.
[92] Coontz, 228.
[93] Ibid., 231.

romantic love ideal was actually attainable for a sizeable, if not majority, of the population, which is why many perceive the following period to be the "golden age" of marriage.

The "Golden Age" of Marriage

This was the "first chance" many people had to live out the dream of a romantic ideal: "a private family, happily ensconced in its own nest."[104] Help came to those who did not know how to live out that romanticized dream of a family life and marriage in the form of advice books and magazine articles: many of the ideas that couples had about what marriage should be like, were disseminated by such literature. "Every magazine, every marriage manual, every advertisement…assumed the family was based on the…male wage-earner and the child-rearing, home-managing housewife," according to historian Doug Owram.[105] This idea that marriage was supposed to be the ultimate source of personal fulfillment, sexual gratification, and personal intimacy was an idea that had long existed, but "was taken to new heights in that decade."[106] It is not at all surprising that people began to think of the male-provider love marriage as an ubiquitous and timeless ideal, given how they were bombarded with information about (and even avidly sought) it. According to historian Stephanie Coontz, couples "devoured articles and books on how to get the most out of marriage and their sex lives."[107]

Yet another vital linchpin to post-war marriages were the distinct roles designated to each spouse. A woman's duty was to be the homemaker. So much of the housewife's role was defined by sacrifice; which was corroborated by the advice and prescriptions seen in post-war marriage literature. The magazine *House Beautiful* told its female readers, "Your part…is to fit his home to

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[104] Coontz, 231.
[105] Doug Owram, quoted in Coontz, 229.
[106] Coontz, 233.
[107] Ibid., 231.

him…forgetting your own preferences."[198] It was the duty of the housewife, to take care of her husband, which was also expected to be her ultimate source of contentment. That idea was quite pervasive; another article said that a woman who was not fulfilled by her role as a housewife was sick.[199] Another magazine articulated that in return for giving up so much, housewives should be shown appreciation for the role they had taken on. In 1945, women were thrown this bone when a "leading" U.S. family sociologist, James Bossard, posited that a woman's heart had to be "stoked to 'a white glow of appreciation,'" for her work.[200] Men, on the other hand, were expected to remain breadwinners, which was also idealized as a man's source of personal fulfillment. The ideal was that a husband would perform his duty by providing financial support for his wife and his family, despite the lack of traditional patriarchal rights (since women were continually being afforded small bits of legal equality), and a wife's role in turn was to provide meals, keep the home, and "[keep herself] attractive."[201] The ideal family – referred to by some as the "normal" family – was a "man who specialized in the practical individual activities needed for subsistence and a woman who took care of the emotional needs of her husband and children."[202] The "attractive" bit, was definitely something that was influenced by the mass media of that time.

Several characteristics, promoted by the plethora of marital literature, appeared as the centerpiece of a successful marriage. One was the resumption of the importance of marital sex – some referred to this change as the hegemonic position of the "pleasure principle."[203] As historian Stephanie Coontz argues, "The sexualization of mass culture continued in the 1950s."[204] Wartime production reenergized the economy, and with it the station of sexual gratification's importance. For

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[198] Ibid., 223.
[199] Coontz.
[200] Ibid., 223.
[201] Ibid., 237.
[202] Ibid., 242.
[203] Coontz.
[204] Ibid., 239.

many people, as one marital counselor noted, it "has become a confusing world of new-fashioned women trying to live with old-fashioned men or vise-versa."[205] Understandably, that would create a riff between the spouses because of their differing expectations. This was not the experience of all couples, but many felt the difficulties of such incongruous marital expectations. A culture that promoted sexualized marriages was certainly part of the transformation. The multifaceted media outlets painted the martial bed as a venue of pleasure that was key to the happiness of a marriage.[206] Despite the widespread insistence on sexual gratification, there was a movement to keep it safely contained within the marriage to avoid adultery or premarital sex, as claimed by historian Elaine Tyler May: during the Cold War, the containment policy manifested in family life as containment entailed tolerance of the pursuit of individual enjoyment and the sexual expression that had become firmly entrenched in American life, but with determined efforts to channel those aspirations into matrimony.[207] However, in the literary world, which had always been slightly left of center, there was an "epidemic" of affairs: Sartre "with the mysterious M," Albert Camus with Patricia Blake, and Simone de Beauvoir with Nelson Algren, among many others.[208] Those in the literary world were not quite conformists but were part of the mainstream in many ways, since they had a hand in providing what the mainstream read. Despite their somewhat unorthodox romantic liaisons, they were not completely isolated from the male provider love-marriage ideal.

This ideal was preserved through the long decade of the 1950s because the observations of social scientists were incorporated into the college curriculum under "education for marriage" courses, in the decade when "more Americans than ever before attended college."[209] Even in those

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[205] Constance Foster, *Fathers are Parents, Too*, quoted in Weiss, 18.
[206] Think of movies with Marilyn Monroe, the aforementioned articles, and the rising popularity of musicians who made use of sexual innuendo in a variety of ways (Elvis Presley, The Beatles, etc.) as a few examples of the media.
[207] Elaine Tyler May, Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era (New York: Basic Books, 1988), paraphrased in Coontz, 212.
[208] Bigsby, 375.
[209] Weiss, 19.

college textbooks, it was advocated that young adults should prepare for a marriage of equals, since marriage was going through a transitional period in which old-fashioned ideas were "cast aside" for "increasing sex equality and role sharing in the relationship."[210] Further, the ideal was a widely disseminated idea, with which very few people disagreed. It was thought that the current epoch of marriage was the ultimate in human achievement and that it was inevitable in mature industrial societies.

To a certain extent, it is true that the model of a marriage is dependent on the economy of its environment, but the idea of inevitability is dubious. Nonetheless, when the economy shot back to unprecedented health and stability after the war, the idea of romantic love resumed its important status in marriages; it was more affordable than ever before for a large segment of the population to live middle class lives, so this love ideal was achievable for more people than ever before as well. Consequently, love in marriage took a heightened position in marriages. This meant that a couple's marriage, which lacked those certain aspects of romantic love, would no longer be considered successful by mainstream standards. In 1948, sociologist John Sirjamaki claimed that because people chose their partners on "the basis of affection," a successful marriage was marked by "the personal happiness of [the] husband and wife."[211] The proliferation of expert opinion in magazine articles, TV shows, and other mass media, that advocated a successful marriage should be 'a loving and near-equal romantic relationship' made it difficult for many people whose marriages were not that way to still feel like their marriage was a success. In the words of one historian, this mass media discussion of the ideal marriage promoted a "culture of discontent."[212]

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[210] Paul H. Landis, Making the Most of Marriage. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1955), vi, 77, 84, quoted in Weiss, 20.
[211] Coontz, 224. John Sirjamaki, "Cultural Configurations in the American Family," *American Journal of Sociology* 53 (1948), quoted in Coontz, 224.
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A demographic trend that appeared in this golden age of marriage, was the youthful age at which people would enter a marriage. "By 1959 almost half of all women were married by age nineteen, and 70 percent were married by twenty-four. Men were also marrying younger and in greater numbers."[213] Correspondingly, couples would have their children at younger ages, and complete the childrearing phase of their marriage at an earlier age – which left an increasingly larger portion of their marriage for something other than childrearing. Those years would prove challenging for couples who were unaccustomed to the renewed standards of love in marriage; an apt example of this can be seen in Arthur Miller's first marriage to Mary Slattery from 1940 to 1956.

Arthur Miller (1915-1962)

Arthur Miller, an acclaimed playwright for the American theater, was a second-generation Jew who intermarried three times. When one thinks of seminal works for the theater in the twentieth century, Arthur Miller is the name that comes to mind; he really was a world renowned playwright. Consequently, there are numerous pieces written about his life and his work. However, the only literature on Miller used for this thesis is the first volume of a biography written by Christopher Bigsby. Through interviews, documents, and careful analysis of Miller's plays, Bigsby recreates Miller's life, including his marriages. In fact, all three of his marriages served as inspirations for some of his plays, and can all be critically analyzed in that manner, but in the interest of brevity only the first intermarriage (to Mary Slattery) will be discussed.

From that biography, it becomes clear that the problems in Miller's intermarriage, like that of his predecessors, were not due to his being Jewish and his wife's being Catholic. Rather, like other American marriages, the difficulties in his intermarriage had to do more with unmet expectations derived from variations of the romantic love-match. How he developed the ideal of the love-match

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[213] Coontz, 225.

can be seen by his integration in mainstream America. Miller's young adult life demonstrates his secularization and assimilation into certain niches of American society, particularly literary and socialist ones. Further, his upbringing reveals that his increased contact with American society influenced his perception of a successful marriage, which changed over time depending on the sub-culture with which he associated. The resulting hardship from that period of transition in marital culture was a source of the problems in his marriage with Mary, as it was for many other Americans.

Influence from American Literary and Marxist Niches

From the story of his background and upbringing detailed in his biography, it is evident that Miller grew up in a home that had more secular than religious influences. His father was illiterate but was a smart businessman and became an extremely successful garment manufacturer. That is how he could afford buying an eight-bedroom apartment in Manhattan for his family – the home in which Miller spent his adolescence and early teenage years. Miller's mother was very well educated, something uncommon for daughters of Orthodox immigrant parents; it was the reason the home of Miller's youth was always filled with classical literature and art, the love of which his mother made sure to pass on to her children.[214] Of his upbringing, Bigsby writes that "[Arthur] was surrounded by art, in the form of magazines," among other markers of popular culture.[215] "Slowly, he was absorbing an aesthetic world by indirection… because of the nature of the 1920s with its popular music and movies."[216] Despite the abundance of popular American culture in his life, he grew up in a firmly Jewish world, as most of his parents' associates were Jewish, and he knew few gentiles. Nonetheless, "his instincts were to follow the codes and values of mainstream America."[217]

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[214] Technically, Miller is a second-generation Jew from his father's side (who immigrated) and a third-generation Jew from his mother's side (who was a second-generation Jew). It is one reason why his mother was more educated than his father, although there are many others.
[215] Bigsby, 30.
[216] Ibid.
[217] Ibid., 52.

After 1929, the very beginning of the Great Depression, the Miller family had to leave their lavish Manhattan home for another neighborhood in Brooklyn. "This kind of neighbourhood lay at the heart of the American experience. It was a modest house…. It was the kind of house, though, in which many Americans raised their families."[218] And it was the house in which Arthur Miller lived through his teenage years until he went to the University of Michigan, where his Marxist beliefs were solidified. Though they grew to become a part of his core being at Michigan, they were founded back in New York, at the start of the Depression.

When the stock market crashed, many people – especially those who experienced the drop from riches to rags – lost their faith in the market. It was a gap that for many was filled by Marxism. As might be expected, Arthur Miller, whose instincts dictated that he follow the mainstream, also became a Marxist, even a "radical." Miller reflected on his own indoctrination with the "radical" lifestyle associated with Marxism in one of his novels. Of the main character in that quasi-biographical novel, Miller wrote: "When he married, the 30s radical 'vowed never to reconstruct the burdensome household he had left behind, the pots and pans, the life of things. The god was the unillusioned life, the opposite of the American Way in nearly all respects. The people were under the pall of materialism, whipped on unto death in a pursuit of rust."[219] Indeed, that is how Miller envisioned the rest of America: as a people magnetically drawn to materialism. He saw himself in contrast to that, as when he complained that his own home became one subsumed in the material consumerism of his time.[220] The 1930s and early 1940s were part of a decade that he spent as a "radical" – attending meetings with other Marxists – which established his firm beliefs against the consumer culture generated by capitalist societies.[221] When he married Mary Slattery in 1940, it was

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[218] Ibid., 44.
[219] Miller, *Echoes Down the Corridor* (2000), 131, quoted in Bigsby, 375.
[220] This only happened after he and his family had the money to become materialist – after he became famous for his plays and was actually drawing an income from them.
[221] Those meetings he went to in the 1930s would establish the basis on which the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) under the supervision of Senator McCarthy would famously interrogate him in 1956. In that

a belief he brought to the marriage. But a few years later, "The [Second World] war... dissolved certain conventionalities and the puritanical backwash of ideology, [which] had largely disappeared along with the intensity of political convictions."[222]

When political convictions no longer dictated the path to a successful marriage, sex did – at least according to the cultural niche of New Yorker left-leaning artists. And the mainstream agreed, promoting sexualized films as never before. Take for example the plethora of films with Marilyn Monroe and her sensual scenes. For a man who was inclined to follow the mainstream, it is unsurprising that his sexual appetite became wet at this time (early 1950s). It would prove to be a contentious issue in his marriage with Mary Slattery, and would eventually contribute to their divorce. In 1956, they filed for divorce after having been married for sixteen years. The following section illuminates how their (mostly Miller's) expectations changed with the culture of their times, and how that significantly contributed to the fallout of their relationship.

Expectations and Problems in Marriage (1940-1956)

There are numerous indicators that their marriage was not a love-match. For one thing, Miller had an uncertain love for Mary when they wed. Numerous instances in his life verify this, from stories he wrote based on his own life, to interviews he gave. For example, Miller wrote an unpublished story in which the protagonist confesses his guilt at feeling nothing when kissing the woman who is to be his bride.[223] In an interview with Bigsby, Miller elaborated on his decision to propose: "she was really anxious to get settled down so I thought, well, it's probably a good idea. I

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congressional meeting (or interrogation) he was asked to name those in the literary or Hollywood industry who were thought to be communists or communist -sympathizers. He refused and was convicted of contempt of Congress. This episode demonstrates that he was widely viewed as a Marxist and possibly a communist sympathizer – which reveals the extent to which he was impacted by the 1930s political movement for Marxist ideology.

[222] Bigsby. 375.

[223] Bigsby. 172.

didn't want to lose her but I didn't terribly want to get married."[224] That is not exactly the most romantic approach to marriage, and neither is his description of his feelings for her at that time: "But I really admired Mary a lot. I loved her. I had a great feeling of companionship with her. And we got along great."[225] Even Bigsby commented that Miller's choice of words "have something of a dying fall."[226] And in another unpublished story, "in which he plainly revisited his marriage in an attempt to understand what had drawn him and Mary together," he wrote a plotline in which the marriage "is seen less of a product of love than of a momentarily shared sensibility."[227]

That shared sensibility, it seems, was a shared political conviction. His biographer wrote that Miller "had seized on Marxism as a response to the general social and political drift of the time." and consequently, he found himself, "on the evening of his marriage," suspecting that "he had merely drifted" into that marriage as well.[228] This comes as no shock since theirs was a marriage that was "born, in part, out of shared political loyalties."[229] In Miller's own autobiography, he recounts the weekend he was to wed Mary, and much of the account is lack-luster – without the excitement or nerves typically associated with newly-weds. He recalls the uncomfortable relationship with his in-laws, the hot train ride to Ohio (where her family lived) which he thought was too expensive, and the frustration of the delayed marriage because of an unavailable priest, among other details that relate the bleakness of the experience. In a list of what was propelled his suddenly overwhelming desire to wed Mary, the fact that he "felt" himself falling in love with her came last after a hoard of insecurities and bottled up frustrations that were irrelevant to his feelings for Mary. Even "the fall of France to the Nazis just weeks before," was listed before his nascent love for his bride.[230] Though it

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[224] Miller, quoted in Bigsby, 171.
[225] Ibid.
[226] Bigsby, 171.
[227] Bigsby, 172.
[228] Bigsby, 171.
[229] Bigsby, 398.
[230] Miller, quoted in Bigsby, 175.

may seem unusual to marry someone because of shared politics, recall that in New York in the 1930s, picking a mate inside the party was commonplace. This makes even more sense when one realizes that this was particularly common among 1930s radicals, "of which [Miller] was undeniably one."[231] And it just so happens that Miller and Mary were essentially living together in New York during the late 1930s.[232] Even Miller pointed out that back then, to marry someone because that person shared the same politics was "much more of an organic part in daily life, in the way that religion had once been."[233]

But political convictions only played a part in Miller's decision to ask Mary to wed. A principal factor in Arthur's decision to marry her was that "she was necessary to his work."[234] Even his biographer noted "marriage offered Miller…a secure base from which to operate as a writer."[235] She supported him with her income from a secretarial position until he was making enough money to support them, and in addition to that she ran their home; she was the provider, which gave him the time and space he needed to write. He assured his friend in a letter that his domestic life was happy as Mary "was the keel to an otherwise wayward ship."[236] Clearly, love was not the chief reason behind their decision to get married. All this, however, was initially fine because they married at the tail-end of the Depression, when love fell second in priority to survivability in this economically difficult time. In reality, "their marriage had been born in one world, one of political and social enthusiasms...[but] it was required to mature in another" – that of romantic love and sexual gratification.[237]

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[231] Bigsby, 374.
[232] Bigsby, 170.
[233] Bigsby, 170.
[234] Bigsby, 172.
[235] Ibid., 171.
[236] Ibid., 186
[237] Ibid., 342.

It really should not surprise anyone that within seven years of their marriage Mary would "come to resent performing the role of keel."[4] Since they wed in 1940 that places them in the year 1947 – which is in the affluent post-war period of the United States, and in which the standards for a successful marriage were starting to change back to love and sex, as opposed to political similarity and economic practicality. It is not surprising that it is in *this* period in which she begins to "accuse him of giving her nothing, obsessed as he was with his career…she came to feel that she was invisible, keeping the family home going for a man who worked night and day."[5] Before, during the tail-end of the Depression when she was both working and keeping the home, her role was socially acceptable, but by 1947 that had changed some; it cannot be seen as a coincidence that she began to nag about Miller's lacking love and attention at the same time that American culture reverted back to a love-match marital standard. It is of course also possible (and even probable) that she became fed up with that role after seven years. In her defense, it seemed that Miller completely ignored her. By his own accord, Miller was "totally immersed" in his work: "It was day and night, all day, all night. That's all I ever did, so I probably paid little or no attention to her. She was very bright, and she could have [done other things], instead of waiting around for me to pay attention to her. So I think that both things were working against the marriage."[6]

The above quote is one of Miller speaking in retrospect. It took him a while to realize that he treated her unfairly. What helped him come to this conclusion was writing it out: true to his calling as a writer, Miller would run to the typewriter whenever filled with self-doubt in an attempt to analyze himself.[7] In doing so, he produced plenty of works whose characters were accurate models for the people in his own life. In one story, a man and wife experience mutual alienation seven years into their relationship, as Miller and Mary did. The wife in this story accuses him of "failing to offer the

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[4] Ibid., 186.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid., 306.
[7] Ibid., 299.

small courtesies which seem to her a mark of the respect she needs."[242] She suggests that her husband seems to believe that reading his work is a sufficient sign of commitment. What she expects, however, is clearly something more along the lines of the romantic ideal.

As a result of the lack of emotional intimacy between them, Mary was turned off by Miller's sexual advances. Even his advances had the undertones of satisfying a martial obligation more than fulfilling a level of intimacy – and that repulsed Mary into rebuffing it. The characters in Arthur Miller's play *After the Fall*, who were modeled on himself and Mary, experience some trouble seven years into their marriage. There is a telling exchange in which the female character's rejection is framed as something that stems from the male character's neglect, which substantiates that this was a real problem Arthur and Mary experienced.

> Quentin: You have turned your back on me in bed, Louise. I am not insane!
> Louise: Well, what do you expect? Silent, cold, you lay your hand on me?

Because in 1991, Mary confirmed the accuracy of her portrayal in *After the Fall*, Louise's response confirms that Mary was put off by Arthur's unfeeling request to make love. Her character's retort about what he expected, implied that Mary clearly insisted on a stronger intimacy between the two of them – one that she was not receiving, and therefore not reciprocating. After a few more exchanges, the characters continue:

> Louise [with an intense reasonableness]: Look, Quentin, you want a woman to provide – an atmosphere, in which there are never any issues, and you'll fly around in a constant bath of praise –
> Quentin: Well, I wouldn't mind a little praise, what's wrong with praise?
> Louise: Quentin, I am not a praise machine! I am not a blue and I am not your mother! I am a separate person![243]

Here again, the frustrated reply of the character Louise reflects how Miller expected Mary to care for his needs, emotional and physical, without being sensitive to her needs in return. Looking back, Miller "was amazed that he should have written [the relationship between him and Mary] so

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[242] Ibid.
[243] Arthur Miller, *After the Fall*, quoted in Bigsby, 376.

honestly."[244] The passage also demonstrates how their sex life faltered, in good part, because Miller neglected Mary. Accordingly, Miller was left in a state of sexual deprivation, which eventually consumed him. In his autobiography, Miller wrote that he would sometimes come face to face with his inner desires on solitary walks: "on these long walks, flashes of accusatory truth would sometimes fly at me, showing up my fraudulent pretensions to monogamous contentment when my lust was truer and bewilderingly taunting."[245] His close friend Elia Kazan, a Broadway and Hollywood director, noticed in 1951 that Miller was "distraught and ill.…He was longing for something nameless.…His life, he told me, seemed all conflict and tension, thwarted desires, stymied impulses, bewildering but unexpressed conflicts…Above all, he had sex on his mind, constantly. He was starved for sexual relief."[246] Despite the obvious difficulty in doing so – which seemed to be eating Miller from the inside out – Miller restrained himself from adultery, attempting to satisfy his desire with his wife, the only kind of sexual gratification that society condoned (which was also deemed indispensable to a successful marriage). The start of these escalating desires, it seems, was about seven years into their relationship when Mary became fed up with Miller's neglect, as *After the Fall* demonstrates. The play lends evidence to Mary's accusation of Miller's "self-centered[ness], [and] of [his] looking for praise and subsequently turning away from her."[247] To her credit, it seems that is exactly what happened when Miller had his first encounter with fame.

In the words of Miller's biographer, "she began to resent his withdrawal, and when success arrived she came to fear it as it…opened up possibilities for him but not for her," further separating them.[248] He would grow only more dedicated to a blossoming career and less dedicated to her. Her premonition was solidified on February 10, 1949: After the first night of *Death of a Salesman* – the

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[244] Ibid.
[245] Bigsby, 298.
[246] Bigsby, 373.
[247] Ibid., 342.
[248] Ibid., 186.

play that would make him an overnight sensation in the world of playwrights and theater, and which would soon be taught in American English classes – he drove home with Mary at three in the morning, while listening to radio reviews. They were all positive, which was a sign that he was going to be famous. Miller recounted the almost immediate effect it had on his relationship with Mary: "the aphrodisiac of celebrity, still nameless, came and sat between us in the car."[249] Understandably, Mary needed some reassurance about the effects of his fame, and characteristically, Miller said "it never occurred to [him]" that she might need it.[250]

Mary spoke of the event forty years later and admitted there was a shift in power that night. Until then, "he and Mary had had some kind of equality. She, after all, had sustained him when success proved so elusive. Now he was being fêted, lured more and more into another world. They were no longer equals."[251] There is an unpublished novel that was probably written around 1953, about three years before their divorce, titled *The Best Comedians*. In real life, as in the novel, "he is the famous playwright, she the embittered wife. He resists the idea that there is a power struggle between them but acknowledges that she is weak, he powerful, not least because of his public reputation [and] he admits to feeling detached from her," as a result.[252] Their relationship became less egalitarian than it already was, and further concentrated its focus on Miller and his work. Obviously, this did not sit well at a time when the experts of marriage were advocating "egalitarian marriages." Mary was annoyed that her husband would "dedicate himself to various projects" while she dedicated herself to taking care of home and managing their life. They were not dedicated to each other, as she wanted, and as she came to expect. She expected more from her marriage than to become a maid, doing "little other" than maintaining the house and "wait[ing] for him to emerge"

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[249] Ibid., 340.
[250] Ibid., 341.
[251] Bigsby, 320.
[252] Ibid., 495.

from his writing.[253] His work especially affected Mary, and created a tension between them, enough to the point where Miller began to see that his art "stood between him and his wife and that the solution was to sacrifice that talent to his marriage in order to allow a more equitable balance of power."[254]

Miller, commenting on the intrusion of his writing into his marital life elaborated "Even when I wasn't locked away in a room I was doing that my whole waking life.... Work occupies your whole brain."[255] But the romantic idea of love insists that the significant other should occupy one's mind. As Mary feared, fame locked him away in another world apart from her "in the virtual reality generated by success."[256] Even Miller agreed that this was the thing that really tore their marriage apart: "I think that's what did it. Had I not succeeded...I probably would have remained married. What happens is that you get another mistress, and that is your career, and you get absolutely obsessive, crazy concentration on the work....In all justice to her, she was talking to the wall."[257]

Even so, work was not the only mistress he had. He started an affair with a woman, and an infamous one no less – Marilyn Monroe. It goes without saying that this dalliance with the preeminent sex symbol of the world put a strain on his conjugal relationship. His wife was already suspicious of his "roving eye" and this only confirmed her suspicion that her husband was not to be trusted.[258] Finally, he gave in to his desires. As he describes in his autobiography, he wanted to "engorge experience forbidden in a life of disciplined ambition," so he "let the mystery and blessing of womankind break like waves over [his] head once or twice."[259]

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[253] Ibid., 186.
[254] Ibid., 438.
[255] Ibid., 342.
[256] Ibid., 342.
[257] Bigsby, 341.
[258] Ibid., 377.
[259] Ibid., 374.

However, Marilyn was not the reason his marriage dissolved. "She was a symptom of it."[260] The reality was that Miller "had found it impossible to live with Mary's sustained disapproval."[261] She disapproved of his art, as it occupied more of her husband's attention than she did. She disapproved of his fame, as it made their relationship unequal and brought him into a world of which she could not be a part. Bigsby substantiates, "For her part, she withholds praise or even interest in his work, since it is that very work which threatens their relationship and which has opened up a wider world in which he is open to temptation."[262] Because of her disapproval, she refused to give him any love, which then led him into the arms of another woman. And Mary (understandably) disapproved of that too. In Miller's autobiography, there is "an implicit description" of his marriage with Mary, which shows that it had "failed to offer [him] genuine fulfillment."[263]

What really finalized the divorce was that she would not forgive him. This can be seen through his play *After the Fall*, which really provides "a remarkable insight into his relationship with Mary," in the words of his biographer.[264] In it, a man is married to a woman who occupies the moral high-ground in their relationship and is sexually inaccessible. Every time he expresses interest in her it invites suspicion, in some respects because "her own confidence in her attractiveness had been eroded" from her suspicions that he had been with other women. She insists on monogamy because she fears the possibility against it, and in doing so, she "becomes his conscience and he becomes impotent both within the marriage and beyond it."[265] The result is that he begins to entertain the notion of acting on his desire for other women as a way to save his own marriage: "it is easy for the man to convince himself that in some way the affair is not only unthreatening as far as his marriage is concerned, but might be seen as some way strengthening it, since in restoring him to himself it will

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[260] Ibid., 300.
[261] Ibid., 494.
[262] Ibid., 496.
[263] Ibid., 374.
[264] Bigsby, 475.
[265] Ibid.

reinvigorate his relationship with his wife."[266] From Mary's end, it was bad enough that her marriage failed to meet the romance and closeness she (and society) expected of it, it was worse that her marriage broke apart on matters of trust and infidelity, especially at a time when sex was supposed to be contained within a marriage. From Miller's point of view, he found himself trying to work hard to reestablish a marriage "only to find himself continually on trial and sexually alienated."[267] "Nonetheless, he did, like Quentin, accuse his wife of refusing responsibility for their failed relationship as if his desire to insist on her own innocence, and hence his ineradicable guilt, was at the root of their estrangement."[268]

This is why Miller thought Mary was "stubborn," which in his words, "was her undoing with me, finally."[269] They divorced in 1956, for reasons that were clearly due to their unmet expectations, harbored more by changes in American marriages than anything that had to do with their different religious and cultural backgrounds. Miller's story is much like those of secularized second-generation Jews, which explains their growing number of intermarriage and divorce. By the third generation, a large portion of Jews, possibly a majority, would be almost fully assimilated into American culture.

Assimilated Jews, the Culture of Divorce, and Fern Kupfer

The course of the third-generation Jew is one of assimilation, and acculturation. Born after World War II, approximately between 1946 and 1970, the third generation game of age in the post-war golden years and counter-culture. Evidenced by surveys and case histories, Jews clearly embraced American traditions, and let go of Jewish ones that distinguished them. In doing so, the

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[266] Ibid.
[267] Bigsby, 375.
[268] Ibid., 376.
[269] Miller quoted in Bigsby, 142.

third generation's newly adopted lifestyles mirrored that of the American public – in short, they were assimilating.

The Third Generation, Suburban Life, and Assimilation (1946-1980)

The members of the third generation were more assimilated than their predecessors, not only because they were the children of American-born Jews, and thus more likely to share an American experience, but they were the children who came after the Second World War, which played an important role in the integration of Jews into American society. It was the war effort that prompted a new and sustained interaction between Jews and gentiles that contributed to the secularization of a large portion of the American Jewry, particularly for the parents of the third generation.[270] Because they were interacting more with non-Jewish Americans, they were exchanging ideas and beliefs, fashions and trends. So it is not surprising that when many Caucasian Americans moved to the suburbs following the end of the war (dubbed the "white flight" from urban areas) Jews followed suit.

The "white flight" was made possible by government funds and held several major consequences for American society, and the Jewish people. Wartime production had brought the nation out of the Depression. and the government subsidized loans that were hauled out to returning veterans were used to move to the suburbs and get better educations. It is referred to as the "white" flight because Caucasians were the principal beneficiaries of these government funds. Their move was funded by the GI Bill of 1944, which doled out cheap mortgages and education grants to returning veterans to reward them for their service. That piece of legislation "moved millions of working-class Americans into middle-class occupations and lifestyles in the 1950s."[271] As a result, it increased the number of single family homes in the country – a marker of middle class status. United

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[270] McGinity, *Still Jewish*, 69.
[271] Coontz, 223.

States historian Eric Foner corroborates, "By 1960, suburban residents of single-family [or nuclear] homes outnumbered urban dwellers and those living in rural areas."[272] The establishment of a predominately white middle class was one consequence of the move to the suburbs.

Jews, as well as gentiles, were part of that trend, and so they, like other Americans, experienced a new kind of affluence promoted by federal loans in the post-war period. Those same federal loans helped move them to the suburbs as well. As a result, the relocation from insulated inner city neighborhoods to less insulated suburban areas helped fuel the assimilation of the third generation. There, Jewish children (the third generation) would grow up with more gentiles than they would have in urban Jewish enclaves, and consequently they would be more likely to acculturate. There is a 1967 study on the Jewish family that observes the changes made from generation to generation, which also notes the rise of suburban living among the most recent cohort of Jewish families (those with third generation children). It reveals, "Almost 90 percent of the Jewish households in suburbs were classified as nuclear [or single-family] compared to… 77 percent in the older urban areas."[273] Clearly, Jewish families were moving to the suburbs, and they were doing so without their older family members – they were opting to live, like other Americans, in "single-family" middle class homes.[274] That was a change from the older tradition whereby Jewish grandparents would often reside with the families of their sons and daughters in intergenerational households. The author of the same study explains, "The family represents an instrument of cultural continuity which serves as one of the socializing agents for the transmission of values, attitudes, goals, and aspirations. Thus, the degree to which the structure of the Jewish family has changed is one indicator of the strength of cultural continuity and, in turn, a measure of cultural assimilation."[275]

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[272] Foner, 918.
[273] Calvin Goldscheider and Sidney Goldstein, "Generational Changes in Jewish Family Structure." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 29, no. 2 (May 1967): 275, accessed December 7, 2013. http://www.jstor.org/stable/349687
[274] Foner, 918.
[275] Goldstein, 267.

That change in the Jewish family was not the only consequence of the move to the suburbs. In addition to living in nuclear homes like other Americans, suburban life increased the likelihood that Jews would adhere less to Judaism – either by being irreligious or by practicing Reform Judaism instead of Conservative or Orthodox. According to the aforementioned study, nuclear household units were more likely to be found in the suburbs, and Reform Jews were more concentrated in nuclear (single-family) homes.[276] And Reform Jews, given that they were less religious and more secular than Conservative or Orthodox Jews, had one less barrier to hold them from intermarriage. The Pew Research Survey indicates that as of today, 19 percent of Jews who were born between 1946 and 1964 identify as Jews of no religion, and 26 percent of Jews who were born between 1965 and 1980 identify as the same.[277] These figures are greater from those of the second generation, which corroborates that the American Jewry was becoming increasing secular, and that change was easily observed in those of the third generation.[278] Additionally, the Pew Survey indicates that those born in the third generation have their highest percentages in the Reform denomination or no denomination.[279] Ultimately, all of this means that the third generation's number of irreligious Jews increased from the previous generation, and the rest of the Jews who retained their religious identity were not likely to be orthodox. This is a huge contrast from the first generation of Jews that immigrated to the United States, who were almost completely orthodox. Clearly, by the third generation, Judaism as a religion was not a required attribute of the American Jewry.

In addition, suburban life correlated with a higher education. Because the third generation was the product of the post-war "golden" years, they tended to receive a higher education because it was affordable for a greater portion of the population. The same generational study substantiates this

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[276] Ibid., 275.
[277] *A Portrait of American Jews*, 49. Recall third-generation Jews were typically born between 1940 and 1970.
[278] As was discussed on page 47, the percentage was 7 percent for those born between 1914 and 1927, and 14 percent for those born between 1928 and 1945.
[279] *A Portrait of American Jews*, 50.

trend: "Jews with the highest level of education have the highest concentration in nuclear household units," while among them "the more educated segments are generally more secular and acculturated."[280] As expected, most Jews of the third-generation came from relatively comfortable middle- and upper-middle class homes, where interaction with gentiles was frequent and Judaism was lightly stressed.[281] It is no surprise that considerably more of those Jews intermarried than those in the previous generation.

For Jewish men who intermarried, 8.5 percent of them did so between 1956 and 1960, 16.6 percent intermarried between 1961 and 1965, and 35.8 percent intermarried between 1966 and 1972.[282] Starting then, the number of Jews who intermarried would outnumber those who married-in.[283] The combination of a higher education, a less religious upbringing, and a suburban life evidently highly correlated with intermarriage. That combination would present opportunities to meet and integrate with gentiles in American society, which is why higher rates of intermarriage are seen in the third generation. Examples of this can be seen in the lives of those Jews who moved to the suburbs.

Carolyn Jasper is one such Jew whose parents "moved out of their ethnic [neighborhood] in the [city], leaving their kinship networks along with their outsider status, behind."[284] Growing up in the suburbs afforded Jews the chance to mingle with gentiles in neighborhood programs like that of the Scouts. For example, Jasper's Congregational (Christian) Scout leader would later become her mother-in-law.[285]

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[280] Goldstein, 275.
[281] Spickard, 184.
[282] Ibid.
[283] McGinity, *Still Jewish*, 110.
[284] Ibid., 73. Carolyn Jasper is still alive (or at least she was as of 2012), which is why this thesis uses the present tense to describe her.
[285] Ibid.

One might think that because Carolyn Jasper grew up in the suburbs, she was more likely to be better educated, and more acculturated in general – following the pattern inferred from the generational study. In reality, Carolyn Jasper only had educational aspirations – she felt she was unable to pursue them because she was hindered by the Jewish quotas that universities still had.[286] In that way, she was not actually of the cohort of suburban Jews who had better educations. In another manner however, she may still be considered part of the secularized Jews who lived in the suburban neighborhoods (she grew up in the suburb of Watertown, Massachusetts).[287] For one thing, she is irreligious, for she said in an interview, "I've never considered myself a Jewish woman. But I never considered that I wasn't Jewish."[288] Clearly, she identified with the ethnic aspect of a Jewish identity, but not the religious one. Additionally, she demonstrated an adherence to American cultural values: Keren McGinity who interviewed Carolyn Jasper wrote "Her *personal goal* of escaping into the majority mainstream was *stronger than her allegiance* to her parents [italics mine]."[289] That she prioritized individual aspirations over group obligations denotes her acculturation, in some respects, to the individual ethos of the United States.

The Culture of Divorce (1960-1990)

That individual ethos is of special importance to the culture of divorce that seemed to permeate through American society in the period during which the third generation had come of age. In some ways, the individual ethos shares a counterproductive relationship to a romantic love, for it requires that one prioritize one's own aspirations and desires above anything else, and possible even above one's romantic partner. There was a subsequent elevation of individuality during the 1960s

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[286] Jasper actually moved to the suburbs before the time of white flight (which is why she experienced trouble with Jewish quotas in schools, whereas fewer third-generation Jews did), so she was a bit ahead of the trend. Nonetheless, she demonstrates the correlation between suburban life and cultural assimilation.
[287] McGinity, *Still Jewish*, 69.
[288] Ibid., 98.
[289] Ibid., 87.

and 1970s that contributed to undermining the stability of such romantic relationships. However, heightened individualism was not the only aspect of American culture that was undermining the foundation of the institution of marriage.

The increased importance of sexual gratification in marriage, and the increasing reliance on love as the main proponent for marriage, helped to create a culture of divorce. One reason love became the main proponent for marriage was the groundbreaking gains made in economic equality for women in this period. Since women could make their own livable income, they no longer need to rely on that of their husband's.[290] As women could increasingly support themselves, the incentive to marry (or remain unhappily married) for economic stability was taken away. Recall that when Anna Strunsky's marriage was falling apart, she did not want a divorce for the sake of her children and because she could not make it on her own as a divorcee; society looked down upon and effectively reprimanded female divorcees in 1932. Even Mary Slattery remained in an enduring marriage for years, before her husband eventually served her the divorce in 1956. She made it clear to him that she was staying in the marriage for the children, but she also was not in a position to make a sustainable living wage as a divorced woman; women were not paid that well in 1956. But if those two women could have earned their living despite their marital status, they might have acted differently. Observed in this period, then, is a correlation between divorce and women's economic emancipation.

Social and Economic Gains for Women

Given the independent economic progress women had made since the end of the Second World War, divorce was more feasible from a financial perspective. Single women, especially in the first half of the twentieth century, were considered ideal workers for they could be paid less, since they did not have a family to support. But near the second half of the century, specifically beginning

[290] That economic aspect to marriage had contributed to its stability in the past, despite the destabilizing effect of the romantic ideal.

after World War II, people began to marry at younger ages, which left the applicant pool in lack of single women. For that reason, businesses made room for married women to take those positions. That was something that would never have been done before World War II, when married women were still expected to spend their time taking care of the home and the children. By this time, when wives were entering the workforce, the conveniences of the post-war consumerism had appeared (i.e. washers, driers, prepared foods), relieving mothers of certain time-consuming duties involved in keeping a home. Additionally, because women were marrying at younger ages in the post-war period (around 20 years of age), they would still be relatively young when their children had grown (around 40 years of age), and would be capable of working. Even though women were still expected to do the bulk of housekeeping, it became much simpler in the post-war period with the conveniences created by appliances. Keeping the house in order did not demand as much time, therefore a part-time gig was understandably feasible. This change in the decade following the war allowed women more time to be mothers *and* participate in the workforce.[291]

Through the 1960s and 1970s, more women would postpone marriage to build a career as their aspirations for personal achievement grew; whereas in the past it was custom for women to marry, wait until the children had grown, and *then* go back to work. The trend of marrying at a young age began to be reversed in the late 1960s as a result of career aspirations. Because women started to remain single longer, they opened the opportunities for a college education and a career. This served as the foundation of the women's movement that would bring better terms to women's place in the public sphere and accelerate their entry into higher education and into the workforce. By 1980, "women's workforce participation was beginning to look much more like men's."[292] Instead of working as secretaries or nurses, women aimed for careers in fields that were male-dominated. To compare, Jewish women played a huge part in the economic emancipation of women. In fact,

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[291] Coontz, 252-253.
[292] Ibid., 259.

proportionately speaking, they benefitted much more than average white Americans: an analysis of the Jewish baby boomers (those in the third generation) reveals that 16.9 percent of Jewish female baby boomers and 12.2 percent of Jewish male baby boomers had professional specialties as of 1990, while the general white population had 16 percent.[293] Meaning, proportionately more Jewish female baby boomers had professional occupations than their male counterparts, and than the Caucasian population. Evidently, Jewish women prospered from the women's movement, especially when taking into account the fact that "there is much less dissimilarity between the occupational statuses of men and women for Jews of the third generation than for the entire white population in the United States."[294] Perhaps even more than white female Americans, Jewish American women were beneficiaries of the occupational advancements garnered from the women's movement. Correspondingly, their salaries grew too, which is why it makes sense that "Jewish baby boomers [enjoyed a] relatively high income status."[295] We can be sure that Jewish women, given their numbers in professional, well-salaried occupations, were the recipients of that higher income. The ability to support oneself would prove to be a definitive factor in the decision to divorce, which is part of the reason why this period saw a rise in the number of women who initiated a divorce.[296] This became especially true if "the love" in a marriage was gone – what was becoming the sole reason for matrimony.

It's All about Love and Sex in Marriage

As discussed in the previous section, sex resumed its place in expectations of marital relationships after the post-war period. Because there were other ways to attain the things that

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[293] Table 2-6 in Henry Waxman, *Jewish Baby Boomers: a Communal Perspective* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 30.
[294] Waxman, 29.
[295] Ibid.
[296] Coontz.

marriage traditionally offered (like financial stability or social status), the remaining reason to marry – and stay married – fell increasingly on "love." And romantic love, as Americans have known it – as an engrossing, transcendent emotion – is not something that will persist very long. Certainly, such a mystical and vitalizing emotion would not last the length of a marriage.[297] This idea of love was promulgated throughout the upbringing of the baby boomers. The earlier cohort of baby boomers, those born closest to 1946, shared their parents' trend of marrying at a young age, and so they had some of the same characteristics of post-war marriages.

For example, some of them experienced the detriment of sex-specific roles (housewife and working husband), which had the tendency of separating spouses and crippling marital intimacy. The 1960s women's magazines were a staple of post-war consumerist homes that baby boomers either grew up reading or watched their mothers read. They were filled with articles delineating how marriage should be the institution that would grant fulfillment and satisfaction in one's life. Yet the method by which these magazines promoted marriage and its concomitant roles was counterproductive to achieving personal happiness. Alongside prescriptions for how satisfying marriage should be were lessons in femininity and homemaking, which would often separate a husband and wife into distinctive domains rather than induce an intimate relationship.[298] The 1950s and 1960s housewives who experienced that separation first-hand, shared their thoughts on it in a series of interviews. One such example comes from a woman interviewed in 1959 who stated that she wanted her daughter "to make a living so the house [was] not the end of all things."[299] Evidently, for her, keeping the home alone was not fulfilling. People who were in male breadwinner marriages in

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[297] The length of a marriage has been steadily increasing over the last century as medical advancements have prolonged human life. Today, when a couple can live well into their 70s, they could celebrate a 50 year marriage, if they wed in their twenties. (Earlier in the century, marriages ended more often because a spouse died, not because of divorce. And because the age of death was younger earlier in the century, marriages tended to last closer to 25 years.) If the purpose for marriage is love, then for that marriage to fulfill the spouses' expectations they would need to sustain a feeling of romantic love for almost half a century – which is very difficult and highly unlikely.

[298] Coontz, 250 and 252.

[299] Jessica Weiss, 108, 206, and note 7, 278.

the 1950s and 1960s revealed in later interviews that "the division of labor in which they'd hoped to find fulfillment had so divided their lives that intimacy had become difficult, if not impossible."[300]

As more people expected to gain personal happiness within their marital relationship, the existence of unsatisfying or "empty" relationships was viewed more critically. This was true in previous periods as well, but because of the economic gains made by women across the States (which contributed to the increasing emphasis of marrying for love, and not financial stability), it became feasible to actually adhere to the logical extension of a romantic ideal. If one were unable to achieve the sole purpose of one's marriage, it would seem illogical to remain within it. It might have been socially acceptable to remain in an enduring marriage earlier in the century, as Anna Strunsky and Mary Slattery did for several years, but it became less acceptable in this period. Accordingly, as the standards for a successful marriage became impossibly high, so the dissatisfaction among couples substantially increased – which was the same time that single women became economically independent, and the divorce rate grew respectively.

Before the no-fault divorce became legalized in the 1970s, a divorce could only be obtained if there was foul play involved or adultery. The number of divorces grew incredibly in the years between 1950 and 1970, which saw plaintiffs who essentially falsified the grounds for a divorce in order to obtain one. One of every three 1950s marriages eventually divorced.[301] In fact, it was the mounting number of couples who went through fraudulent lengths to obtain a divorce that eventually coerced legislatures to reform the divorce laws to reflect the change that was happening in society.[302] One author of a 1950s divorce study commented, "The number of cruel spouses in Chicago, both

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[300] Coontz, 250.
[301] McLaughlin et al., *The Changing Lives of American Women* (see ch. 13, n. 9) quoted in Coontz, 249.
[302] Many people believe that the divorce rates rose as a result of the legislatures changing the law and making it easier to obtain a divorce. But in reality the rates were on the rise before the legislatures changed their divorce laws. The no-fault divorce was a reflection of the changes in society. Not the other way around.

male and female, who strike their marriage partners in the face exactly twice, without provocation, leaving visible marks, is remarkable."[303]

The trend of divorce exacerbated greatly with the trend of female employment. The late 1980s was the portion of a decade in which women had substantially achieved a more equal footing in the employment sector as their involvement in working fields "was beginning to look much more like men's."[304] It is clearly no coincidence that 1980 is also the year at which the divorce rate stood at 50 percent, meaning half the people who married could expect to divorce sometime in their future. However, calculating divorce rates are complicated and that one in particular "was a projection of how many marriages would end before the couple reached their fortieth wedding anniversary."[305] It may have overstated the actual figure, but other scholarship on divorce rates suggest that it was not too far off the mark, and conclude that rates have been fluctuating between 40 and 50 percent since 1980, substantiating the concept of a culture of divorce.

Most interesting is how individuals who thought themselves outside the culture of divorce found themselves within it. Even assimilated Jews who still felt slightly outside the mainstream, underestimated the affect their assimilation would have on them. Fern Kupfer is the example of an intermarried Jew here. She obtained a divorce in 1988 from her husband Joey Kupfer.[306] Two years later, she married her second husband, Joe Geha, who was a Lebanese immigrant. It must be said that Joey Kupfer, the first husband, was actually Jewish – theirs was not an intermarriage. However, that marriage will be extensively analyzed for it serves to demonstrate that the extent of assimilation, which both Fern and Joey Kupfer underwent, correlates to an adherence to values that are not conducive to a sustainable and unproblematic marriage.

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[303] Maxine Virtue, Family Cases in Court (1956), quoted in Katherine Caldwell, "Not Ozzie and Harriet: Postwar Divorce and the American Liberal Welfare State," *Law and Social Inquiry* 23 (1998), quoted in Coontz, 252.
[304] Coontz, 259.
[305] Coontz, note 1, 395.
[306] Because there is a repetition with names, Fern Kupfer will be referred to as "Fern," Joey Kupfer as "Joey" and Joe Geha as "Geha."

Fern Kupfer (1946-1990)

Fern Kupfer is the author of several novels, one of which is her own memoir published in 2012, *Leaving Long Island...and Other Departures*. It is her story of the challenges encountered in her life in the United States as a third-generation Jew, from the difficulties of aging to those of loving. Within her memoir were sections in which she discussed her childhood and upbringing – from which the extent she assimilated can be ascertained.

Integration in American Society

As it turns out, she had the average middle class upbringing of a child raised in the post-war era, though she always maintained a sense of her Jewishness. She was in born in 1946 after her father's return from the war. She was one of the third-generation Jews whose family moved to the suburbs, and her father was ostensibly the beneficiary of GI Bills that gave her family the kind of money required to live in the suburbs.

Like many others of Fern's generation, and several that came before her, marriage was what family historian Stephanie Coontz called the "master event," that dictated how young people lived out their sexual lives, assumed adulthood, chose jobs, and became parents.[307] For Fern and Joey specifically, who were of the earlier cohort of baby boomers, marriage served all of those purposes except sex. They began their sexual activity before marriage, while they were still dating in college. Additionally, they fit the family model most of society was following: breadwinner father and homemaker mother. After they married at the end of her senior year in college, Fern's plan was to teach a little while she waited for Joey to get his graduate degree to be a Philosophy professor. Her post-college plans were centered on her husband, his career, and their potential family – not around herself. She wrote in her memoir, "I had not given serious thought to 'being' something other than a

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[307] Coontz, 247.

supportive wage-earner, a wife, a mother."[308] Even Fern's teaching jobs on the side were advocated by American housewives of the 1950s who did not want their daughters to be "just" a housewife. It may seem that Fern's ideas were a bit traditional for a young woman in 1968 – but, in fact, Fern was not in the minority. According to historian Stephanie Coontz, as late as 1968 almost two-thirds of women aged twenty to twenty-four still intended to become full-time homemakers.[309] Fern Kupfer, who married in 1968 when she was about twenty-two years old, clearly had beliefs that were equal to those of other Americans. Fern was bred to believe that a wife should "be home in time to make dinner for her husband," even if she worked, as her mother told her.[310] She also told her that as a teacher, which was "a great profession for a woman," she could still be a homemaker. The same was reiterated by her high school guidance counselors in 1964.[311] Evidently, that was an idea promulgated to many high school girls in the 1960s. Clearly, American popular culture bred women to aspire to be a good wife and run a good home for their husbands.

Fern was an assimilated American as was her ex husband Joey. She writes "finally after assimilation, it was easy to be ourselves."[312] They both went to public school in New York, Fern lived part of her adolescent years in the suburbs of Long Island, she went to college in upstate New York, left the family home as an unmarried girl, and she grew up in a Sam Hochman home – similar to a constructed Levittown.[313] Of her clichéd upbringing she writes, "Mother actually wore a frilly apron over her dress and had a snack ready for me. Up and down different blocks other children were similarly greeted."[314] They, like other suburban families, had brand new kitchens with the latest

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[308] Ibid., 62.
[309] Ibid., 249.
[310] Ibid.
[311] Kupfer, 130 and 256.
[312] Ibid., 14.
[313] Ibid., 164.
[314] Ibid., 14.

appliances. She even ate pork! That was something her grandparents generation (the immigrant one) never did, although in her own words "all the next generations did."[315]

By that time, Fern, a third-generation Russian Jew, had been dating Joey Kupfer, her would-be husband, for quite some time. They were high school sweethearts. She lost her virginity to him. Her whole romantic life involved him. They were in love.[316] Which is why it surprised all of their friends that after almost twenty years of marriage, they would abruptly divorce.[317]

Problems and Expectations in Marriage with Joey Kupfer

However, their marriage had been on the rocks for quite some time, according to Fern's memoir. She expressed that if she had to describe the health of her relationship, she would have said she was "in an enduring marriage," meaning she was suffering patiently through it.[318] For most of it, she viewed her husband, Joey, as "a difficult man."[319] She never labeled him as such, but she clearly demonstrated in her memoir the many instances when he proved to be a selfish character. In her own words, "he never did anything that he didn't want to do."[320] Not even for their first childbirth class did he inconvenience himself by accompanying her. He "was annoyed," that he would miss a movie on television he "really" wanted to see when she reminded him that they had to leave.[321] She ended up going by herself to avoid making him "resentful for forcing him to participate."[322] To demonstrate the absurdity of Joey's actions, Fern includes an anecdote: There was only one other woman who was without a partner in that class, and it was because her husband was fighting in Vietnam. "I didn't tell her that my husband was at home watching a vampire movie."[323] This was one of the many

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[315] Ibid., 199.
[316] Ibid., 61.
[317] Ibid., 80.
[318] Ibid., 76.
[319] Ibid.
[320] Ibid., 77.
[321] Ibid.
[322] Ibid.
[323] Ibid., 78.

instances in which Joey refused to share something, whether it was an experience or something tangible, like food. "Not even in a Chinese restaurant," would he share, where tables spin and dishes come in family size, which means there definitely would have been more than enough to share.[324] He would say "I ordered just what *I* wanted," which made Fern feel "alone."[325] Even when Fern would look at other couples who did their grocery shopping together, or went on walks together, she would think, "Not us." Joey and Fern, as it seems, did not share many things – and wanting to share is part of the romantic concept of love. It is akin to the "commitment to the well-being of the loved person."[326] The lack of sharing was hard to reconcile with the concept of a successful marriage, which to Fern was in some ways conceived as a romantic one. That was the fundamental problem: he prioritized himself over their relationship and it hurt Fern. Ultimately, when she divorced him – that was the central issue. She could not trust him because he would put himself before the health of their marriage. And she did not want to be in a relationship like that. Her concept of a successful marriage is best demonstrated by her description of the early years of their marriage.

The happiest times in their marriage were those when Fern could say that it was "*just us*," which is closer to a prerequisite of the romantic idea of "preoccupation with one's lover."[327] Those moments occurred at the beginning of their marriage, when they had just moved from New York to Ames, Iowa, where Joey recently accepted a job teaching Philosophy at Iowa State University. That was in 1970, when they were establishing a life together. Ten years later, it was "just them" *plus Joey's mistress*. He had an affair with one of his students, Debbie. Amidst tears, proclamations of love, self-doubt ("I don't know why I did this"), and pleas for forgiveness, Fern forgave him. But after the fiasco, Joey's attitude was "hostile rather than chastened."[328] Which is why Fern "shouldn't

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[324] Ibid., 58.
[325] Ibid.
[326] Dion and Dion, 7.
[327] Kupfer, 65. Dion and Dion, 7.
[328] Kupfer, 71.

have been [surprised]" when he cheated again eight years later. Only this time their marriage came crashing down.

In the months before their split, Joey was distant, answering "No," with a sigh every time Fern would ask if he was alright, given that he seemed so preoccupied.[329] It was clear their relationship lacked the intense connection to the loved one as prescribed by notions of romantic love. She thought his being distant was because he was on leave from the University and supposed to be writing a book. Evidently, it was because he had an ongoing affair with another student – this was the second time he failed to meet her expectation of fidelity and trust. But when she found out this time, he responded "I don't think I love you anymore."[330] That was the reason their marriage faltered – his lacking love, which led him to break his vows to her and her trust.

It was he that suggested marital counseling, but with the condition that he could still see his girlfriend – yet another example of his self-interest, which in this case invokes incredulity. According to her memoir, when Fern told him that would be "impossible," Joey explained: "Fern, if we go to counseling and it doesn't work out between us, then I will have no one."[331] More demonstrative of his acute egomania is his behavior the night she found out about the affair, when they stayed up late talking, crying, and fighting about it. Of that event, Fern writes: He was "closed off from me. He did not want to go round and round. He did not want to answer all the questions I had. Finally he said: *I can't do this anymore.* Annoyed. Within the next few minutes, he turned from me in bed and was soundly sleeping."[332]

The most telling example of their discord was what happened the night after she found out about the affair and Joey went to sleep, instead of at least answering her questions, let alone apologizing. Since she could not talk to him, she tried to "make sense" of the situation by writing, as

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[329] Ibid., 72.
[330] Ibid., 74.
[331] Ibid.
[332] Ibid., 78.

many writers often do. What she wrote was an article she would later sell to a woman's magazine titled "I Don't Think I Love You Anymore," for two thousand dollars – and not as an anonymous article.[333] In Fern's eyes, this was the result of Joey shutting her out when she wanted answers, so she had to reason them out herself – and capitalizing on her adversity was a perk. Joey was appalled that she wrote about their relationship as it was falling apart and insisted that it demonstrated her "controlling" nature, as she probably wanted to control her version of the story. In the end, he requested half of the two thousand dollars, contending "if it weren't for me, you never would have written that article."[334] Fern expressed her frustration by quoting the words of her friend who claimed that Joey's actions were akin to Hitler asking for the royalties on Anne Frank's Diary, since without him her diary never would have been published.[335]

At some point later in the memoir Fern insinuated that Joey was the type of boy whose sense of entitlement encouraged unfaithfulness.[336] That "sense of entitlement" is remarkably similar to what one might call the trait self-actualization. That trait, present in many Americans, according to cross-cultural psychologists, paradoxically promotes a belief in the concept of a transcendent, romantic love, which requires self-sacrifice for the loved one, while it also makes that self-sacrifice less likely.[337] Evidently, Joey is a glaring example of a self-actualized individual. The point here is to show that after a certain degree of assimilation, whether the assimilated persons are in an intermarriage or in a Jewish marriage, that American mainstream culture into which they assimilated would be the reason behind their marital problems – as was the case here. As it turns out, Joey is a fourth-generation Jew – one more generation than Fern. In a personal email from Fern Kupfer, she wrote "Yes, my ex was more assimilated than my family. All his grandparents were born in this

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[333] Ibid., 78.
[334] Ibid., 79.
[335] Ibid.
[336] Ibid., 107.
[337] Dion and Dion, 13.

country, none of them knew Yiddish (which was spoken in my home)."[338] If his grandparents were born in this country then he was *at least* a 4th generation Jew. The point is to show that the evidence demonstrates that new cultural values based on romantic ideals (which both spouses share!) are what really have had to do with the increasing distress of Jewish intermarriages – not intermarriage itself.

Fern, at the time of her marriage in 1968, wrote that she "could never imagine divorce."[339] When she said her wedding vows, a woman scorned was not a position she expected to find herself in, especially twice! The early years of their relationship were romantic, almost clichéd. Given its promising start as the relationship of two people in love, why expect anything but a clichéd ending? Fern can still recall the moment they met as teenagers at a party: "We looked at each other across the floor, then danced in steamy silence to Johnny Mathis singing 'The Twelfth of Never.' [Her best friend even] said, 'Fern, I'll bet you [will] marry him."[340] There was that suddenness of onset in their relationship and romantic isolation as they danced in silence to a song she can recall almost fifty years later. In her own words, she "felt bonded together with him in some ineffable way."[341] Since their relationship started out like a modern love tale, it makes sense that she did not expect it to end like the opposite of one.

Modern love tales do not include adultery. Correspondingly, her idea of a successful marriage did not include cheating, though she did not necessarily expect it to be a contemporary version of Cinderella either, which become evident in her memoir. She described a moment in her college years when she chastised her girlfriend for having an affair with a married professor. Her friend tried to present the affair as a loving relationship, partly because it was true – she seemed to be in love with him – and partly because she wanted to gain Fern's approval, demonstrating that for Fern to approve of a relationship, there had to be love within it. She wanted to convince Fern of that

[338] Fern Kupfer, email message to author, March 10, 2014.
[339] Kupfer, 61.
[340] Ibid., 60.
[341] Ibid., 61.

because the professor flattered her, called her beautiful, told her he was "inspired by her vitality," and wrote poems for her. However, no matter how her friend spun it, Fern thought the professor was "a bullshit artist and an alcoholic," and her "idea of romance did not include running out of the house at midnight to give blow jobs in the back of a family station wagon."[342]

Clearly, Fern's expectations of a loving relationship stopped short of infidelity. She did not consider an adulterous relationship romantic, even if the people involved felt the emotions typically associated with romantic love. It seems like Fern believed true love was monogamous and trustworthy.[343] What can substantiate this are the reasons behind her divorce with Joey. What finalized her decision for divorce was that she did not want to "continue a marriage with someone who couldn't be trusted."[344] Despite Joey's preference for counseling, she insisted on a divorce.

Her reasoning reflects the greater general trend of American divorce. In her memoir she wrote that though she was making pretty good money for a writer it was not enough to "live on for the rest of [her] life."[345] But she was still young enough at age forty-two to "get a teaching job easily enough" that could provide her an income she could live on. Since she was hesitant to continue a marriage with someone she did not trust to be faithful, this could be her only chance to secure her future. If she waited longer, and he proved unfaithful again, she would be stuck in an unhappy marriage for financial survivability – not love. For this reason, she rationalized: "I moved so quickly toward divorce because I was afraid not to" – time was slipping for a woman who might want to secure her own future.[346] Evidently, a marriage without love and trust was a deal breaker for Fern. Here, Fern fits within the larger trend of American marriage. The historian Stephanie Coontz asserts,

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[342] Ibid., 73.
[343] Not to suggest that she believes those were the only two aspects to love, but they certainly seem to have held priority in her mind.
[344] Ibid., 75.
[345] Ibid.
[346] Ibid., 74.

"Women's heightened expectations of personal fulfillment interacted with their growing economic independence," which made rates of "divorce accelerate further."[347]

Previously, married women could not get jobs with livable wages. Anna Strunsky complained about it in her diary soon after she wed: "If I cannot earn my bread and he can [then] I feel inferior to him." For a married woman to work back then was something that was looked down upon. Mary Slattery perhaps could, but she was dependent on her husband – and that proved one obstacle to divorce, which is ostensibly why, in addition to her children, she stayed in the marriage despite how betrayed she felt and dissatisfied she was in her marriage. Mary knew Miller cheated and yet she stayed in the marriage for another five or six years. Fern, on the other hand, stayed in the marriage in 1980, which was the first time he cheated, because Joey promised never to cheat again, and begged her forgiveness. But by 1988 she had a window of opportunity. That window was closing for a woman who might not be hirable at an older age. For this reason – and the fact that she did not trust Joey – she accelerated the process for divorce. Her decision to divorce was clearly due in part to the certain economic gains made by women in the 1970s and 1980s. It gave her an option to survive economically outside of her marriage. That was an option that she, and many others of her generation took.

Conclusion

All in all, the point I have spent ninety-some pages trying to make is that the statement, "Jewish intermarriages are less likely to work because the spouses come from different cultural and religious backgrounds," is only half correct.[348] The first half, that "Jewish intermarriages are less

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[347] Coontz, 252.

[348] What is happening is that people are mixing up causation with correlation. Yes, Jewish-gentile couples are more likely to divorce. But their being Jewish and gentile is not the cause of their divorce; there is something else in their intermarriage that is causing their problems, which explains how the fact that they are intermarried correlates with divorce.

likely to succeed," is true if the definition of success is defined solely on the basis of not divorcing. There are reasonably reliable statistics that demonstrate Jewish intermarriages are more likely to end in divorce. However, for the more meticulous among us, there is definitely room for more definitive studies to be conducted. The second half of the sentence is one I have found to be inaccurate through the history of marriage in conjunction with case studies of intermarried couples, and the cultural histories of the Jewish people over the course of their migration from one continent to another and across generations.

Therefore, the argument that Jewish intermarriages do not work because of "cultural and religious differences" is one of questionable validity. One reason to dispute it is because the culture and religion of Jewish-Americans is something that has changed as generations of Jews successively assimilated and acculturated into American society. My research led me to believe that whatever differences remained are not at the heart of the problems in a Jewish intermarriage – although it is possible they can be part of it. From my research, it seems like the problems in Jewish intermarriages are much like the problems in many American marriages – and they do not have as much to do with cultural and religious differences as they do with high expectations of sustained romantic love.

In fact, that is a societal condition that afflicts contemporary America. One author wrote, "[The American] ideology of individualism may have helped to grease the main engine of change, the movement of women into the labor force which subverted the model of marriage as an exchange of goods and services between men and women."[349] This left the model of marriage to become an exchange of love and romance. According to one sociologist and marriage historian, the present conditions of the institution of marriage in the United States today, "virtually demand divorce."[350] Those words were written in 1990, but the conditions have essentially remained the same, in tandem

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[349] Furstenberg Jr., Frank. "History and Current Status of Divorce in the United States." *The Future of Children* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 34.
[350] Dion and Dion, 15.

with the near-50 percent divorce rate. Marriage scholars have pointed to the high divorce rate of American marriages as a result of an impossible juxtaposition between believing that love is the only (or main) reason to be married, with Americans' very high expectations that love should be life-long, transcendent, emotionally intimate, and sexually groundbreaking. But – as most people acknowledge – love is not the most stable of emotions; it can, and often does, change with time. And so making *that* the primary foundation of marriage will correspondingly make marriage less stable.

With respect to Jewish intermarriages that undergo distress, it seems that the spouses in those marriages reflect an adherence to the aforementioned American values. So their acculturation to American values – not the cultural or religious differences in their relationship – is (one of) the reasons behind higher dissatisfaction and divorce rates between intermarried Jewish couples and in-married ones.[351]

But the same can apply to acculturated Jews, as seen in the case of Fern and Joey Kupfer. And their assimilation correlates to their generational status: Fern was a third-generation Jew, and Joey was at least a fourth-generation Jew. When going over their story, I developed this idea that Joey's selfishness was in some part a reflection of the American ethos for self-actualization, because his family was more assimilated than hers. From the information in Fern's memoir, though a one-sided (and therefore probably biased) account of their relationship, I think Joey adopted the American value of individualism that made him prioritize his feelings and ambitions above anyone else's.[352] I think Joey Kupfer might have adopted that value more than Fern Kupfer, perhaps because his family was in the United States longer than hers was.

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[351] It would be naïve to give any kind of monocausal explanation for highly complicated problems. Religious and cultural differences, is one such monocausal explanation for the higher divorce rates of intermarried Jews, though it seems to be an inaccurate one. The assimilation of Jews into a culture that promotes values that undermine stable marriages seems to be a more accurate reason, however, I am not suggesting it is the *only* reason behind higher divorce rates of intermarried Jews. There are surely other factors, specific to each couple, which contributed to their separation or dissatisfaction.

[352] Recall that there is research to corroborate this – the trait of self-actualization (present in many Americans, according to psychologists) paradoxically promotes a belief in the concept of a transcendent, romantic love, which requires self-sacrifice for the loved one, while it also makes that self-sacrifice less likely.

Realistically, this was one of three examples that correlated with the general trend of Jewish identity and American acculturation. However, personalities and identities are multifaceted and there will be (and most certainly are) plenty of exceptions to the trend of divorced intermarried Jewish couples. Even a psychological counselor and modern orthodox rabbi concurred that couples from different backgrounds can have marriages that work, especially if they both adhere to an overarching culture that connects both of them despite their different backgrounds.[353] He expressed that many intermarried Jewish couples can, and *do*, "have a good marriage, a good family and pass on good values to their children." I interviewed another woman who was intermarried, though not divorced. Over the course of three and a half hours, it became apparent that what made her Jewish intermarriage work was that she and her spouse had flexible expectations of one another. In her own words, "Respect for [one an]other…is huge…true respect…. If you really respect someone's wishes, and what they stand for, and respect their freedom, and respect the individual for who they are," then your marriage will work. It is, she says, what keeps her marriage going. She does not expect her husband to conform to the changing notions of "what a husband should be," and simply admires him for who he is regardless of how others feel about him.[354]

I am also not trying to make any moral judgments on the issue. Is it better to have more than one marriage and feel immersed in romantic love and be enthralled by your partner? Or is it better to be in a single marriage despite the fact that it is probable that the later period of the relationship will not have the same emotional romantic love connection it first did?[355] That is not for me to say.

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[353] Michael Sanders, interview by author, February 16, 2013, West Los Angeles, tape recording, private home, Los Angeles. Dr. Sanders has requested to be defined as "a clinical psychologist and practicing [Orthodox] Jew: he is a cultural anthropologist and a theistic existentialist at heart whose guiding principle is the W.I. Thomas Dictum." I'm not quite sure what his definition of a "working marriage" is, but from the context of our conversation I think it is safe to assume that he meant something along the lines of "they are happy, and not divorced."

[354] Fiona O'Malley, interview by author, April 27, 2014, West Los Angeles, tape recording, private home, Los Angeles.

[355] In a later period of the relationship, there will probably be a different kind of love (i.e. not romantic, transcendent love). Most research suggests that later stages of a relationship replace the thrilling romantic love feeling with a shared emotion of deep care and respect.

The last thing that needs to be said to all Jewish parents, and especially to my own, is an apology. I know my parents were excited when I started this project because it initially appeared as though they were correct – and they certainly were regarding higher dissatisfaction rates among intermarried couples. However, I know the final version of my thesis is not what they (especially my mother) had hoped to read. This multidimensional history of Jewish intermarriage is a series of patterns and correlations extracted from statistical data and case studies to paint a cohesive picture of Jewish intermarriage in the absence of one. By no means am I suggesting that divorce as a result of acculturating to American standards of marriage is everyone's story. There are many reasons that a married couple will choose to divorce. Generalizing that reason is a huge disservice to the complexity of interdependent relationships, religion, and culture. I only hope to show that those who suggest "a Jew would be wise to refrain from marrying a gentile" are reducing the complexities of a marriage and its history as an institution to a cultural background theory of dubious veracity. A Jewish marriage might not guarantee a more successful one, if either spouse is immersed in those incompatible values so widely disseminated throughout American society. For many American Jews, this information will undoubtedly be hard to digest. Sorry, Mom. I know it is not what you wanted to read but it is what the evidence is telling me.

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