SYMPOSIUM

FORTY YEARS OF LOVING:
CONFRONTING ISSUES OF RACE,
SEXUALITY, AND THE FAMILY IN THE
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

INTRODUCTION

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In a recent New York Times editorial, Professor Stephanie Coontz provocatively asked, “Why do people—gay or straight—need the state’s permission to marry?”1 The question is one many legal scholars have

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**** Associate Professor of Law, Fordham University School of Law. This book and the Symposium it commemorates would not have been possible without the support and contributions of many people. First, we would like to express our deep gratitude to Professor Angela Harris, who delivered the Symposium’s keynote address, and to the distinguished professors who participated as panelists during the Symposium and submitted essays for publication. They include Carlos Ball, Erica Chito Childs, Adrienne Davis, David Eng, Katherine Franke, Darren Hutchinson, Kevin Noble Maillard, Chandan Reddy, Russell Robinson, Darren Rosenblum, and Adrien Wing.

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increasingly begun to ask. But the fact that it was raised so publicly in a year in which the nation celebrates the fortieth anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court’s landmark decision in Loving v. Virginia is nevertheless striking.

_Loving_ is a landmark decision and, significantly, one of the Court’s most important cases on matters of marriage. It is the first Supreme Court case to recognize that the right to marry is fundamental under the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. And yet, perhaps curiously, the Court never discussed the threshold issue whether it was appropriate for the state of Virginia to play a role in deciding who could and could not marry. Rather, the question Chief Justice Earl Warren addressed in his opinion for the Court was whether Virginia, in enforcing its antimiscegenation laws, could deny permission to marry on the ground that the individuals

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5. See id. at 365–66. Some scholars argue that, because of the dual grounds—race and marriage—on which Loving was decided, the first clear articulation of the due process right to marry did not come until _Zablocki v. Redhail_, 434 U.S. 374 (1978), which declared unconstitutional a Wisconsin statute requiring any person with child-support obligations to get court approval before being permitted to marry. See, e.g., Joseph A. Pull, _Questioning the Fundamental Right to Marry_, 90 Marq. L. Rev. 21, 31 (2006).

6. At the time Loving was decided, Virginia had several statutes concerning miscegenation. See Loving, 388 U.S. at 4–7. One of the statutes the Lovings were found to have violated provided, in relevant part, that, “[i]f any white person intermarry with a colored person, or any colored person intermarry with a white person, he shall be guilty of a felony and shall be punished by confinement in the penitentiary for not less than one nor more than five years.” _Id._ at 4. Significantly, this statute was only one of many Virginia had enacted in its history. The first Virginia law banning interracial marriage was enacted in 1691. A. Leon Higginbotham, Jr. & Barbara K. Kopytoff, _Racial Purity and Interracial Sex in the Law of Colonial and Antebellum Virginia_, 77 Geo. L.J. 1967, 1967 n.5 (1989). Laws prohibiting sexual intimacy between whites and blacks appeared in the American colonies as early as 1662. _Id._ at 1968 n.6 (discussing the first prohibition on interracial sex).
The基本 legitimacy of the state’s role as the gatekeeper for marriage was a foregone conclusion.

The Lovings, importantly, did not set out to change the way we think about marriage and the state’s role in it. The aim of these childhood sweethearts—Mildred Jeter, an African American woman, and Richard Loving, a white man—was actually much more modest. After years of forced exile in Washington, D.C., for violating Virginia’s prohibition on interracial marriage, the Lovings wanted only to secure the right to live as a married couple in their native state.

As Mildred explained years later,
“All we ever wanted was to get married, because we loved each other. Some people will never change, but that’s their problem, not mine. I married the only man I had ever loved, and I’m happy for the time we had together. For me, that was enough.”12 In the end, however, the impact of the decision in Loving extended far beyond Mildred and Richard’s particular case.

Significantly, Loving received no mention in Professor Coontz’s New York Times editorial, which argued for the privatization of marriage.13 While Coontz references the identity-based restrictions placed on marriage over the years,14 she bases her overall argument for relieving states of the power they have long wielded in the marriage arena not on past abuses of that power, but on the notion that society no longer benefits from governmental regulation in this context.15 The proof of this, Coontz maintains, can be seen, in part, from the tremendous societal changes that have occurred in traditional marriage over the last few decades.16 Divorce rates have skyrocketed since the 1950s and 1960s.17 Many people never marry at all.18 And those who choose to marry are doing so later and later in life.19 In short, as Professor Rachel Moran recently noted, marriage now...
serves a very different purpose than it did in the past. It is no longer a prerequisite for cohabitation or sexual intimacy. Nor is a marriage license necessary to raise children. Despite the New York Court of Appeals 2006 decision in *Hernandez v. Robles*, which regarded heterosexual marriage as a virtual precondition for the rearing of well-adjusted children, the reality is that, today, “[a]lmost 40 percent of America’s children are born to unmarried parents.”

The significance of these and other similar changes cannot be ignored. As Coontz maintains, they reflect tremendous shifts in the nature of the personal and intimate obligations individuals—gay, straight, bisexual, or transgendered—now have to one another. Marriage in the twenty-first century is arguably very different from what Mildred and Richard Loving had in mind. There is good reason to explore this reality and to engage questions about the proper place of marriage in contemporary society, given the evolution we have witnessed in an institution that the Supreme Court has described as “the most important relation in life” and “an association that promotes a way of life, not causes; a harmony in living, not political faiths; a bilateral loyalty, not commercial or social projects... an association for as noble a purpose as any....” It may be, as Coontz and other scholars, including some in this book, have suggested, that


20. See Moran, supra note 17, at 268–69; Coontz, supra note 1. Along these lines, we no longer stigmatize children born outside of marriage as illegitimate. See Thomas Healy, *Stigmatic Harm and Standing*, 92 Iowa L. Rev. 417, 479 (2007) (arguing that the “stigma of illegitimacy has lessened somewhat over time, as the number of illegitimate births has increased and as alternative models of the family have become more accepted”); Linda C. McClain, “Irresponsible” Reproduction, 47 Hastings L.J. 339, 350 (1996) (critiquing rhetoric decrying “the decline in stigma attached to out-of-wedlock births”); *see also* Gomez v. Perez, 409 U.S. 535, 537–38 (1973) (holding that state denial of public benefits to illegitimate children violates the equal protection guarantee).


24. Coontz, supra note 1. Based on 2005 data, the percentage of out-of-wedlock births is 36.8 nationally. See U.S. Census Bureau, supra note 17; *see also* Bowman, supra note 18, at 31–34 (distinguishing between children in single-parent households and those in cohabitation households, and noting that half of the latter are biological children of both cohabitants).
marriage’s elevated status in the hierarchy of models for human intimacy and obligation has been undermined by the shifts in societal norms that have occurred. We submit, however, that it would be futile to try to comprehend fully the significance of the societal changes that have occurred since the 1960s and 1970s in the area of marriage without also considering Loving and the impact of the Supreme Court’s opinion in that case. A full determination of where we are with marriage and “loving” cannot be made in the absence of a more complete understanding of Loving.

Our insistence on placing Loving at the center of any attempt to comprehend contemporary marital and intimate relations may be counterintuitive to some. After all, we noted at the outset that Loving did not purport fundamentally to change marriage or the role of the state in regulating it. At the same time, it seems clear that in spite of this and the modest aims of the Loving plaintiffs, the decision in Loving has been transformative on a number of levels. Indeed, in recent years, it has been at the forefront of efforts to rethink marriage, the nature of the obligations it imposes, and the role of the state in determining which relationships are licit and which are illicit. One need only look at recent litigation to secure rights for same-sex couples to get some sense of this. Loving has been a centerpiece of litigation efforts waged by advocates for the right of gay and lesbian couples to marry. Even more significantly, it figured prominently

(2008) (contesting the centrality of marriage in claims for gay rights and advocating an increased focus on other models for human intimacy and obligation).

30. Loving has led to changes in cross-racial intimacy. See Randall Kennedy, How Are We Doing with Loving?: Race, Law, and Intermarriage, 77 B.U. L. Rev. 815, 817–19 (1997) (describing, inter alia, Loving as a “triumph” for freedom of choice); Pratt, supra note 8, 240 (describing the decision’s effect on Mildred and Richard Loving personally); Tim Padgett & Frank Sikora, Color-Blind Love: Once Considered Taboo, Interracial Marriages Are Now on the Rise—Even in Some Unexpected Places, Time, May 12, 2003 (unpaginated) (claiming a 1000% increase in the number of interracial marriages since Loving and profiling several such couples in Alabama). But its greatest impact may be on thinking about race, marriage, and the law. See John DeWitt Gregory & Joanna L. Grossman, The Legacy of Loving, 51 How. L.J. 15, 52 (2007) (noting that Loving’s legacy has mostly been legal, not cultural, since interracial marriage is still a “relatively unusual occurrence”); see also Reginald Oh, Regulating White Desire, 2007 Wis. L. Rev. 463, 508–11 (discussing the impact of Loving on the legality of racial subordination). But see Rashmi Goel, From Tainted to Sainted: The View of Interracial Relations as Cultural Evangelism, 2007 Wis. L. Rev. 489 (cautioning that Loving failed to address the racist “cognitive imprint” that favors the white partner in an interracial relationship); Camille A. Nelson, Lovin’ the Man: Examining the Legal Nexus of Irony, Hypocrisy, and Curiosity, 2007 Wis. L. Rev. 543 (same, from Nelson’s own personal perspective).

in the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court’s 2003 decision in Goodridge v. Department of Public Health, which extended marriage rights to gay and lesbian couples in Massachusetts.\footnote{Goodridge, 798 N.E.2d at 969.} As the following excerpt highlights, the Goodridge court relied a great deal on Loving and Perez v. Sharp,\footnote{198 P.2d 17 (Cal. 1948).} the first post-Reconstruction case to invalidate an antimiscegenation law:\footnote{See, e.g., Goodridge, 798 N.E.2d at 958–59.}

As both Perez and Loving make clear, the right to marry means little if it does not include the right to marry the person of one’s choice, subject to appropriate government restrictions in the interests of public health, safety, and welfare. . . . In this case, as in Perez and Loving, a statute deprives individuals of access to an institution of fundamental legal, personal, and social significance—the institution of marriage—because of a single trait: skin color in Perez and Loving, sexual orientation here. As it did in Perez and Loving, history must yield to a more fully developed understanding of the invidious quality of the discrimination.\footnote{Id. at 958 (citation omitted).}

Our objective in planning this fortieth celebration of Loving was to devise a program that would allow us to explore in depth the modern implications of the Court’s 1967 decision in Loving—what it says about the state’s role in intimate relationships, as well as what it might explain about race, family, and the place of marriage in modern society. Too often, the inclination among scholars is to choose between the different aspects of Warren’s opinion for the Court.\footnote{Cf. Lenhardt, supra note 10 (manuscript at 126).} On one hand, there are Warren’s statements about race and the dangers of racial prejudice. The assertion that “the racial classifications [in Virginia’s antimiscegenation statute] must stand on their own justification, as measures designed to maintain White Supremacy,”\footnote{Loving v. Virginia, 388 U.S. 1, 11 (1967).} is viewed as a “key sentence” in Loving,\footnote{Cass R. Sunstein, Homosexuality and the Constitution, 70 Ind. L.J. 1, 17 (1994) (“The key sentence in Loving says that ‘the racial classifications [at issue] must stand on their own justification, as measures designed to maintain White Supremacy.’” (alterations in original) (quoting Loving, 388 U.S. at 11)).} one absolutely critical to understanding both issues of race and equality, and the concerns of the Court during this period.\footnote{See id. at 17–18 (“The striking reference to White Supremacy—by a unanimous Court, capitalizing both words and speaking in these terms for the only time in the nation’s history—was designed to get at the core of Virginia’s argument that discrimination on the basis of participation in mixed marriages was not discrimination on the basis of race. The Supreme Court appeared to be making the following argument: Even though the ban on racial marriage treats blacks and whites alike—even though there is formal equality—the ban is transparently an effort to keep the races separate and, by so doing, to maintain the form and the conception of racial difference that are indispensable to White Supremacy.”);} On the other hand, there is the
aforementioned language about marriage. Warren’s conclusion that “[m]arriage is one of the ‘basic civil rights of man,’ fundamental to our very existence and survival,” was extremely significant, both because of what it said about what was at stake for the Lovings and what it signaled about the status of marriage in the constitutional hierarchy.31

Rather than choose between these two poles, we have preferred to think of them, as the Loving Court arguably did, as interdependent, each necessary to comprehend the issues at hand.42 As the essays by Angela Harris and Kevin Noble Maillard in this book help to elucidate, state laws pertaining to marriage and sexual intimacy have been instrumental in promoting racial segregation and stratification and, more generally, in constructing racial identity.43 Nothing illustrates this better than the opinion of the Virginia trial court in Loving, which regarded the state’s antimiscegenation laws as essential to restoring what it perceived as the racial order originally established by “Almighty God [with] white, black, yellow, malay and red [persons] . . . on separate continents.”44 Likewise, as Erica Chito Childs’s and Russell Robinson’s essays emphasize, race, or more specifically the racial identity of one’s intimate partner, still plays a critical role in shaping how individuals think about sexual intimacy and the prospect of marrying someone of a different race.45 Indeed, although the rates of interracial marriage have increased since 1967,46 they have not


40. Loving, 388 U.S. at 12.

41. Lenhardt, supra note 10 (manuscript at 126–28).

42. On the importance of considering both aspects of the Loving decision, see William N. Eskridge, Jr., Destabilizing Due Process and Evolutive Equal Protection, 47 UCLA L. Rev. 1183, 1186–87 (2000); Lenhardt, supra note 10 (manuscript at 126–28, 152–61); Laurence H. Tribe, Lawrence v. Texas: The "Fundamental Right" That Dare Not Speak Its Name, 117 Harv. L. Rev. 1893 (2004).


44. Loving, 388 U.S. at 3 (internal quotation marks omitted). The trial court concluded that “[t]he fact that [God] separated the races shows that he did not intend for the races to mix.” Id. (internal quotation marks omitted).


46. Maillard, supra note 43, at 2710. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that, in 1960, only 0.4% of all marriages were interracial, including interracial couples that were not black-white. U.S. Census Bureau, Table 1: Race of Wife by Race of Husband: 1960, 1970, 1980, 1991, and 1992 (1998), available at http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/race/interractab1.txt. By 1970, that figure rose to 0.7%. Id. The figures were 1.3% in 1980, 1.8% in 1990, 2.6% in 2000, and 3.8% in 2006.
done so to the extent one might expect. Interracial sexual intimacy may occur, but for many people, the idea of entering into a lifelong partnership with someone of a different race is still simply unimaginable.

The dual dimensions of Warren’s opinion are also a lens on matters beyond those formally addressed in the opinion—concerns that Warren and his colleagues on the Court probably never contemplated but that are nevertheless implicated by the Court’s decision. For example, what can Loving be understood to say about same-sex couples seeking to marry, particularly in light of the Supreme Court’s 2003 decision in Lawrence v. Texas, which held that state laws criminalizing same-sex intimacy deprived gays and lesbians of the liberty interests secured by the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment? Is there a meaningful analogy between identity-based restrictions on marriage that concern race and those that pertain to gender or sexual orientation? Does it make sense
for marriage to be so much at the center of the movement for LGBT rights?53 Can access to marriage for same-sex couples “deliver” on citizenship and the benefits it confers in the way that it arguably did for African Americans?54 In addition, one might contemplate the reverberating effects of Loving for other kinds of intimate associations and their place in American society and law.55 What of the relationship between a parent and child?56 Or the relationship between extended family members or even friends?57 Does Loving offer a way of thinking about these types of holding of Loving and other similar cases. See, e.g., Monte Neil Stewart & William C. Duncan, Marriage and the Betrayal of Perez and Loving, 2005 BYU L. Rev. 555. Others have argued that the analogy masks problems of race and hierarchy within the gay and lesbian community, among other things. See Devon W. Carbado, Black Rights, Gay Rights, Civil Rights, 47 UCLA L. Rev. 1467, 1484–1500 (2000); Darren Lenard Hutchinson, Out Yet Unseen: A Racial Critique of Gay and Lesbian Legal Theory and Political Discourse, 29 Conn. L. Rev. 561, 631–35 (1997).

53. See Franke, supra note 29, at 2685–87; see also Katherine M. Franke, The Politics of Same-Sex Marriage Politics, 15 Colum. J. Gender & L. 236 (2006). We use the term “LGBT” to refer to lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgendered individuals.

54. Numerous scholars have discussed the denial of marriage rights of same-sex couples as a citizenship issue. See, e.g., Amy L. Brandzel, Queering Citizenship?: Same-Sex Marriage and the State, 11 GLQ 171, 195 (2005); Harris, supra note 29; Lenhardt, supra note 10 (manuscript at 107, 108, 151–61). Katherine Franke has explained elsewhere that “[t]he right to marry [also] figured prominently among the bundle of rights African Americans, who had lacked the capacity to marry as slaves, “held dear in the postbellum years.” Katherine M. Franke, Becoming a Citizen: Reconstruction Era Regulation of African American Marriages, 11 Yale J.L. & Human. 251, 252 (1999). At the same time, Franke, expressing caution about the move toward marriage among gays and lesbians, has emphasized that marriage also served as an avenue for state intervention in the intimate relations of freedmen and women. Id. at 252–53.


57. Laura Rosenbury discussed the stance the law should take with respect to friendship and the recognition of extramarital care-taking arrangements in a recent article. See generally Rosenbury, supra note 55 (advocating the legal recognition of friendship and family care-taking arrangements).
interpersonal relationships? Does it tell us something about handling matters of identity that might arise within them?

Finally, looking beyond the particular facts of Loving invites an inquiry into the treatment of matters of race and marriage outside the borders of the United States. Have other countries managed to construct a model of state regulation of marriage that is different than what we have seen in the United States? If, as the Lawrence Court suggested, it is reasonable and even desirable to permit the practices of other nations with respect to same-sex intimacy to inform constitutional decision making on such matters in this country, might we, for example, look to what other countries have done in thinking about the legitimacy of state laws that exclude same-sex couples from the institution of marriage? Could the experience of South Africa or Canada be instructive?

In a very real sense, our goal in organizing the Forty Years of Loving: Confronting Issues of Race, Sexuality, and Family Symposium was to examine the Loving decision in all of its dimensions and to look at all the dimensions of “loving.” Admittedly, this agenda was more than a little ambitious. But, as this book attests, we were able, through the incredible contributions of the Symposium participants and attendees, to achieve a good part of our goal. On November 2, 2007, scores of legal and nonlegal scholars, practitioners, and students filled the auditorium at Fordham University School of Law to give Loving what, at this point in its forty-year existence, may be the very best celebration we could offer: a thorough and in-depth discussion of what it has meant and can mean to those concerned about matters of race, sexuality, and family in modern society.

Each of the four sessions held during the Symposium focused on an important aspect of Loving and/or loving. The panelists in our opening session, Historical Perspectives on Race, Sex, and Family, endeavored to put in context the Loving decision and questions regarding the identity-based restrictions that states have historically placed on marriage. Professor Maillard, addressing questions of race and collective memory, challenged

58. For a survey of developments in marriage in other countries, see, for example, M.V. Lee Badgett, Predicting Partnership Rights: Applying the European Experience to the United States, 17 Yale J.L. & Feminism 71 (2005); and Mark E. Wojcik, The Wedding Bells Heard Around the World: Years from Now, Will We Wonder Why We Worried About Same-Sex Marriage?, 24 N. Ill. U. L. Rev. 589, 603–76 (2004).


us to reject the vision of *Loving* as “Multiracial Epiphany,” the idea that it somehow began or made possible the formation of interracial relationships or the existence of mixed race individuals. Through a compelling discussion of three “contemporary disputes over racial identity and membership”—that concerning Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemmings, one of his former slaves, and those claiming to be their descendants; that involving Essie Mae Washington-Williams, a woman of color who recently revealed that she was the daughter of former Senator Strom Thurmond, once an avowed segregationist; and that pertaining to descendants of West Ford, a slave said to be the son of George Washington and a slave named Venus—Maillard’s essay in this book both documents the existence of interracial intimacy that occurred long before *Loving* and focuses our attention on the continued resistance to interracial relationships and the inability of some to acknowledge a pre-1967 past that includes them.

Professors Katherine Franke and Darren Hutchinson turned our attention to recent litigation to secure marriage equality for LGBT couples, each effectively arguing that “there are good reasons to resist the analogy to *Loving*.” Concerned that the current focus on marriage will ultimately require the “surrender of a great deal of the liberty rights acknowledged in *Lawrence*” as well as gay and lesbian acquiescence in intimate lives patterned exclusively on heterosexual relationships, Franke’s essay urges advocates to undertake “efforts to secure marriage equality for same-sex couples . . . in a way that is compatible with efforts to dislodge marriage from its normatively superior status as compared with other forms of human attachment, commitment, and desire.” In this connection, she proposes friendship as an alternative model for reconceptualizing social structures, one that does not implicitly use marriage as the ultimate measure of human intimacy and commitment, and that would not, in her estimation, result in increased regulation of gay and lesbian sexual liberty. In Franke’s view, friendship has the advantage of “destabiliz[ing] the meanings and the makings of meaning of fundamental human life,” of letting individuals decide for themselves how to interact, and what their commitments and obligations to one another should be.

63. *Id.* at 2712.
64. Franke, * supra* note 29, at 2685.
65. *Id.* at 2688.
66. *Id.* at 2697–98 (critiquing the default rule under the American Law Institute Principles of the Law of Family Dissolution that treats relationships where the individuals have jointly maintained a household and cohabited for a specific period of time as presumptive domestic partnerships).
67. *Id.* at 2686.
68. *Id.* at 2702–05.
69. *Id.* at 2704.
70. *Id.* at 2705.
The panelists in the second session, Social and Legal Norms Regarding Race, Sex, and Gender Nonconformity, built on the tremendous foundation laid by the first panel in diverse and innovative ways. Professor Carlos Ball continued the focus on current marriage litigation, broadening the discussion to concentrate not only on the arguments made by gay advocates of equal access to marriage, but also those advanced by state officials and judicial officers. In particular, Ball’s essay critiques the emphasis on child rearing in judicial opinions upholding as constitutional bans on marriage for same-sex couples, demonstrating that similar arguments were made in defense of antimiscegenation laws such as those struck down by Loving.

The remaining panelists in this session shifted the conversation away from litigation matters and toward an exploration of modern examples of interracial “loving.” Professor Adrienne Davis addressed matters of race and gender underlying the film Monster’s Ball, critiquing the storyline for its adherence to flawed conceptions of both race and gender in interracial relationships. Professor Chito Childs, for her part, looked more broadly at the attitudes of Whites and Blacks toward interracial marriage in the twenty-first century. Arguing that black-white relationships function as a “miner’s canary . . . expos[ing] lingering racism, prejudice, and segregation in society,”71 Childs’s fascinating essay provides the results of qualitative interviews on cross-racial intimacy and explores the “dominant” and sometimes shocking “images and beliefs about black-white couplings” and what they suggest about the state of “contemporary race relations.”72

Professor Robinson invited the audience to think harder about results such as these by drawing attention to the “impact of structural conditions on preferences regarding intimacy.”73 In an essay that blends personal narrative and empirical analysis, Robinson explores the impact of racial screening devices such as Internet dating sites and sex-segregated queer social spaces. He concludes that these and other social structuring devices greatly influence romantic preferences, giving special attention to black-white intimate interactions involving gay men.74

Professor Harris of the University of California–Berkeley School of Law was magnificent as the conference’s keynote speaker. A distinguished scholar, and leader in Critical Race Theory, Critical Race Feminism, and LatCrit, Harris delivered an address that both synthesized themes raised in the prior two sessions and compelled the audience and participants to travel to entirely new intellectual territory. In Loving Before and After the Law, Harris considers “marriage as a practice of national citizenship,”75 focusing specifically on notions of citizenship that bear on the “possession and

71. Chito Childs, supra note 43, at 2784.
72. Id. at 2774.
73. Robinson, supra note 45, at 2787.
74. Id.
75. Harris, supra note 29, at 2821.
enjoyment of certain political, civil, and social rights” 76 and “active
engagement in the public life of the community.” 77 In Harris’s view, “the
legacy of Loving v. Virginia looks strikingly different depending on which
[of these] ax[e]s of citizenship one chooses to examine.” 78 From the
perspective of rights, Harris—who develops a theory of state power
premised on “racialized gender” 79 and the preparation of “proper” citizens
through marriage 80—argues that Loving should be read to require gay and
lesbian access to marriage, “not because marriage holds any special position
in human life,” 81 but because “the denial of the right . . . signals that state
power is being used to enact a system of caste.” 82 From the perspective of
participation, however, Harris contends that Loving may very well be
irrelevant, to the extent it emphasizes the citizenship-building capacity of
marriage, an institution that, as Coontz emphasizes, is in serious decline in
the United States. In concluding, Harris points us toward alternatives for
possible reconciliation of these divergent views. Apart from the options
presented by various forms of political theater, such as queers marrying en
masse and “heterosexuals . . . refus[ing] to get married,” she emphasizes the
new and productive avenues that might be opened by a critical examination
of prevailing conceptions of family. 83

Finally, our last session of the day—a panel entitled Transnational
Perspectives on Race, Sex, and Family—followed the path blazed by Harris
in the previous session, turning the focus to the international context and an
inquiry into how other countries have handled their own Loving moments,
instances when they have been confronted with diverse claims for racial,
gender, sexual, or familial diversity. As with the prior sessions, the
panelists provided in-depth and thought-provoking analyses of the
conference themes and issues. Professor Chandan Reddy delivered remarks
that considered the challenges for LGBT organizing in the domestic and
international contexts, advocating the adoption of a new paradigm for queer
political engagement. His essay in this book picks up on that theme by
exploring the limits of legal efforts to secure marriage rights and equal
citizenship for gay men and lesbians. More specifically, Reddy asks what

76. Id.
77. Id. at 2822.
78. Id. at 2823. Citing the work of Professor Linda Bosniak, Professor Harris
acknowledges that there are additional dimensions of citizenships that marriage implicates,
but which she chose not to explore in her keynote address. For a discussion of the
dimensions of citizenship generally, see Linda Bosniak, Citizenship Denationalized, 7 Ind. J.
Global Legal Stud. 447, 455 (2000); and Leti Volpp, "Obnoxious to Their Very Nature":
80. Id. at 2829.
81. Id. at 2846.
82. Id. For a discussion of the benefits denied same-sex couples by the bar of marriage
rights, see Elizabeth B. Cooper, Who Needs Marriage?: Equality and the Role of the State, 8
83. Harris, supra note 29, at 2846–47.
gay advocates gain and lose by invoking Loving in current marriage litigation. 84 Engaging critical texts relevant to his query, Reddy accuses advocates of living too much in the past and relying on the social hierarchies and structure that constituted it, concluding that the use of Loving and the move toward “the universalization of the right to marriage” it reflects “is the very means by which the law forecloses other, possibly more difficult and imaginative articulations of antiracism.” 85 In his view, “the desire for the universal right of marriage is primarily the preservation of an episteme that has lived beyond its utility.” 86

Professor David Eng addressed similar issues in his presentation, advancing a critique of what he refers to as queer liberalism. He focused primarily on the implications of regarding the Court’s 2003 decision in Lawrence as one that concerns gay rights alone. Reminding us that Lawrence involved a couple that was gay as well as interracial, Eng urged a more sustained focus on intersectionality and the ways in which legal restrictions in the area of intimacy can have effects on matters of race and sexuality. For Eng, the success of queer liberalism—which so often entails an embrace of Loving, as Goodridge and other recent marriage cases attest—should not rest on what amounts to a “forgetting of race.”

Professors Adrien Wing and Darren Rosenblum took the conversation in a different, but equally productive direction by considering the identity-related implications of international laws and policies bearing on questions of race and gender. Darren Rosenblum focused on Norway, comparing judicial efforts to achieve racial equality in Loving with efforts by the legislature of Norway to secure a level of gender equality for women through the implementation of the Corporate Board Quota (CBQ). In his essay, Rosenblum urges a renewed focus on the possibilities presented by “assertive remedies for inequality” such as quotas. He argues that, in the final analysis, Norway’s QBC has been more effective than Title IX and other similar measures in the United States for achieving equity through forms of balancing. In this connection, Rosenblum, while praising the outcome of Loving, concludes that, as a necessarily passive remedy, it is inherently limited in its ability to facilitate interracial intimate relationships.

Employing themes from Critical Race Feminism, as well as personal experience and narrative, Professor Adrien Wing closed the session and the Symposium by asking how Loving can help us think about the challenges faced by “Muslim women who . . . want the legal freedom to marry outside their faith,” something forbidden in most Muslim countries. 87 Her essay in this book, Twenty-First-Century Loving: Nationality, Gender, and Religion

85. Id. at 2871.
86. Id.
in the Muslim World, explores the multiple race, gender, and family-based identities possessed by Muslim women and discusses in detail the challenges they face both under Islamic family law precepts subordinating women to men and in the secular world, where head scarves and other indicia of spiritual devotion mark Muslim women as targets for abuse and discrimination. Explaining that these forces combine to make life extremely difficult for Muslim women who want to enter into interfaith unions, Professor Wing urges a focus on the many ways in which “[g]ender discrimination manifests itself.”88 And she offers specific solutions for addressing the inequities posed by interfaith marriage bans that range from public education to legal strategies centered on gender equality provisions contained in the constitutions of countries in the Muslim world and international provisions, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,89 the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,90 and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.91 While acknowledging that barriers to interfaith marriage are unlikely to rank high on the international human rights agenda in the near future, Professor Wing, referring to Loving and the presidential candidacy of Senator Barack Obama—who is the product of a union that was both interracial and interfaith—reminds us that there are good reasons to expect and hope for productive change down the road.

Together, the talented group of scholars who participated in Forty Years of Loving: Confronting Issues of Race, Sexuality, and the Family in the Twenty-first Century managed to make important interventions in the field that will significantly advance thinking about Loving in the context of the intersecting realities of race, sexuality, and family in contemporary American society. No doubt some will find that there are questions and issues relevant to understanding Loving that were not addressed by this Symposium or that were explored only superficially. This gathering of scholars was not, however, meant in any way to close the book on Loving—to somehow wrap up neatly a case that, as the discussion above details, touches on some of the most difficult and complex issues facing our society. Like the Lovings, our aim here was ultimately more modest. In the end, we wanted simply to launch a critical conversation about the Court’s decision in Loving, one that perhaps complicates as many issues as it resolves. In opening up the discussion, we invite others to join in what we expect will be a conversation that continues for at least another forty years.

88. Id. at 2905.