

THE FRANCO-AMERICAN LOVE AFFAIR: TRANSNATIONAL COURTSHIP
AND MARRIAGE PATTERNS DURING THE NINETEENTH
AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES

by

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Abstract

The Franco-American Love Affair: Transnational Courtship and Marriage Patterns
during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

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This work deals with courtships and marriages that transcended national, cultural, and linguistic boundaries. It deals with the formation of transnational families and transnational spaces. And finally, because the historical concept of transnational marriage provides a unique prism through which to view the interconnectedness of societies at their most intimate cultural intersections, it deals with the longstanding, complex cultural relations between France and the United States during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

In an effort to address not only why Franco-American marriages occurred but how and why the dynamics that produced them changed over time, this work examines and compares two transnational-marriage patterns in different historical contexts: the first, when wealthy American heiresses married French aristocrats during the second half of the nineteenth century—a period marked by relatively free

transatlantic circulation and mobility—and the second, when borders were far more solidified—during the world wars when French women entered into matrimonial contracts with American soldiers.

The purpose of this work is twofold: In an effort provide new categories of analysis that place the human experience into broader, more global perspectives, the first is to show how concepts of transnational marriage and courtship allow the historian to move further beyond the analytical frameworks of national histories by forcing the researcher to reconsider the ways in which one thinks about family formation and the permeability of national borders during these different stages of the national project. The second is to challenge underlying assumptions in existing historiographical explanations that those who crossed national borders to couple or to marry did so for purely socio-economic reasons. I contend that such rationalizations are simply too narrow and that at the intersection of cross-cultural encounter and transnational coupling stood a profoundly emotional experience. Therefore, greater analytical considerations need to include both cultural and emotional motivations that were always in the background.

Because the social practices of courtship and marriage became mechanisms through which borders were crossed and new cultural spaces were created, they represent important elements of transnational entanglements. Therefore, rather than examining marriage motivation from the perspective of one society or another, this work seeks to instead examine the ways in which patterns of transnational marriage emerged out of social spaces of cross-cultural encounter between the two societies. In order to identify, map, and analyze the transnational spaces that produced marriage during the nineteenth and twentieth century, this work draws on

descriptions of social events found in the French and American press, travel literature, personal accounts, and guest lists. By examining where and how couples met and courted one another, these sources provide an important glimpse into not only transnational social networks and cultural rituals but also the ways in which marriage participants perceived, experienced, and interpreted these spaces. In this spatial examination, emotions are employed as a category of analysis rather than a narrative device in order to show how complex cultural meanings within transnational spaces were experienced on personal levels among transnational-marriage participants. Because a variety of emotions manifested in both encounter and representations of the “other,” I propose that *othering* be further considered as not simply a cultural process, but an emotional one. By drawing on French and American literary works, travel literature, and personal accounts found in unpublished and published memoirs, letters, and interviews collected by contemporary journalists and oral historians, I argue that even though marriage participants from each of the two patterns conceived of the national and cultural boundaries that separated them in very different ways, attraction to notions of difference provoked important emotional responses and largely remained the driving force of marriage and coupling processes in both historical contexts. By participating in a transnational marriage, participants bound themselves not only to their spouse but also to the culture of that spouse. Motivations for transnational marriage were, therefore, still strategic but were largely based on preconceived notions of what they believed the other culture to be.

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Introduction

Marriage: National Borders And Personal Spaces

Why do people marry? Or better: Why do they couple?¹ While marriage and coupling practices seem to correspond with obvious biological and social necessities, a more targeted question might include: Why do they choose to couple or marry with the people that they do? And, what happens when they marry someone who is perceived as different from themselves?

Admittedly, such over-generalized questions are, of course, accompanied by the underpinning assumption that the modern, Western social practice of marriage is largely accepted as a contract between two individuals based on both their free will and their affection for or commitment to one another. However, the cultural normative characterizations of both marital practices and courtship rituals show great variability in different historical contexts, and as Stephanie Coontz shows in her work, *Marriage, a History: From Obedience to Intimacy or How Love Conquered Marriage*, marriage as an emotion-based, state-sanctioned union is a relatively recent social invention.² This leaves the task of defining marriage a difficult one. Over time, courtship and marital practices have taken many forms. In

¹ Jean Claude Bologne, *Histoire du couple* (Paris: Perrin, 2016), 7 reminds us that researchers too often examine the social processes of coupling through the prism of marriage, leaving out a variety of important relationships.

² Stephanie Coontz, *Marriage, a History: From Obedience to Intimacy or How Love Conquered Marriage* (New York: Viking, 2005), 2.

some contexts, to marry was a privilege, in others a necessity. Even in the present time, the tension between its dual meaning—both as a legal contract and as an emotional relationship—persists, and academic definitions vary. Anthropologist, Edmund Leach, for example, defines marriage as “a set of legal rules” that largely determines inheritance between generations.³ Coontz, by contrast, notes the limitations of this definition and goes further to define it instead as a “social practice” that “determines rights and obligations connected to sexuality, gender roles, relationships with in-laws, and the legitimacy of children.”⁴ However, no matter the changing legal or social characterizations, the practice of marriage has always, at its core, represented the connectedness of individuals—connectedness between participants, between families, between larger kinship and social networks, and even between societies. The marriages that make up the subject of this work transcended national, cultural, and linguistic boundaries and connected individuals across the Atlantic.

While “mixed marriages” (in their many forms) are not a new phenomenon⁵—the practice of marriage long pre-dated many of the borders that it would come to cross—the concept of *transnational marriage* presents for the historian a unique methodological opportunity to move further beyond the analytical frameworks of national histories that have long “caged” them, as they continue their

³ Edmund Leach, “The Social Anthropology of Marriage and Mating,” in *Mating and Marriage*, ed. Vernon Reynolds and John Kellett (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 93.

⁴ Coontz, *Marriage, a History*, 34.

⁵ Jose Moya, “The Historical Emergence and Massification of International Families in Europe and Its Diaspora,” in *Transregional and Transnational Families in Europe and Beyond: Experiences Since the Middle Ages*, ed. Christopher H. Johnson et al. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 23 shows that people have been constructing families across borders as long as people have been mobile.

search for new categories of analysis that place the human experience into broader, more global perspectives.⁶ In this context, the social practices of courtship and marriage become mechanisms through which borders were crossed and new cultural spaces were created, and they represent important elements of transnational entanglements. Because marriage is a microcosm of larger cultural and social values, examining how and why marriages occurred between two societies reveals the broader, complex cross-cultural encounters from which couples emerged. Moreover, examining how and why observable *patterns* of transnational marriage and coupling emerged between the same two societies and changed over time reveals broader shifts in the global currents of that interconnectedness.

Here, the entangled past of France and the United States provide an interesting case study. Since the Age of Revolutions and their emergence as modern nation-states within a transatlantic system of trade, migration, and information, both nations shared a longstanding, changing, and sometimes-turbulent cultural and diplomatic relationship. The continued occurrence of clear patterns of Franco-American marriages during the nineteenth and twentieth century, therefore, provokes interesting questions about these cross-cultural and transnational frameworks. Two of those patterns are examined here in a temporal comparison: the first, when wealthy American heiresses married French aristocrats during the second half of the nineteenth century—a period marked by relatively free transatlantic circulation and mobility—and the second, when borders were far more solidified—during the world wars when American soldiers entered into matrimonial contracts

⁶ Daniel Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), 2.

with French women. The timeframe selected is an important one as it represents a critical global moment that can be characterized by the culmination of the national project. This examination, therefore, situates Franco-American marriage practices within the context of the broader shift from nineteenth-century nation-making to early- and mid-twentieth-century hypernationalism. In these different contexts, the continued occurrence of transnational marriages forces the researcher to reconsider the ways in which one thinks not only about coupling and family formation, but also about the permeability of national borders during these different stages. Here, I argue that even though the degree to which marriage participants conceptualized borders differed between the two periods, a sense of longing for the “other” and attraction to difference between the two societies remained the primary driving forces of these transnational marriages.

Defining Transnational Marriage, Coupling, and Courtship

Like the object of study, *transnational marriage* as an academic concept is also not entirely new. During the last two decades, overlapping terms such as mixed marriage, intermarriage, bi-national marriage, international marriage, global marriage, cross-border marriage, and transnational marriage have all made their way into the corpuses of various social scientific disciplines; however, the establishment of any kind of topical field remains both fragmented and underdeveloped. For the historian, a general lack of conceptual themes and methods creates two notable methodological problems: The first is defining transnational marriage as a *historical* concept, and the second is identifying appropriate categories of analysis through which to examine marriages of the past as a subject of inquiry.

Because the practice of marriage was rarely a private matter, the histories of modern marriage have often been written as the histories of the laws or external structures that shaped and regulated them.⁷ The same has often been the case for the histories of marriages that crossed national borders.⁸ With the rise of the modern nation-state, the practice of marriage came to serve an important function in the formation of national cultures. As Nancy Cott shows in her work, *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation*, marriage was an essential aspect in the making of the nation-state by underlining national belonging, establishing cohesion, and setting national moral standards.⁹ Therefore, both state and national apparatuses often attempted to shape relationships according to these national agendas by defining what were or were not acceptable practices of family formation.¹⁰ When families constructed themselves beyond that national project, they failed to fit into national narratives of a longstanding past and unified culture surrounded by concrete

⁷ Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009); Nancy F Cott, *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000); John R Gillis, *For Better, for Worse: British Marriages, 1600 to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Silvana Seidel Menchi, Emlyn Eisenach, and Charles Donahue, *Marriage in Europe, 1400-1800* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016).

⁸ Candice Lewis Bredbenner, *A Nationality of Her Own Women, Marriage, and the Law of Citizenship* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Francisco Muñoz-Perez Tribalat, Michèle, “Mariages d’étrangers et mariages mixtes en France: Évolution depuis la Première Guerre,” *Population (French Edition)* 39, no. 3 (1984): 427–62; Gérard Neyrand et al., *Mariages mixtes et nationalité française: les Français par mariage et leurs conjoints* (Paris: Ed. l’Harmattan, 1995); Ann Marie Nicolosi, “‘We Do Not Want Our Girls to Marry Foreigners’: Gender, Race, and American Citizenship,” *NWSA Journal* 13, no. 3 *Gender and Social Policy: Local to Global* (2001): 1–21; Jessica Mai Sims and Runnymede Trust, *Mixed Heritage: Identity, Policy and Practice* (London: Runnymede Trust, 2007); Mika Toyota, “Editorial Introduction: International Marriage, Rights and the State in East and Southeast Asia,” *Citizenship Studies* 12, no. 1 (2008): 1–7; Lucy Williams, *Global Marriage: Cross-Border Marriage Migration in Global Context* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Helena Wray, *Regulating Marriage Migration into the UK: A Stranger in the Home* (Farnham, Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011).

⁹ Cott, *Public Vows*, 5.

¹⁰ Williams, *Global Marriage*, 7.

boundaries, and state intervention in instances of transnational-marriage practices typically came in the form of laws that regulated marriage-related migration. While the examinations of legal restrictions tell us much about the state's role in family formation practices, these perspectives provide an incomplete picture of the past for a couple of reasons. First, they fail to explain how and why marriages that spanned national borders formed in the first place. Second, even from bi-national or comparative perspectives, historical examinations of state regulations remain inherently limited by the national frameworks of analysis,¹¹ as they largely view the state(s), rather than marriage participants, as agents of historical change. Moreover, by narrowly defining marriage as a legal agreement that only begins at contractualization, these studies overwhelmingly neglect the related transnational processes of coupling and courtship, which also served as an important source of intimate cross-border connections. Defining transnational marriage as a historical concept must therefore coincide with questions of the making of the nation-state, but it must be further investigated the extent to which marriage participants actually saw themselves as crossing borders and to what degree.

For these reasons, in this historical analysis, I employ the term *transnational marriage* over alternatives such as *bi-national* or *international marriage*—two terms that largely connote legal or diplomatic perspectives—and I draw on the intersecting methodologies of transnational history, cultural history, and emotions history. Here, rather than an active historical agent, the state is considered a non-static component

¹¹ Micol Seigel, "Beyond Compare: Comparative Method after the Transnational Turn," *Radical History Review* 2005, no. 91 (December 21, 2005): 62–90; Ian R Tyrrell, *Transnational Nation: United States History in Global Perspective Since 1789* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

of a larger global structure in which the historical actors—the marriage participants—must navigate. Rather than viewing marriage simply as a legal agreement that begins at contractualization, this project also examines the transnational spaces of extramarital coupling and courtship out of which transnational marriages emerged. Because the global/transnational turn led to the rethinking of the spatial dimension of history, I draw on the analytical concept of *transnational space*, which further allows researchers to move beyond national frameworks of history. An examination of these spaces remains important because they were spaces of both transnational entanglements and of cross-cultural negotiation. I, therefore, adopt and assess as a working definition of the concept of transnational marriage that of sociologists, Wen-Shan Yang and Melody Chia-Wen Lu, who in their work, *Asian Cross-Border Marriage Migration: Demographic Patterns and Social Issues*, maintain that the concept of transnational marriage situates more general *cross-border marriages*—in which geographical, national, racial, class, gender, or cultural borders are unspecified—within a context of wider transnational processes, networks, and spaces created by the actors themselves.¹²

Transnational Spaces of Marriage and Courtship

While British sociologist, Katharine Charsley, notes in the edited volume, *Transnational Marriage: New Perspectives from Europe and Beyond*, that one of

¹² Wen-Shan Yang and Melody Chia-Wen Lu, *Asian Cross-Border Marriage Migration: Demographic Patterns and Social Issues* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010). This definition was also adopted in the recent sociological edited volume, Katharine Charsley, *Transnational Marriage: New Perspectives from Europe and Beyond* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 7, in which British sociologist, Katharine Charsley attempted to standardize some of the relevant concepts as they pertained to the emerging but still interdisciplinary and fragmented field of transnational marriage.

the key themes in the literature on transnational marriage is the degree to which marriages can be understood as a strategically motivated practice,¹³ this analytical focus has often led researchers to reduce strategic motivation to socio-economic circumstance. I contend that such explanations are simply too narrow and largely remain embedded in national perspectives. For example, if the researcher begins with the question, why did wealthy American heiresses marry French nobility during the nineteenth century, the focus largely rests of the question of what is happening in New York that makes American women seek out Frenchmen. As such, the location of inquiry is inherently positioned on one side or the other and result in “push-pull” types of explanations that have largely been rooted in socio-economic circumstance. Therefore, rather than asking simply, how does the historian explain instances of marriages that transcended national boundaries in the past, based on the definition above, this work instead seeks out to examine the ways in which patterns of transnational marriage emerged out of cross-cultural encounters. This question repositions the location of inquiry from the perspective of one culture or another to the liminal space between them—transnational spaces and social networks out of which marriage emerged.

Here, the concept of *space* is defined not as geographical space but as a cultural space, which is created through human practices and arrays of social meaning.¹⁴ It is both a cross-cultural space of encounter and space of transnational sociability. When these cultural spaces are created beyond the limits of national

¹³ Katharine Charsley, ed., *Transnational Marriage: New Perspectives from Europe and Beyond* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 7.

¹⁴ Margrit Pernau, “Space and Emotion: Building to Feel,” *History Compass* 12, no. 7 (2014): 542.

boundaries and in transnational contexts, the notion that culture is tied to geographical places is called into question. While transnationalism has been broadly defined as ties and interactions linking people across nation-state borders, the social spaces of transnationality that produced transnational marriages go beyond mere spaces occupied by each group and comprised of a cultural *mélange*. In this way, I argue that the concept of transnational space can be further distinguished from postcolonial concepts of “hybrid” spaces, which often connote an equal balance that can be reduced to its component parts.¹⁵ Here, transnational space is a negotiated space, within which the actors often produced their own tastes, codes, and norms rather than simply combining them.

The following questions therefore, frame the categories of analysis employed here: How does the historian locate and map transnational spaces of marriage and courtship? What are the cultural and emotional dimensions of those spaces? And finally, how did marriage participants conceptualize the spaces they occupied and the boundaries they crossed?

In order to map and analyze transnational spaces that produced marriage during the nineteenth and twentieth century, this work draws on descriptions of social events found in French and American press, travel literature, personal papers and accounts, and guest lists. By examining where and how couples met and courted one another, these sources provide an important glimpse into transnational social networks and their cultural rituals as well as how marriage participants perceived, experienced, and interpreted these spaces. Through a deeper reading of these descriptions and cultural rituals, I seek to further uncover the complex diversity of

¹⁵ Homi K Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London; New York: Routledge, 1994).

intimate cultural and emotional experiences that coincide with the practices of courtship and marriage—experiences that are even more multi-faceted in this transnational context.

Emotional Evolution of Marriage and Courtship

The cultural and emotional dimensions of the spaces that produced transnational marriage are significant because prior to the second half of the nineteenth century, the practice of marriage had already begun to undergo a transformative evolution from marriage as an economic or political agreement to marriage as personal or emotion-based engagement. While the period under analysis here is not long enough to provide a comprehensive study of changing cultural understandings of marriage as a multi-sided, multi-dimensional social phenomenon or the making of emotions such as “romantic love,”¹⁶ an examination of nineteenth- and twentieth-century transnational marriages must, nonetheless, be placed within the broader shift of changing emotional standards as they relate to the practice of marriage.

According to its most traditional religious definition, marriage was both monogamous and indissoluble—two qualities that have been traced back to Jewish and Greco-Roman law.¹⁷ In addition, prior to the eighteenth century, marriage also served an important institutional function in early modern societies.¹⁸ As Coontz explains, “For centuries marriage did much of the work that markets and

¹⁶ Coontz, *Marriage, a History*; William M Reddy, *The Making of Romantic Love: Longing and Sexuality in Europe, South Asia, and Japan, 900-1200 CE* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

¹⁷ Seidel Menchi, Eisenach, and Donahue, *Marriage in Europe*, 33–34.

¹⁸ For a region-specific analysis of marriage practices and the laws regulating them in various European societies from a comparative perspective see: Seidel Menchi, Eisenach, and Donahue, *Marriage in Europe*.

governments do today. It organized the production and distribution of goods and people. It set up political, economic and military alliances. It coordinated the division of labor... [and] orchestrated people's rights and obligations."¹⁹ Thus, marriage existed as both an economic and political institution in which cooperative networks expanded beyond the immediate family, and it was used as a way to not only increase one's familial labor force but also to consolidate and maintain wealth through subsequent generations. This strategically motivated institution also served important political functions that allowed European monarchs to merge resources and forge political alliances. In this way, the practice of marriage was conceived as a major investment, and great care was often taken in the arrangement of matches by the ruling class.²⁰ After these early political and economic unions were contracted, both parties rarely occupied the same intimate familial spaces and often went their separate ways as they engaged in everyday rituals.

However, between the fourteenth and nineteenth century, marriage practices gradually underwent fundamental changes as understandings of emotion-based coupling began to infiltrate marriage practices; although, it should be noted that this evolution was neither linear nor was it marked by clear watershed moments in the past. The earliest origins of these cultural notions of emotion-based coupling can be found in medieval France. As William Reddy shows in his work, *The Making of Romantic Love: Longing and Sexuality in Europe, South Asia, and Japan*, the "courtly love" of the troubadours likely developed in opposition to Christian

¹⁹ Coontz, *Marriage, a History*, 9.

²⁰ Kimberly Schutte, *Women, Rank, and Marriage in the British Aristocracy, 1485-2000: An Open Elite?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 88.

doctrine of physical or sexual desire as sinful.²¹ As the social and cultural relationships with the Church continued to change through the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century reforms, a variety of coupling and marriage practices and values developed in Western Europe. However, as both Reddy and Coontz note, these earliest sentiments of courtly love were more often reserved for mistresses rather than for wives.²²

According to Coontz, the most rapid and observable shifts from what had been economically and politically motivated marriage practices to marriages based on notions of what would come to be described as “romantic love” and “happiness” occurred during the eighteenth century—a shift which she attributes to not only the rise of the market economy and wage labor but also to the dissolution of absolutism during the Age of Revolutions.²³ According to her, the economic shift to wage labor meant that men were no longer required to wait to inherit land or business, and with alternatives to domestic service, women were no longer required to live in the home of domestic masters.²⁴ Entangled with the permeation of enlightened thinking, these economic shifts led to the championing of individualism and the insistence that social relationships be based on reason and justice rather than force. In this way, she explains, marriage as an institution became viewed more and more as “private agreement” that centered on emotional needs or emotional gratification of both participants—albeit, still having “public consequences.”²⁵ By the end of the eighteenth century, she concludes, “people had begun to adopt the radical idea that

²¹ Reddy, *The Making of Romantic Love*, 5.

²² Coontz, *Marriage, a History*, 128.

²³ *Ibid.*, 7, 148.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 146.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 148.

love should be the most fundamental reason for marriage and that young people should be free to choose their marriage partners on the basis of love.”²⁶ The broader implications of this emotional shift meant that public forms of coupling and courtship rituals become essential additions to marital practices. It should also be noted that emotion-based marriage did not equate to egalitarian partnerships. Contrarily, the permeation of notions of romantic love into marital partnerships further forced marriage participants into stricter gender roles, and the husbands’ control and protection over their wives was reaffirmed.²⁷

Yvonne Rieker, in her work, “Love Crossing Borders: Changing Patterns of Courtship and Gender Relations among Italian Migrants in Germany,” likewise recognizes these emotional shifts; however, she dates the most fundamental changes across all social segments of society in the beginning of the nineteenth century. Before this, she argues, forms of courtly love remained limited to members of the nobility and intellectual elite. She explains: “To pursue the ideal of romantic love in one’s life implied leisure and educational and financial resources as well as integration into urban society or the possibility of traveling to augment the circle of candidates for one’s affection and passion.”²⁸ However, Roderick Philips notes in his work, *Untying the Knot: A Short History Of Divorce*, that these fundamental changes were more indicative of late-eighteenth- rather than nineteenth-century shifts. Here, he points to one study by Margaret Darrow, who found that prior to the 1770s, only nine percent of those cited in petitions for dispensations from the

²⁶ Ibid., 5.

²⁷ Reddy, *The Making of Romantic Love*, 21.

²⁸ Yvonne Rieker, “Love Crossing Borders: Changing Patterns of Courtship and Gender Relations among Italian Migrants in Germany,” in *Intimacy and Italian Migration: Gender and Domestic Lives in a Mobile World* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), 123.

Catholic Church in Montauban, France argued that a marriage should be based on emotional attachment, but after the 1770s, forty-one percent thought so.²⁹ Contrary to Rieker's claim of elite exclusivity, Phillips also remarks that what was most notable about this pattern, was that it was representative across all social classes – peasants, bourgeoisie, and nobility.

While Coontz admits that marrying for political and economic advantage largely remained the norm until the end of eighteenth century, secular and enlightened understanding of marriage as emotion-based had, by that time, largely become a social or cultural *ideal*, and personal choice of partners had largely replaced more traditional forms of arranged marriages.³⁰ Kimberly Schutte in her work, *Women, Rank, and Marriage in the British Aristocracy, 1485-2000: An Open Elite?*, also agrees that by the nineteenth century, overtly arranged marriages among European aristocratic families were no longer seen as socially acceptable and that emotional aspects of potential unions were of great concern to the aristocratic mothers.³¹ However, that was not to say that socio-economic factors were discounted entirely. The maintenance of social position continued to be important among the elite classes, and individuals still largely married within their social echelons.

While the tension between emotional and economic motivations remains prevalent in historical examinations of marriage, this dichotomy can sometimes be counterproductive. When examining transnational marriage motivations of the

²⁹ Roderick Phillips, *Untying the Knot: A Short History of Divorce* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 108.

³⁰ Coontz, *Marriage, a History*, 7.

³¹ Schutte, *Women, Rank, and Marriage in the British Aristocracy*, 103–4.

nineteenth and twentieth century, socio-economic and emotional considerations should not be viewed as mutually exclusive.³² In fact, when one married within their own social class, these socio-economic and emotional considerations did not even necessarily exist in opposition to one another. That means that one could marry someone who was considered to be a “good match” and still have expectations that the marriage would be based on “love” and “happiness”—even if those notions of love and happiness differed from their current cultural conceptions.

Culture and Emotions as Categories of Analysis

Following the cultural turn, research interests shifted to other aspects of experience that had previously been perceived as fixed and ahistorical; this included emotions. In order to trace and analyze the changing norms and rules of feelings in the past, historians of emotions have drawn on debates in sociology, anthropology, psychology and psychoanalysis in order to show that emotions not only had larger social and cultural implications but they were also shaped public and personal realities.³³ This social constructionist theory of emotions establishes that emotions such as “romantic love” and “happiness” were shaped by the societies in which they were embedded.³⁴ Despite criticisms that constructionist theories lend the risk of

³² Alison Shaw and Katharine Charsely, “Rishtas: Adding Emotion to Strategy in Understanding British Pakistani Transnational Marriages,” *Global Networks* 6, no. 4 (2006): 405–21. In their examination of British Pakistani marriages, Shaw and Charsley go even further to argue that even traditionally arranged marriages were not void of emotion. They argue that marriages were, in fact, arranged in order to safeguard happiness.

³³ Susan J. Matt and Peter N. Stearns, *Doing Emotions History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014), 1.

³⁴ Alain Corbin and Pascal Ory, *Une histoire des sens* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2016); Anne-Emmanuelle Demartini et al., *Émotions contemporaines: XIXe-XXIe siècles* (Paris: A. Colin, 2014); Matt and Stearns, *Doing Emotions History*; William M Reddy, *The*

emotions becoming an unstable signifier onto which ever-proliferating meanings can be inscribed, viewing the past through the prism of emotions yields important new narratives. Yet, employing emotions as a useful category of analysis within transnational perspectives requires that the relationship between culture and emotions be more closely considered. Rather than a comparative, *longe durée* study of changing cultural understandings of marriage as a practice or the making of romantic love, such as those that William Reddy and Stephanie Coontz have produced,³⁵ this work is instead concerned with the emotional dimensions of different transnational spaces in the past, or more specifically, the ways in which emotional standards shaped interactions among groups across national and cultural borders. I, therefore, pose the following questions: If emotions are constructed, how do emotions like “love” and “longing” differ within transnational and transcultural spaces? Also, within this spatial analysis, to what extent can transnational sociability be considered a site of emotion?

In this work, emotions are employed as a category of analysis rather than simply a narrative device in order to show how complex cultural meanings within transnational spaces were experienced on personal levels among transnational-marriage participants. Because emotions manifested in both encounter and representations of the “other”, I also propose for further consideration the extent to which *othering* can be considered as not only a cultural process, but also an emotional one, in which notions of perceived cultural differences were not only marked but also provoked certain emotional responses. In this way, I also seek to

Navigation of Feeling a Framework for the History of Emotions (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

³⁵ Reddy, *The Making of Romantic Love*; Coontz, *Marriage, a History*.

untangle the cultural and emotional processes in which the “other” was constructed in a way that made them desirable. In order to overcome the analytical constraints of the term *romantic love* and conceptualize this wider range of emotions, I adopt William Reddy’s concept of *longing for association*—a term which overcomes the dichotomies created when the socially constructed emotion of romantic love is set against notions of more physiological feeling of desire—and, by placing in the transnational context, expand it to *longing for association with the “other.”*³⁶

For the historian, using emotions as a category of analysis in examining personal and intimate relationships is not without methodological limitations. This is especially the case when examining nineteenth-century elite transnational communities in which most contemporary subjects often saw outward displays of public emotion as contrary to proper behavior. Therefore, because personal accounts about intimate couple and family lives are scarce, the researcher is required to engage in a re-reading of very select memoirs, such as that of Boni de Castellane, which provides an important glimpse into transnational elite courtship practices, emotions, personal choice, and individual agency even if it cannot be considered representative of all cases of titled-marriage during that time.

Conversely, the emotional dimensions of transnational spaces that were manifested in both encounter and representation are far more accessible. The evidence of the cultural and emotional processes of encounter and courting in transnational spaces is best noted in ways in which marriage participants from the two societies described one another in varied forms of media. An examination of these discourses found in the press, French and American literary works, travel

³⁶ Reddy, *The Making of Romantic Love*, 6.

literature, and personal accounts demonstrates not only how notions of difference were marked but also how these perceived differences provoked certain emotional responses.

Finally, the personal accounts of courtship and marriage processes during the world wars are far more numerous as transnational-marriage participants were more likely to speak openly about intimate experiences and relationship, especially in the context of war. These stories of wartime encounter, courtship, and marriage have been captured in unpublished memoirs, self-published memoirs, letters, interviews collected by contemporary journalists, and detailed in the invaluable oral histories that have preceded this work. Because the wars forced to the forefront a discourse of new emotional dimensions, these numerous personal accounts from both men and women allow the historian to push the theory of emotions further than nineteenth-century sources allow.

Organization

The temporal comparison that follows is divided into two main parts. The first examines elite titled marriages between wealthy American heiresses and French aristocrats, which largely took place during the second half of the nineteenth century. The second part examines marriages in the context of the world wars when borders were far more solidified between American soldiers and local French women. For the purpose of the comparison, the two types of transnational marriage are separated topically; although, it should be noted that they overlapped chronologically. Further, while changing social definitions of marriage over time have led to the social recognition of a variety of coupling practices (cohabitating

without marriage, polyamorous relationships, and same-sex marriage, for example), the legal and social contexts of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have left researchers with few sources on these other types of unions. This study, therefore, recognizes that not all couples had equal access to marriage and is, for this reason, mostly concerned with heterosexual couples of two that were contracted between French and American citizens who were involved in legally, religiously, or socially recognized relationships. This work also centers on the examination of noticeable transnational-marriage patterns between France and the United States, to which exceptions existed. In order to maintain the methodological focus on the temporal comparison, those exceptions have largely been excluded. The patterns examined here are also gender-specific. This gender imbalance is not a categorical selection, but was instead the result of various external structures that facilitated movement in the past, and is largely representative of those patterns. These structures will be further addressed in the chapters that follow.

Because historians have generally treated these two patterns of marriage separately, each part is opened with an introductory section that situates the proposed analytical categories of transnational space, culture, and emotion within its existing historiography. Each of these historiographical frames is then followed by two chapters—one, which maps the transnational spaces and communities that produced marriage and one, which further examines the cultural and emotional dimensions of these transnational spaces of encounter and courtship. In both parts, I seek to examine the ways in which marriages emerged out of cross-cultural encounter by illuminating how notions of cultural difference were marked and how these perceived differences provoked certain emotional responses that shaped the

marital, familial, and social experiences of transnational-marriage participants. In my analysis, I further place those cross-cultural encounters within three broader global contexts: 1) the shift from nineteenth-century nation-making to twentieth-century hypernationalism, 2) the changing cultural relations between France and the United States, and 3) the changing emotional standards as they relate to the practices of marriage and courtship.

In the first part on titled marriages, I specifically challenge existing notions that marriages between wealthy American heiresses and French nobility were purely the result of strategic socio-economic calculations on the part of American women and their families. By examining the making of elite transnational communities in the context of both nineteenth-century economic development and transatlantic mobility, I argue in the first chapter that these marriages were instead, the result of social interaction within elite transnational social networks and spaces that existed between the United States and Europe, among those with largely unrestricted transatlantic mobility and who chiefly identified with others of similar economic and social status rather than national origin. Here, I will show how elite transnational social events such as costume balls and dinners came to serve as both a stage for Franco-American cross-cultural encounters and a cultural mechanism for elite coupling. In this chapter, I adopt the term *transnational Society* to describe those members of an elite high society who lived very privileged lives not limited by national borders and who occupied elite transnational social spaces in the Atlantic world. These social networks largely included wealthy Americans from urban centers such as New York, Boston, and Philadelphia; royalty, nobility, and aristocracy from around Europe; as well as diplomatic elites. In an attempt to avoid

replacing a national frame with a bi-national one, it should be noted that while this work is an examination of Franco-American marriages, this transnational high Society was not limited to French and American members, and therefore at times, I also draw on the writings and words of members who resided in other important urban centers such as London.

In the second chapter, I go further to examine the cultural and emotional dimensions of the transnational spaces that produced elite, titled marriages by examining cultural othering as an emotional process. Here, I argue that at the intersection of encounter, elite class-consciousness, and transnational coupling stood a profoundly emotional experience, and because that experience was so intertwined with cross-cultural interaction, the marriages that emerged from these spaces can be, in many respects, characterized as even more (rather than less) emotional than their elite, national counterparts. Within the transnational context, Franco-American cultural interactions, exchange, and the process of *positive othering* facilitated sentiments of longing for the “other” among marriage participants.

The second part on marriages in the context of the world wars continues with the application of the analytical categories of transnational space, culture, and emotion to the changing contexts of the twentieth century, and I argue that despite increasingly seeing their own identities through national lenses and despite changing cultural relationships between France and the United States, notions of perceived difference remained the driving force of transnational coupling. The third chapter, “Longing for the Other Through the War,” begins by contextualizing the broader temporal comparison of nineteenth-century elite marriages and twentieth-century wartime marriages by examining some of the wider global changes brought on by

the world wars. These changes shifted the context in which wartime encounter took place by producing a situation in which marriage participants would not only come from the working and middle classes but would also have an increased tendency to self-describe through national frameworks. In this setting, notions of difference were further heightened and cross-cultural encounter during wartime was dissimilar from that out of which nineteenth-century elite marriages emerged. The processes of othering during wartime encounter were also very different for American soldiers and French women. For American soldiers, rather than the elite high cultural forms of the nineteenth century, cultural fascination with the French was laced with notions of romance, sex, and pleasure. These notions were subsequently transcribed onto French women. For French women, emotions of war such as fear, uncertainty, and the longing for stability under German invasion and occupation during World War II were soon contrasted by the overwhelming excitement and euphoria of liberation. This drastic emotional shift along with what was perceived as a striking and curious difference of American soldiers led young French women to actively engage American soldiers in their courting customs.

The fourth chapter, “Transnational Courtship in Spaces of War”, shifts from wartime othering as an emotional process to a spatial analysis of transnational courtship and marriage and attempts to reconcile the relative absence of a transnational community or social network among these marriage participants by locating and defining new transnational spaces that were created during the world wars and by examining how those transnational spaces of courtship and marriage existed in opposition to national spaces. One of the most important of those transnational spaces, I argue, was Red Cross dances, where other forms of mediated

cultural cues associated with dancing not only compensated for lack of common language among participants but also became important cultural devices for transnational coupling and courting rituals.

This final chapter also goes further to contextualize wartime Franco-American marriages within broader themes of sexualization and emotionalization of marriage as a social practice. While the emotional evolution of marriage was not entirely linear, by the mid-twentieth century, that marriage was recognized as both an emotionally based union and a free and individual choice can no longer be doubted in either French or American societies. Further, in context of both wars, both societies experienced a temporary relaxation of moral and patriarchal standards as they had previously been enforced. Therefore, new dimensions of wartime encounter led to numerous intimate and sexual relationships that provide another interesting layer to cross-cultural encounter. According to one Army report produced in 1922, seventy-one percent of American soldiers claimed to have had sexual relationships with French women while serving in the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF), but only a fraction of these intimate encounters resulted in marriage.³⁷ Therefore, in this chapter, I also ask what conditions needed to be present in order for a Franco-American couple involved in an intimate relationship to take matrimonial vows.

In the end, I conclude that even though marriage participants from each of the two patterns conceived of the national and cultural boundaries that separated them in very different ways, notions of and attraction to that difference largely

³⁷ George Walker, *Venereal Disease in the American Expeditionary Forces* (Baltimore: Medical Standard Book Co., 1922), 101.

remained the driving force of marriage and coupling processes in both contexts. Here, by participating in a transnational marriage, one bound oneself permanently not only to one's spouse but also to the culture of that spouse. Motivations for transnational marriage were, therefore, strategic and based on preconceived notions of what they believed the other culture to be.

Part One. ‘Trading Titles For Treasure’?: Elite Marriages During The Nineteenth Century³⁸

INTRODUCTION

As long as the modern nation-states of France and the United States have existed, people have constructed families across their borders. For example, in 1782, Elizabeth Livingston of New York married the Comte de Mosloy, attaché to the French Minister. During the French Revolution, Edmond-Charles Genêt, French ambassador to the United States, married Cornelia Clinton, the daughter of New York Governor George Clinton (1794), and soon after, Betsy Patterson of Baltimore married Jérôme Bonaparte, brother of Emperor Napoleon I (1803). In the early nineteenth century, Maria Bingham of Philadelphia first married Jacques Alexandre, Comte de Tilly and later wed the Marquis de Blaizel (1826), whereas Prince Napoleon Lucien Charles Murat married Caroline Georgina Fraser of Charleston (1831).³⁹ While these early marriages likely occurred by chance and in relatively

³⁸ P. Harvey Middleton, “Dukedoms for Ducrats: Europe Is \$900,000,000 Ahead of America in Trading of Titles for Treasure,” *Omaha World Herald*, May 30, 1909. Portions of the preliminary results of the research presented in this part were published as an earlier version in Nicole Léopoldie, “Désirer l’autre : Mariages franco-américains et sociabilité transnationale à la fin de XIXe siècle,” *Revue Recherches Familiales*, no. 14, (January 2017), pp. 107-118.

³⁹ Elizabeth Eliot, *Heiresses and Coronets* (New York: McDowell, 1959), 14; William Thomas Roberts Saffell, *The Bonaparte-Patterson Marriage in 1803, and the Secret Correspondence on the Subject Never Before Made Public* (Philadelphia: The Proprietor, 1873), v; Comte Alexandre de Tilly, *Mémoires du comte Alexandre de Tilly, pour servir à l’histoire des mœurs de la fin du 18me siècle* (Paris: Chez les Marchands de Nouveautés, 1828), 247.

small numbers, as the nineteenth century continued—a century marked by growing nationalism and heightened boundary-making—a noticeable pattern of transnational marriages began to emerge between wealthy American women and European aristocrats. According to contemporary American commentator Gustavus Meyers, by 1909, five hundred American heiresses had entered into transnational marriages with titled nobility and had taken nearly \$220 million out of the United States to Europe.⁴⁰ While these women entered into matrimonial contracts with nobility from all over Europe, an overwhelming majority of these marriage contracts were established with men from Great Britain and France.

Even though these mixed marriages were not entirely exceptional, they remained (and in many ways continue to remain) exceptional in public discourse as contemporaries and historians struggled to explain their occurrence. For example, in January of 1887 the American newspaper *Town Topics: Journal of Society* published the following story:

Direct from the banks of the Seine: M. le Duc de Charenton is a nobleman of the type common in the palmy days of the Second Empire. Paris laughed at his eccentricities then, and Paris is laughing still. M. le Duc has always been a worshiper at the shrine of beauty in the careless, happy, French manner, which changes the idol, but never the shrine, as often as the sun tops the spire of Notre Dame. And this is why Paris has dug him up from the obscurity of played-out nobility to laugh at him now. This gay old dog of Napoleon's court has been living for years 'au troisième', apparently dead broke, in a slum at Montmartre. He has been seen at odd intervals late at night on the Boulevards, evidently on the prowl: but he has always dodged old acquaintances, and was generally written off by society as a bad debt. What, then, was the surprise of the strollers in the Bois the other day, when M. de Charenton resurrected himself in a brand

⁴⁰ Gustavus Myers, *History of the Great American Fortunes*, vol. 3 (New York: The Modern Library, 1909); Gabriel A. Almond, *Plutocracy and Politics in New York City* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1998), 116.

new chariot, exquisitely horsed, and accompanied by a charming blond, whose accents were suggestive of Chicago. It seems the M. le Duc has courted, and has been successfully courted by one of those ladies who tried for a title in London last year... must be a relief to all her friends who know how much she wanted it.⁴¹

Likewise, in 1895, American novelist William H. Chambliss made the following claims about these titled European husbands:

A Chinese exclusion act we already have. What we need now is a European exclusion act... The general exclusion act should contain an article specially designed for the unconditional exclusion of penniless princes, lords, barons, counts, and all other cheap-titled adventurers who, like Prince Andre Poniatowski and Count de Castellane, are likely to be sent over here in the future by the same board of matrimonial brokers that sent these two sweet-scented "noblemen" to marry rich parvenueuses on percentage... The Chinaman who goes to the market to purchase a wife always gets more for his money than does the American heiress who goes shopping for a titled husband... In the name of common sense, will our novel-reading girls never learn that a foreign title amounts to nothing more than the paper it's written on.⁴²

Even French novelist Victorien du Saussay created a similar image of these Franco-American marriages in his novel, *La traite des blancs : mariages franco-américains : roman de passion*:

Et comme elle a mis au Mont-de-Piété ses derniers bijoux, la noblesse vend le diadème au plus offrant. Elle se livre, comme une catin. Et à qui? A qui la noblesse s'allie-t-elle et se vend-elle? A tout ce qu'il y a de douteux sur terre. L'Amérique; refuge de la lie de l'humanité, productrice de milliardaires aux origines inavouables, fils et petits-fils de voleurs, d'assassins, de déclassés impunis, achète pour quelques poignées d'or infâme les plus fières couronnés du vieux monde.

⁴¹ "Saunterings," *Town Topics: Journal of Society*, January 27, 1887, New York Genealogical and Biographical Society Collection, New York Public Library.

⁴² William H. Chambliss and Laura E. Foster, *Chambliss Diary, Or, Society as It Really Is* (New York: Chambliss & Co., 1895), 15.

Pourquoi... les jolies riches américaines croient-elles nécessaire de se faire épouser par les gentils hommes de la vieille Europe, au lieu de rester Américaines? ... Ici, une jeune fille riche ... dit “je vaudrais tant de rentes”; et, immédiatement, de toutes parts, on lui fait la cour, on se bat pour la conquérir; elle n’a que l’embarras du choix ... Que pensez-vous de cette sorte d’union marquise? demanda le sculpteur. C’est excellent. Ainsi, moi, j’ai épousé le marquis sur un bateau qui allait du Havre à New York. ... Je n’ai pas épousé un mari, mais un gérant de ma fortune... et je trouve que j’ai fait une bonne affaire.⁴³

(And since it has put its last jewels at the Mont-de-Piété, the nobility sells the coronet to the highest bidder. It surrenders itself like a whore. And to whom? To whom does the nobility ally and sell itself? To all that is questionable on earth. America—refuge of the dregs of humanity, producer of billionaires with unspeakable origins, sons and grandsons of thieves, of assassins, wretched, unchastened criminals—buys for a few handfuls of infamous gold the proudest crowned of the old world.

Why...do pretty rich American women believe it necessary to marry gentlemen of old Europe rather than remaining American? Here [in Europe] a young wealthy lady says, “I am worth a lot of money,” and immediately, from everywhere, they [nobility] all want to court her, they all battle to conquer her, and she only has to choose from among them... What do you think about this type of union Marchioness? asked the sculptor. It’s excellent. I married the marquis on a boat that was going from Le Havre to New York... I did not marry a husband, but rather an administrator of my fortune... and I think that I made a good deal.)⁴⁴

Given the nature of these passages, it is little wonder that the few historians who have taken on the subject of nineteenth-century titled marriages (focusing often on Anglo-American cases) have come to describe them as little more than socio-economic arrangements, in which European titles were exchanged for American

⁴³ Victorien Du Saussay, *La traite des blancs: mariages franco-américains : roman de passion* (Paris: Librairie des publications modernes, 1900), 17.

⁴⁴ Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

dollars through marital contracts.⁴⁵ Frederic Cople Jaher, for example, in his 1975 work, *The Rich, the Wellborn, and the Powerful: Elites and Upper Classes in History*, argues that these marriages, which he describes as a caricature of the shaky pretensions of fashionable New York, were impelled by status anxieties of the *nouveaux riches* and were, therefore, arranged with European nobility in order to “fortify mediocre genealogies.”⁴⁶ Likewise and more recently, transnational historian Thomas Adam agrees labeling such unions the “result of purely economic and social calculations” in his 2009 work, *Buying Respectability: Philanthropy and Urban Society in Transnational Perspective, 1840s to 1930s*.⁴⁷ According to Adam, these women married impoverished nobility to whom they promised financial support in exchange for social honor in an artificial New York High Society, which had been founded on social prestige and exclusion rather than on more tangible political or economic power.

Upon closer examination, however, one quickly finds that these socio-economic explanations are limited for several reasons. First, the title-for-treasure-exchange paradigm is based largely on problematic contemporary sources such as

⁴⁵ Ruth Brandon, *The Dollar Princesses* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980); Dana Cooper, *Informal Ambassadors: American Women, Transatlantic Marriages, and Anglo-American Relations, 1865-1945* (Kent State University Press, 2014); Nancy L. Green, *The Other Americans in Paris: Businessmen, Countesses, Wayward Youth, 1880-1941* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014); Elisabeth Kehoe, *The Titled Americans: Three American Sisters and the British Aristocratic World into Which They Married* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2004); Gail MacColl and Carol Wallace, *To Marry an English Lord* (New York: Workman Pub., 1989); Frances McNeil, *Sisters of Fortune* (Sutton: Severn House, 2007); Maureen E Montgomery, “*Gilded Prostitution*”: *Status, Money, and Transatlantic Marriages, 1870-1914* (London; New York: Routledge, 1989).

⁴⁶ Frederic Cople Jaher, “Style and Status: High Society in Late-Nineteenth-Century New York,” in *The Rich, the Wellborn, and the Powerful: Elites and Upper Classes in History*, ed. Frederic Cople Jaher (Secaucus, N.J.: Citadel Press, 1975), 258–84.

⁴⁷ Thomas Adam, *Buying Respectability: Philanthropy and Urban Society in Transnational Perspective, 1840s to 1930s* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 94.

the popular American press, which often attempted to capitalize on the most scandalous tales. These articles, such as the one quoted above from *Town Topics*, employed popular gendered classifications of men as emotionless and in search of only money rather than companionship and women as having little else besides money, lending to a need for a husband, thereby perpetuating the notion of these marriages as title-for-dollar exchanges. Other accounts of these marriages were largely based on the views of contemporary non-participants, like Gustavus Meyers and William H. Chambliss, who remained outside of the internal, private space of these marriages and whose critiques largely rested on the juxtaposition of American republican ideals with European monarchy and aristocracy.

There are further limitations to the titles themselves. In these marriages, very large sums of money were exchanged for little in return. The American publication *Titled Americans: A List of American Ladies Who Have Married Foreigners of Rank*, issued in March 1890, warned American girls seeking noble titles through marriage of the following: “These honorific distinctions are, however, not officially recognized in this country, and their use is not in accordance with the democratic institutions and social systems of the United States.”⁴⁸ Because these titles were neither recognized in the United States nor did they extend to the rest of the women’s family, obtaining European titles did not translate into any additional political or economic power for American women or their families.

Additionally, when compared with their British counterparts, French titles, in particular, were especially problematic. Both feudalism and titles of nobility had

⁴⁸ *Titled Americans. A List of American Ladies Who Have Married Foreigners of Rank*. (New York: Street & Smith, 1890), 11.

been explicitly abolished in 1790 by decree of the National Assembly. Even though in 1804 Napoleon reinstated the system and began creating his own titles, neither feudalism nor the judicial status of a privileged *noblesse* were ever restored, and post-Revolutionary France became marked by a long tradition of well-articulated, anti-aristocratic sentiment and discourse. Although viewed by many as markers of an elite and privileged social class, by 1835 French titles had become completely separated from landed claims and continued to exist merely as hereditary appendages to a family name. When the July Monarchy was overthrown in 1848, titles were again abolished, and then again restored in 1852 by Napoleon III during the period of the Second Empire, but again without pre-Revolutionary legal privilege or precedence. Finally, upon the establishment of the Third Republic in 1870, the French state allowed for the continued existence of titles of nobility as an appendage of a legal name—a status that continues to remain in effect.⁴⁹

Nancy Green argues in her recent work, *The Other Americans in Paris*, that even though the economic and political power of French titles had been waning by the nineteenth century, it was their symbolic power within French society that persisted and provided incentives for transnational marriages.⁵⁰ Here, she points to the work of Arno J. Mayer, *The Persistence of the Old Regime*, which argues that in the years leading to the First World War, European post-feudal nobility held great

⁴⁹ For more on the history of the French nobility see: Philippe du Puy de Clinchamps and Patrice du Puy de Clinchamps, *La noblesse* (Paris: L'Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux, 1996); Alain Texier, *Qu'est-ce que la noblesse?* (Paris: Le Grand livre du mois, 2000); Jean Tulard, *Napoléon et la noblesse d'Empire: avec la liste des membres de la noblesse impériale, 1808-1815* (Paris: Tallandier, 2003).

⁵⁰ Green, *The Other Americans in Paris*, 89.

power or influence over both civil society and foreign affairs.⁵¹ However, others have questioned to what extent Mayer's argument could be applied to all of Europe at the time. While Edward R. Tannenbaum, for example, largely agrees with Mayer's assessment, he suggests that it appears more convincing in the cases of Central Europe and Great Britain since the landed aristocracy in these territories retained its influence through landed privilege as well as cultural and social prestige and political skill despite changing economic structures. However, in the case of France, he claims that Meyer's arguments of aristocratic persistence are less convincing.⁵² James J. Sheehan also disagrees with Meyer and argues that French aristocratic power in foreign and internal affairs was minimal.⁵³ The late-nineteenth-century French count Boniface (Boni) de Castellane seems to have offered confirmation of the latter arguments. In his turn-of-the-century memoir he complained:

French society has undergone many changes... and through not understanding the necessity for judicious selection, it developed into the Capernaum of today... It is the same in the country as well as in the capital; old tastes and pursuits have no place in modern life... A château is often another name for a hotel, its original purpose has disappeared, and our peasants have either become indifferent to us or have openly declared themselves our enemies... Our former prestige has suffered terrible loss.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Arno J. Mayer, *La persistance de l'ancien régime: L'europe de 1848 a la grande guerre* (Paris: Flammarion, 1983).

⁵² Edward R. Tannenbaum, "Reviewed Work: *The Persistence of the Old Régime. Europe to the Great War* by Arno J. Mayer," *The American Historical Review* 87, no. 2 (April 1982): 439–40.

⁵³ James J. Sheehan, "Reviewed Work: *The Persistence of the Old Régime. Europe to the Great War* by Arno J. Mayer," *Social History* 8, no. 1 (January 1983): 111–12.

⁵⁴ Boni de Castellane, *How I Discovered America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1924), 107–8.

Green claims that the political position of nobility in France did not impact the fascination of Americans with French titles.⁵⁵ Therefore, one would assume, as Jaher and Adam have, that for American women, the attraction to French titles took the form of social and cultural capital.⁵⁶ While the purpose of this chapter is not to minimize the social symbolism involved in the obtaining of noble titles by Americans, I do maintain that the American perceptions of French titles, in particular, must be further questioned. Similar to the complaints of Boni de Castellane, many American visitors and residents in France remarked on the declining position of the French aristocracy. Harriett Beecher Stowe, for example, claimed in 1854 on her tour through imperial France that “no country has been swept cleaner of aristocratic institutions, and the old bastilles and prisons of tyranny.”⁵⁷ Likewise elite, American novelist and established member of Parisian Society, Edith Wharton later confirmed that “if in those days any authentic member of the Faubourg Saint-Germain had been asked what really constituted Paris [S]ociety, the answer would undoubtedly have been: ‘There is no Paris [S]ociety any longer—there is just a welter of people from heaven knows where’... The old social conventions [of Paris] were tottering or already demolished.”⁵⁸ Because of the various nineteenth-century regime changes in France—each accompanied by the creation of its own titles—Americans considered the status that accompanied French

⁵⁵ Green, *The Other Americans in Paris*, 89.

⁵⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986); Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, ed. Randal Johnson, 1st edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

⁵⁷ Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Sunny Memories of Foreign Lands*, vol. 2 (Boston: Phillips, Sampson, 1854), 410.

⁵⁸ Edith Wharton, *A Backward Glance* (New York; London: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1934), 259.

titles to be less stable in comparison to their English counterparts, whose holders seemed to maintain more cultural and social prestige, as Tannenbaum has suggested. Therefore, while marriages to British nobility, like that of Consuela Vanderbilt to the Duke of Marlborough, were admired and portrayed as storybook romances, marriages to French nobility were often looked at with suspicion and contempt.⁵⁹

American women hoping to find a noble husband would not have been unaware of this perception of French titles. *Titled Americans*, which also published a section that was comprised of “a carefully compiled list of Peers who are supposed to be eager to lay their coronets, and incidentally their hearts, at the feet of the all-conquering American girl”, warned of the untrustworthiness of French titles:

In France, titles at the present moment are somewhat at a discount. While on the one hand there are the representatives of those grand old families, which formerly constituted the very kernel of European “noblesse,” there are on the other hand thousands of persons who have, without the slightest authority, adopted titles and names to which they have no right. It is true that there is a law in France which ordains that no one shall adopt a nobiliary title or even adorn his button-hole with a foreign order without having previously obtained a permit in due form to do so from the Grande Chancellerie of the Order of the Legion of Honor; and infraction of the ordinance is punishable by both fine and imprisonment. But since the overthrow of the empire and the abolition of monarchy in France, no steps have been taken by the government to enforce the law, and people ornament their names with any title which suit their fancy.⁶⁰

Contrarily, it boasted: “English titles enjoy greater consideration, both at home and abroad, than those conferred by any other State.”⁶¹ Similarly to the claims made in

⁵⁹ Harvey A. Levenstein, *Seductive Journey: American Tourists in France from Jefferson to the Jazz Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 193.

⁶⁰ *Titled Americans*, 21–22.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 24.

Titled Americans, Richard Harding Davis, American journalist and novelist, also warned in his work, *About Paris*, that French titles should not be sought after:

The rich fathers of young girls who are sacrificed should go into the business with a more accurate knowledge of what they are buying... they have not taken the pains to study the question of titles, and as long as a man is a count or a prince, they inquire no further... There are, as a matter of fact, only a very few titles worth buying, and in selecting the choice should always lie between one of England and one of Germany. An English earl is the best the American heiress can reasonably hope for, and after him a husband with a German title is very desirable. These might be rated as “sure” and “safe” investments. But these French titles created by Napoleon or ... created by the Papal Court... are not really worthwhile. Theirs are not titles, as someone has said, they are epitaphs.⁶²

Yet, in 1892 the *Social Register of New York* listed thirty-one titled American women, and of those, twenty-one of them were married to Frenchmen.⁶³ Given this seeming knowledge on the part of American ladies, it is hard to place the majority of these Franco-American marriages within the title-for-treasure exchange paradigm.

Further, these socio-economic explanations have failed to account for changes in emotional standards over time, thereby resulting in the reductionist treatment of the practice of marriage. Emotions, often excluded from the study of history because they are hard to capture, played a significant role in the experiences of transnational-marriage participants and provided an essential motivating factor. While marital practices show great variability in different historical contexts, by the second half of the nineteenth century, many Westerners had come to idealize love-based marriage—so much so that the absence of love even justified the dissolution

⁶² Richard Harding Davis, *About Paris* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1895), 201–202.

⁶³ *Social Register of New York*, 1892 (New York: Social Register Association, 1891); Cited in Almond, *Plutocracy and Politics in New York City*, 116.

of marriage, leaving divorce rates a valuable indicator of emotional expectations.⁶⁴ In his memoir written after his divorce from Anna Gould, Boni de Castellane insists numerous times that he did indeed love her and that they both had entered into the marriage with the expectation that it would be based on *love* and *happiness*.⁶⁵ Whether or not he actually loved her, only he could have truly known; however, his insistence is evidence that he recognized the social norms of love-based marriages even among elite classes. However, just as it would be a mistake to reduce marriage to a quest for socio-economic wellbeing, so to would it be a mistake to reduce the emotional dimensions of marriage to *romantic love* alone. Therefore in this work I suggest the need to further uncover the complex diversity of intimate emotional experiences that coincide with the practice of marriage—emotional experiences that are even more multi-faceted once placed within the transnational context.

Finally, while these socio-economic explanations have successfully expanded the concept of social class formation developed by E.P. Thompson by applying it to the case of the American bourgeoisie from a compelling transnational perspective,⁶⁶ I argue that they still fail to fully escape the “analytical cage of the nation-state”⁶⁷ as they largely attempt to explain the marriages from the perspective of one culture or the other rather than from the spaces out of which they emerged—transnational communities located liminally between the two. By drawing on the concept of *transnational marriage*, which situates “*cross-border marriages* within a

⁶⁴ Bologne, *Histoire du couple*; Coontz, *Marriage, a History*; Matt and Stearns, *Doing Emotions History*, 2; Phillips, *Untying the Knot*; Reddy, *The Making of Romantic Love*.

⁶⁵ Boni Castellane, *Comment j'ai découvert l'Amérique; mémoires*. (Paris: G. Crès et cie, 1924).

⁶⁶ E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1964).

⁶⁷ Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, 2.

context of wider transnational processes” and which places focus on the transnational networks and space created by the actors themselves,⁶⁸ the following two chapters suggest instead the ways in which intersecting methodologies of transnational history, cultural history, and the history of emotions might compliment these socio-economic explanations in order to provide us with a more complete picture of mixed marriages in the past. Therefore, in an attempt to reposition the space of inquiry to the transcultural spaces that produced the marriages, they address the following question: How do patterns of transnational marriage emerge out of cross-cultural encounters, and to what extent did larger Franco-American cultural relations facilitate marriages in the context of the nineteenth century?

By placing emotions in broader transnational and cultural frameworks, I show how complex cultural meanings within transnational spaces were experienced on personal levels among marriage participants and highlight what they hoped to gain in addition to their foreign spouse. Descriptions of elite social events found in the French and American press, travel literature, personal papers, and guest lists provide an important glimpse into these transnational communities and their cultural rituals. Further, by focusing on these spaces of transnationality we are able to highlight a series of cross-cultural relationships and experiences otherwise unavailable.⁶⁹ Through an analysis of these elite social events and other social spaces, I argue that these nineteenth-century, Franco-American titled unions emerged out of transnational communities and spaces that existed parallel to national spaces, and resulted from the interplay of social compatibility (rather than

⁶⁸ Charsley, *Transnational Marriage*, 2012, 19.

⁶⁹ Peter Jackson, Phil Crang, and Claire Dwyer, *Transnational Spaces* (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), 3.

social anxiety) among elite European and American participants on one hand, and, on the other, mutual fascination and *cultural infatuation*—an affection for perceived culture itself.

Such an undertaking is not without limitations and deficiencies. The first is the problem of quantifying the number of these titled marriages. While the work of Gustavus Meyers, who claimed that by 1909 five hundred American heiresses had entered into transnational marriages with titled nobility, and the lists generated by *Titled Americans: A List of American Ladies Who Have Married Foreigners of Rank* provide valuable indicators, obtaining precise, nationally-categorized numbers is difficult, and no complete list exists.⁷⁰ During the course of this project, I have recorded individuals' names, backgrounds, marriage dates, and additional relevant information in a database as I encountered them in the local French and American presses and other sources. While this database can be claimed as neither complete nor representative, it totaled about one hundred French-American *titled* marriages—the earliest of which occurred in 1782 and the latest in 1993. This also points to the problem of periodization. The topic of titled marriages between Americans and Europeans seems to have peaked in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. As its novelty wore off, fewer mentions in the press make later marriages far less visible to the historian. Therefore, the analytical focus on titled marriages rests within the nineteenth century. Finally, because the purpose of this first part is to compliment other socio-economic explanations of titled marriage motivations, the analytical focus rests on the broader cultural and emotional dynamics of transnational sociability and cross-cultural interaction rather than intimate in-depth

⁷⁰ Myers, *History of the Great American Fortunes*, 1909; *Titled Americans*.

biographical portraits of individual couples and their post-marriage lives—as interesting and often scandalous as they sometime were.

Chapter 1

The Making of a Transnational High Society

The following chapter is divided into four parts. In the first, I examine the making of elite transnational communities in the context of both nineteenth-century economic development and transatlantic mobility. By adopting Torstein Veblen's concept of the American leisure class and applying it to a transnational context, I argue that a *transnational high Society* developed as wealthy American travelers began to keep company with the aristocratic and diplomatic echelons of Europe, whose lifestyles appeared to resemble their own. The second part goes further to examine the cultural dimensions of transnational Society by examining its social and cultural rituals of their social events. Here, I argue that elite transnational social events such as costume balls and dinners came to serve as both a stage for Franco-American cross-cultural encounters and a cultural mechanism for elite coupling. The third part examines the ways in which American women saw their own place within these elite transnational social networks. Through an examination of assertions of common socio-economic belonging, I argue that rather than American social or status anxieties driving these marriages, it was instead a sense of social confidence or a confident assertion of elite position among members of elite transnational communities that facilitated them. Finally, the fourth and final part examines how legal questions around marriage and citizenship affected the extent to which

participants saw themselves as marrying across national lines. Here, I conclude that a relative absence of nineteenth-century legal barriers further facilitated not only elite Society's transnational existence, but also cross-border coupling.

1.1 Emerging Transnational Communities

The emergence of the pattern of Franco-American titled marriages in the second half of the nineteenth century coincided with two other interconnected developments: First, trans-oceanic steam travel between Europe and America became safer, more comfortable, more rapid, and more frequent thereby providing the precondition of both movement and encounter.⁷¹ The second was the development of what Thorstein Veblen calls the *American leisure class*.⁷² Identifying and associating with only those whose economic and social positions afforded them similar lifestyles, this leisure class was characterized by conspicuous consumption of luxury goods and increased leisure time and travel. As Harvey Levenstein shows in his examination of American tourists in France, for social elites living in the United States, leisurely trips to Europe became synonymous with upper-class tastes and distinction.⁷³ Likewise, Maureen Montgomery explains that “by the 1870’s, visiting Europe had become an integral part of a broader pattern of American consumption, alongside of,

⁷¹ For more on nineteenth-century transatlantic travel see: Mark Rennella, *The Boston Cosmopolitans: International Travel and American Arts and Letters*, 1st ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

⁷² Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. (1899; Reprint, New York: A.M. Kelley, Bookseller, 1965).

⁷³ Levenstein, *Seductive Journey*, 93.

inter alia, the decoration of houses, residential segregation, food, dress, education, religion, social activities, and leisure.”⁷⁴

While many members of America’s elite class traveled widely throughout Europe, Paris, as one contemporary writer put it, became the “Mecca” for wealthy American travelers in the nineteenth century as it attracted them with traditions of friendship and promises of art and beauty.⁷⁵ For them, he explained, “London was a duty, but Paris was a joy.”⁷⁶ The journal of elite American traveler George Frederic Jones also demonstrates this attraction. During a European tour with his wife in 1847-48, he wrote that he was “more disgusted than ever with London... [and] decidedly disgusted with Milan.” He found the smell of the canals in Amsterdam to be unbearable, and the unrefined dinners in Berlin to be nothing but “hard eating, hard drinking, and loud talking.” He was, however, “always glad to be back in France.” For him France was “more agreeable than any other place.”⁷⁷ Similarly, Emery A. Storrs after having spent ninety days in Europe, claimed in his address at the Central Music Hall of Chicago in 1882 that “Paris [was] the most beautiful city in all the world” and that “there [was] something marvelously attractive about Frenchmen.”⁷⁸ Even after WWI, a writer for the *Paris Comet* declared, it was in Paris “that America begins, not at New York.”⁷⁹ The cultural prestige of Paris

⁷⁴ Maureen E. Montgomery, “‘Natural Distinction’: The American Bourgeois Search for Distinctive Signs in Europe,” in *The American Bourgeoisie: Distinction and Identity in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Sven Beckert and Julia B Rosenbaum (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 27.

⁷⁵ John Joseph Conway, *Footprints of Famous Americans in Paris* (London; New York: John Lane; John Lane Co., 1912), 66.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, xii.

⁷⁷ Quoted in Wharton, *A Backward Glance*, iii.

⁷⁸ Emery Storrs, “Ninety Days in Europe,” *Chicago Tribune*, October 24, 1882, 3.

⁷⁹ “Why I Like Paris,” *Paris Comet: Anglo-American Fortnightly Magazine*, October 10, 1927, 14.

further attracted many wealthy Americans not only for leisurely travel, but often times, as an ideal place for extended residency as well.

For Veblen, the concept of the leisure class was an American one; however when applied to transnational contexts, it provides an important theoretical foundation for the concept of an *elite transnational community* or *transnational Society*, which is the term that will be employed here. Defined as social networks that existed in transnational spaces between Europe and the United States and among those who identified with shared economic and social status rather than national or ethnic origin,⁸⁰ elite transnational communities and social spaces formed as the American leisure class began to keep company with the aristocratic and diplomatic echelons of Europe, whose lifestyles appeared to resemble their own. As economic historian Sven Beckert shows, despite their varied national origins, these community members often spoke the same languages, shared common values, read similar literature, and participated in similar cultural rituals.⁸¹ Linked by the urban centers of Paris, London, and New York, these elite networks came to occupy unique social spaces in which these transnational ties and sociability were continuously interweaving and expanding, and members thereby produced their own cultural tastes, codes, and norms as well.

Mixing industrial and commercial wealth with old privilege, the extravagant character of transnational Society began to first take form in the court of Napoleon III, who eagerly welcomed cosmopolitan elites from places like New York and

⁸⁰ Sven Beckert and Julia B. Rosenbaum, *The American Bourgeoisie: Distinction and Identity in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

⁸¹ Sven Beckert, "Die Kultur Des Kapitals: Bürgerliche Kultur in New York Und Hamburg Im 19. Jahrhundert," in *Vorträge Aus Dem Warburg-Haus*, ed. Warburg-Haus (Berlin: Akademie, 2000), 4: 143-75.

Boston. Through webs of established connections and systematic patterns of introduction, transnational social networks started to form and marriages such as that of the Napoleon III's first Equerry, Baron Pierre, to Miss Thorne of New York were facilitated.⁸² An article in *Figaro* explained: "The Emperor and Empress not infrequently take a great liking to persons accidentally presented to them, and sometimes rousing a little jealousy by doing so among persons belonging to the court."⁸³ One such woman, Lillie Moulton (née Miss Lillie Greenough of Cambridge Massachusetts), wife of an American banker who resided in France, recounted the story of her "first [accidental] appearance in Parisian society" in a letter to her mother in 1863. She met the Emperor and Empress when she went ice-skating on the newly frozen lake in the *bois* near the home of her in-laws, who resided in the Chateau de Petit Val, an estate twelve miles from Paris. There, as she spoke to an acquaintance of her father-in-law, Prince Joachim Murat, the Emperor approached them, and Murat provided her with an introduction. Napoleon III complimented her on her skating ability and asked her to skate with him and the Empress, who then invited her to the Tuileries. In the letter, Moulton explained that normally there would have been a number of steps in which people were welcomed into the court—most typically through a series of introductions in the established patterns of the social network—but after extending a personal invitation to the Tuileries, the Empress informed her that such steps were no longer necessary, now that they were

⁸² Washington Irving et al., *The Journals of Washington Irving*, vol. 3 (Boston: Bibliophile Society, 1919), 213; *Titled Americans. a List of American Ladies Who Have Married Foreigners of Rank*, 100.

⁸³ L. de Hegermann-Lindencrone, *In the Courts of Memory, 1858-1875: From Contemporary Letters* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1912), 51.

“personally acquainted.”⁸⁴ Nonetheless, Moulton decided she would take the appropriate steps anyway. According to her, her in-laws had become so well-established in France that her father-in-law could have used the title “de Petite Val” had he so desired. Therefore, her mother-in-law accompanied her on these preliminary steps and presented her to the Grande Maîtresse Duchesse de Bassano. Upon arriving at the ball at the Tuileries, she received a message from the Empress expressing Imperial delight at her presence. Moulton replied: “I am glad to be here, your Majesty; but I went through all of the preliminary steps all the same because my *belle-mère* insisted upon it.”⁸⁵ Other Americans such as Annie Fields, entered the court in similar fashion. In a letter to her friend Sara, she explained how she was invited by another American to go hunting at Compiègne with the Emperor and Empress.⁸⁶ This visit, she explained, led to “a beautiful dinner in a beautiful house with all the French of the ‘*ancien régime*.’ It was in the Quartier St. Germain too, which has a mysterious interest for us from its old aristocratic reputation which is indeed wonderfully sustained.”⁸⁷ Her reference to the *ancien régime* is an important one, as she attempted to highlight the apparent exclusivity of her new social acquaintances from others whose titles had been created during France’s changing imperial regimes.

Exclusivity and social exclusion remained important markers of transnational Society, just as they had in more national elite circles of New York or

⁸⁴ Ibid., 25.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 28.

⁸⁶ Annie Fields to Sara, November 30, 1859, Annie Fields Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

⁸⁷ Annie Fields to Boylston, December 22, 1859, Annie Fields Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

London. Therefore, here it is important to distinguish members of the elite transnational community from other cosmopolitans who simply traveled on Grand Tours. Often labeled as *nouveaux riches*, these American travelers lacked the social connections and sometimes language skills to participate in dinners and balls at the Tuileries, and instead spent most of their time surrounded by their compatriots engaging in more superficial forms of tourism. The diaries of Americans Laura J. Libbey and Annie Bradley provide excellent examples. Much of what Laura Jean Libbey wrote can be characterized as scenic and historical descriptions. For example, she discussed at length the orderly fashion in which passengers are allowed on transport, how even at midnight, the sidewalks are full of people, how the streets were lit by electricity.⁸⁸ Similarly, Annie Bradley described palaces and landmarks typical of those one would find in a travel guide in a short matter-of-fact manner. At times, however, she even expressed disappointment in visiting certain monuments, such as the Panthéon. Her writing, therefore, demonstrates dissonance between the reality of travel and her idealized expectations that had been shaped by travel literature and national stereotypes.⁸⁹ Neither of the women provided details of interaction with anyone beyond other American travelers or the occasional American resident in Paris. Such a superficial experience is characteristic of many Americans on their European tours—tours occupied by visits of monuments, cathedrals, and museums. Therefore, while transatlantic circulation provided a precondition for the formation of transnational Society, and while it provided

⁸⁸ Laura Libbey, “Laura Jean Libbey Journals,” vol. 3 Visit to Europe, 1892, Manuscript and Archives Division, New York Public Library.

⁸⁹ Annie J. Bradely, “Annie J Bradley Diary” 1872-1874, Manuscript and Archives Division, New York Public Library.

opportunity for the transfer of cultural models that became imperative in transatlantic self-definition of high society, it did not allow one to secure his or her place within an elite transnational community.

Generally speaking, their privileged position allowed members of transnational Society to move quite freely across and around the Atlantic during this period and national borders mattered little in constructing their day-to-day lives. As John Torpey shows in his work, *The Invention of the Passport: Surveillance, Citizenship, and the State*, over the course of the “long nineteenth century”—a period marked by the economic liberalism, industrialization, and relative peace—many of Europe’s existing state restrictions on entry and exit were either relaxed or in some case allowed to lapse completely.⁹⁰ While they traveled with a variety of identification papers, elite travelers rarely passed through passport checkpoints or immigration inspections and took extended residencies in places like Paris quite easily. However, even though the period between 1815 and 1914 had been peaceful, brief conflicts complicated this free circulation even for elites. During the Franco-Prussian War for example, the American legation in Paris issued passports to 3,300 tourists or residents as well as “protection papers” for any property they might have had in their Parisian residences.⁹¹ Similarly, in a letter to her mother, Lillie Moulton explained at length the difficulty she faced obtaining the necessary authorization and passport to leave Paris during this time:

Mr. Moulton thought it better that I should leave Paris. But to leave Paris one must have a passport from the Prefect of Police. He

⁹⁰ John Torpey, *The Invention of the Passport: Surveillance, Citizenship, and the State* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 91–92.

⁹¹ Green, *The Other Americans in Paris*, 52.

consulted Mr. Washburn [the American Minister] about it, who not only consented to give me a card of introduction to Raoul Rigault (whom he knew personally), but offered to send me to the prefecture in his own carriage... I don't know how many times I had to pull out my 'billet de circulation' before we reached the prefecture... I must have gone through at least seven rooms before I reached the sanctuary in which Monsieur Raoul Rigault held his 'audience.'

It is noteworthy that she was obliged to obtain the necessary documents from French rather than American authorities. However, as Torpey explains, not only was there no global standard for passport issuances at this time, but formal citizenship was also not necessarily the foundation upon which to claim a passport for travel. As in the case of Moulton, some states issued passports simply for interstate travel and some issued them to non-citizen nationals, resident aliens, or non-citizen population over which the state held domination.⁹²

In her description of her difficulties, Moulton also displays an interesting antagonism to the French Republican official, Monsieur Raoul Rigault, with whom she was obliged to communicate. She continued:

This autocrat, whom the republicans (to their eternal shame be it said) had placed in power after the 4th of September, is (and was then) the most successful specimen of a scamp that the human race has ever produced. At this moment Rigault has more power than anyone else in Paris... "Monsieur, I have come to procure a passport, and here is Mr. Washburn's card to tell you who I am." ... "Does the citoyenne wish to leave Paris? Pourquoi?" I answered that I was obliged to leave Paris for different reasons. He replied, with what he thought a seductive smile, "I should think Paris would be a very attractive place for a pretty woman like yourself." ... At this moment I confess I began to feel dreadfully nervous, seeing the powerless situation in which I was placed, and I saw in imagination visions of prison-cells, handcuffs, and all the horrors which belong to revolutions ... I fancy Raoul Rigault had never been in the society of a lady (perhaps he had never seen one), and his innate coarseness

⁹² Torpey, *The Invention of the Passport*, 161.

seemed to make him gloat over the present situation, and as a true republican, whose motto is 'Égalité, Fraternité, Liberté', he flattered himself he was on an equality with me, therefore he could take any amount of liberty. He took advantage of the unavoidable questions that belong to the making out of a passport, and showed a diabolical pleasure in tormenting 'la citoyenne' who stood helplessly before him.

While her social connections to the Emperor and Empress mattered little in that moment, those to the American Minister did:

He took Mr. Washburn's so-much-looked-at card, scrutinized it, and then scrutinized me. "Are you La Citoyenne Moulton?" I answered, "Yes." "American?" I replied I was, and 'in petto'--mighty glad I was to be so. "Does the American Minister know you personally?" "Yes, very well." "Why do you wish to deprive us of your presence in Paris?" I repeated that my affairs required my presence elsewhere... "If it is impossible for you, Monsieur, to give me the passport, I will inform Mr. Washburn of the fact, and he will no doubt come to you himself for it."... [Another] man Grousset... said, politely, "Madame Moulton, j'ai eu l'honneur de vous voir à un bal à l'Hôtel de Ville l'année dernière." ... I was happy indeed to find anyone who knew me and could vouch for me, and told him so. He smiled. "I venture to present myself to you, Madame. I am Pascal Grousset. Can I be of any service to you?" "Indeed you can," I answered, eagerly. "Please tell Monsieur Rigault to give me my passport; it seems to have been a colossal undertaking to get it."... Grousset and Rigault had a little conversation together, and presto! my longed-for passport lay before me to sign.⁹³

Moulton explained the hastiness of her departure in August of 1870: "We left Petit Val rather precipitately, leaving everything behind us, clothes in wardrobes and letters in commodes." But she added: "We shall not be gone more than a month." Clara Jerome (sister of Jennie Jerome who married Lord Randolph Churchill) had also occupied for years a place in the Society of Tuileries, and like Lillie Moulton, she frequently stayed with the Emperor and Empress at Compiègne.

⁹³ Hegermann-Lindencrone, *In the Courts of Memory, 1858-1875*, 511-25.

But with the outbreak of the war, she, along with her mother and sister abandoned Paris for London. Elizabeth Eliot, in her work *Heiresses and Coronets*, argues that with the fall of the Second Empire, Americans like Clara Jerome shifted both their travel and social interests to London. “Paris without the emperor and empress and without the royal court was,” according to Eliot, “not at all what it had been.”⁹⁴ Likewise, upon Moulton’s return in 1871, she recounted: “Everything was terribly changed. All the chateaux we passed are utterly abandoned, some quite in ruins; one can see, for instance, right through beautiful Grand Val, bereft of windows and doors... I could have cried when I saw the Tuileries... As we drove by I thought of the famous ball given [there] last May (le bal de Plébiscite)... And now! The Tuileries deserted, empty, the emperor a prisoner, the Empress a fugitive! All France demoralized! All prestige gone! One wonders how such things could be!”⁹⁵

1.2 Elite Social Events as Transnational Spaces

While the Franco-Prussian War effectively ended Napoleon III’s lavish social events at the Tuileries, transnational Society continued to thrive and socialize in Paris in many of the same excessive and *aristocratic* ways even without the official royal court. Levi P. Morton, founder of the banking firm, LP Morton and Co., served as American Minister to France from 1881 to 1885. Because Morton felt that the former legation failed to represent the “grandeur and prosperity of the United States” accurately, he spent much of his own money to convert a hotel into both his private residence and a place for diplomatic and social gatherings in the *Place de la*

⁹⁴ Elizabeth Eliot, *Heiresses and Coronets*, 64.

⁹⁵ Hegermann-Lindencrone, *In the Courts of Memory, 1858-1875*, 276.

Bitche in Paris, which was subsequently renamed the *Place des Etats-Unis*. This “American palace,” as it became known, was constructed of white firestone and contained “a magnificent staircase, with gilded balustrades which led to a suite of drawing rooms, which was furnished in the style of Louis XVI and could accommodate 1500 guests.”⁹⁶ The French press was quite fond of both Mr. and Mrs. Morton, at least according to the French editions of American newspapers of which there were many in Paris at the time. One French version of a Boston newspaper exclaimed that “he is a gentleman of elegant address, pleasing manners, and distinguished for his social habits. These qualities the French admire.”⁹⁷ Likewise, an article in the *Figaro* expressed: “[M]arié à une femme charmante qui parle français comme une Parisienne, le nouvel ambassadeur se propose, dit-on, de donner de nombreuses fêtes l’hiver prochain.”⁹⁸ (Married to a charming woman who speaks French like a Parisian, the new ambassador offers, they say, to host plenty of social engagements next winter.) He, along with his wife, were the first formal diplomatic representatives to turn the American legation into a popular center for elite social events, and it came to serve as a gathering place for members of transnational Society. Like others in New York and London, the elite social events at the American legation were highly publicized in both the French and American press. One French newspaper explained: “A chaque instant, vous lisez dans les journaux que tel ou tel riche banquier des Etats Unis vient de donner un dîner, un bal, ou une

⁹⁶ “Newspaper Clipping, Title Unknown,” June 1882, Levi P. Morton Papers, Series VII Scrapbook, vol. 5, 64, New York Public Library.

⁹⁷ “Newspaper Clipping, Title Unknown,” *Boston ___ Nouvelles*, May 4, 1881, Levi P. Morton Papers, Series VII Scrapbook, vol. 4A, 53, New York Public Library.

⁹⁸ “Newspaper Clipping, Title Unknown,” *Figaro*, 1881, Levi P. Morton Papers, Series VII Scrapbook, vol. 4A, 53, New York Public Library.

soirée.”⁹⁹ (At every instant, you read in the papers that this or that rich banker from the United States just gave a dinner, a ball, or an evening celebration.)

These social events and their descriptions remain important to the historian for a couple of reasons: First, they can be used to map transnational communities as the attendees of Morton’s *nombreuses fêtes* and dinners can be described as a representative sample of transnational Society. Morton’s guest lists included elite Americans from not only New York but also cities such as Boston and Philadelphia, foreign ambassadors, diplomats and state heads, titled and untitled French elites, as well as Spanish, British, Russian, German, and Austrian nobility.¹⁰⁰ The *New York Tribune* wrote: “Mr. and Mrs. Morton had their first formal reception in Paris a fore night ago, opening for the purpose the magnificent hotel now occupied by the legation. Galignani says that a very large number, of not only Americans, but also of the most distinguished representatives of Parisian and foreign society, were in attendance... The reception established at once the influence of Mr. and Mrs. Morton as leaders in American social life in Paris.”¹⁰¹ Another American newspaper, the *Boston Post*, explained, “It is... at the American legation alone in all of Paris that republicans, legitimists, Orléanists, Bonapartists, ultra-monarchs, and Gallicans can meet and mingle.” Second, the same article also explained that it was at the American legation where young American ladies were able to find a wide selection

⁹⁹ “Newspaper Clipping, Title Unknown,” June 1882, 62.

¹⁰⁰ “Americans in Europe,” newspaper clipping, 1882, Levi P Morton Papers Series VII Scrapbook vol. 5, 60, New York Public Library.

¹⁰¹ “Newspaper Clipping, Title Unknown,” *New York Tribune*, January 1882, Levi P. Morton Papers, Series VII Scrapbook, vol. 5, 31, New York Public Library.

of eligible nobility.¹⁰² Therefore, because dinners and balls were one of the most important cultural forms of this transnational leisure class, one can observe how events like those at the American legation, for example, provided a stage for both Franco-American cross-cultural encounters and transnational marriage.

During the nineteenth century, elite balls and dinners were used as a way to publically display wealth and social prestige, but throughout the Atlantic's urban centers such as New York, Paris, and London they were also used as a cultural mechanism for elite coupling. In her examination of British aristocratic marriage patterns over the course of five centuries, Kimberly Schutte explains that by the nineteenth century, "overtly arranged marriages" were no longer viewed as culturally appropriate. Therefore, members of British high Society used exclusive social events such as balls, where the guest lists could be controlled and young women could be well chaperoned, to promote "appropriate social interaction."¹⁰³ In this way, elite balls took on the quality of what she calls "marriage markets." Historian, Eric Homberger explains in his examination of social elites in New York and the extravagant social events of the famous Mrs. Astor, that this was the case for Americans as well. According to him at these events, "[t]he etiquette of the ballroom was designed to ensure the social decorum was maintained."¹⁰⁴ Such was the case for transnational Society; however, it should be reinforced that these elite social spaces, like those at the American legation in Paris, were not national spaces, they

¹⁰² "Levi P. Morton: A Review of His Career as Minister to France," *Boston Post*, December 16, 1884, Levi P. Morton Papers, Series VII Scrapbook, vol. 6, 95, New York Public Library.

¹⁰³ Schutte, *Women, Rank, and Marriage in the British Aristocracy, 1485-2000: An Open Elite?*, 91–92.

¹⁰⁴ Eric Homberger, *Mrs. Astor's New York: Money and Social Power in a Gilded Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 120.

were occupied by elites from around the Atlantic. Therefore the pool of potential partners in their “marriage markets” was transnationally comprised, and transnational marriages were a result of those cross-border social interactions.

Elite social events not only provided an opportunity for social interaction between potential partners, but these events also regulated both that interaction and notions of pleasure through strict cultural codes. For example, Lady St. Helier of London explained in her memoir that an “unwritten law of etiquette and conduct enjoined that no one should dance more than once with the same partner. Under certain circumstances to dance twice was permissible, but after that the girl was considered fast, and held up as a warning to well-brought-up and well-conducted young ladies.”¹⁰⁵ The cultural codes of the ballroom sometimes also allowed other members of high Society to participate in the arrangement of potential matches. Along with its list of eligible European men and the American women who married members of European nobility, *Titled Americans* also provides a lengthy description of what it called “The Great Ball,” which took place on the evening of January 2, 1890, at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York. This ball was attended by both New York Society as well as European nobility and diplomatic elites.¹⁰⁶ It explained that while the committee was dining, “there was a succession of dances down stairs. It was the intention of the committee to give the young folks every chance to amuse themselves in this fashion” before the time for the formal cotillion.¹⁰⁷ Regarding the cotillion, it then noted:

¹⁰⁵ Susan Mary Elizabeth Stewart-Mackenzie Jeune, *Memories of Fifty Years* (London: E. Arnold, 1909), 67.

¹⁰⁶ *Titled Americans*, 194.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 214.

All knew that the chief event of the evening was to take place. The ninety-six chosen whose presence in the quadrille d'honneur was because of their indisputable right to claim the respect of their fellows, were to go through the stately measures of Sir Roger de Coverley... The formation of the sets was calculated to give something more than ordinary ceremonial to the quadrille d'honneur. The debutantes were assigned to the first set, and here was a veritable garland of buds. It was a distinction of no small significance to make one's first bow to society at the New Year's ball, and so the prizes, but twenty-four in all, were eagerly disputed. The arrangement of the four sets was based upon a somewhat poetical idea of Mr. McAllister. He was desirous that social prominence should be hemmed in by beauty; that weight of dignity, that a combination of millions and ancestry, should dance with flankings of the prettiest women that New York could muster.¹⁰⁸

This description demonstrates how the arranging of potential matches was sometimes an affair of larger elements within high Society.

At transnational social events like those at the American legation in Paris, the term “arranging a match” sometimes took the form of simply providing an introduction. At one of Morton’s dinners in May of 1884, one American newspaper reported that “a young lady expressed to the Minister her wish to be acquainted with the Comte de Paris, and Mr. Morton conveyed to him her desire. Instead of advancing toward her... [the Comte] imitated that he would feel much pleasure in allowing her to be presented. Accordingly Mr. Morton went back to her and said, ‘The Comte de Paris permits me to introduce you to him’.”¹⁰⁹ This particular introduction ended in scandal and near diplomatic crisis for the American Minister. According to the rumors in the press, Morton had not only introduced the Comte to

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 206–8.

¹⁰⁹ “The Levy-Morton Incident,” *Truth*, May 29, 1884, Levi P. Morton Papers, Series VII Scrapbook, vol. 5, 133, New York Public Library.

the young lady as either “royal highness” or the “future King of France,”¹¹⁰ but earlier when the Comte de Paris had arrived to the dinner, it was also reported that “the American minister and his wife descended to receive him as he alighted from his carriage, in imitation of the etiquette observed by foreign Ministers when receiving foreign royalty.”¹¹¹ The real scandal had little to do with meeting American ladies who may or may not have been looking for a noble husband, but instead whether or not anything was done or said by the American Minister on the occasion not in keeping with the friendly relations existing between the American government and the established republican government of France.¹¹² Nonetheless, when examining the motivations of Franco-American titled marriage, both the numerous articles regarding this particular dinner (and subsequent scandal) as well

¹¹⁰ “Minister and Pretender,” newspaper clipping, June 15, 1884, Levi P. Morton Papers, Series VII Scrapbook, vol. 5, 137, New York Public Library. Based on the selected sources left by Morton, one can only speculate what was actually said during the event. “Newspaper Clipping, Title Unknown,” *Morning News*, May 30, 1884, Levi P. Morton Papers, Series VII Scrapbook, vol. 5, 130, New York Public Library. This article, which quoted the author of the *Truth* article, claimed that not only was the dinner not given in honor of the Comte de Paris but that it never even took place. “Le Comte de Paris Chez M. Morton,” *Matin*, n.d., Levi P. Morton Papers, Series VII Scrapbook, vol. 5, 130, New York Public Library states that he was only invited but did not attend any dinner at the American legation; *Figaro*, May 30, 1884, Levi P. Morton Papers, Series VII Scrapbook, vol. 5, 130, New York Public Library says that he was not even invited to a dinner; “The American Minister and the French Royalty,” May 31, 1884, Levi P. Morton Papers, Series VII Scrapbook, vol. 5, 132, New York Public Library declared that he was “informally invited on the day previous to a small after-dinner dancing party composed mainly of Americans.” However, despite numerous attempts following the scandal by both French and American press to declare otherwise, the Comte de Paris was most likely in attendance as confirmed by the following: Comte de Paris, “Telegram from the Comte de Paris to Levi P. Morton,” May 14, 1884, Levi P. Morton Papers, Box 2, Folder “Correspondence 1884 May,” New York Public Library, which stated, “*I accept with pleasure your kind invitation and I shall be glad to that opportunity to pay my respects to this evening to Mrs. Morton. With your leave, I shall bring with me M. Aubry-Vitet who presently accompanies me. Don’t take the trouble to call here today.*” Also, given the transnational nature of the social events, he was also most likely introduced to young, American women.

¹¹¹ “The American Minister and the French Royalty,” May 31, 1884, Levi P. Morton Papers, Series VII Scrapbook, vol. 5, 132, New York Public Library.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

as the aforementioned *Boston Post* article that boasted that it was at Morton's many elaborate *soirées* at the legation where young American ladies were able to find a wide selection of eligible nobility, demonstrate that cross-cultural interaction at such elite social events should not be underestimated as a facilitator.¹¹³ In this way, what was intended to serve as a national space both created and encouraged transnationalism, and Morton's breach of etiquette with the Comte de Paris may be seen as part of a pattern to further his own transnational social connections.

Elite, Franco-American unions were also facilitated by well-established transnational social and familial networks, as well as the connected introductions that expanded them. For example, one of Morton's attachés, Jules Brulatour of New Orleans "engineered the match" between one of Isaac Singer's daughters, Isabelle-Blanch, and Jean Elie Octave Louis-Sévère Amanieu Decazes, the third Duc Elies Decazes. He arranged their meeting at game of billiards for her brothers. The couple was married in 1888, and among the guests were Queen Isabelle of Spain, Duc and Duchesse de la Rochefoucauld, the Comtesse de Trobriand, also an American woman (née Jones) of New York, the Prince de Polignac, and Miss Fanny Reed, an American resident of Paris, who would later "engineer" the match between Anna Gould and Boni de Castellane.¹¹⁴ Anna, moreover, was not the only member of her family to marry a French citizen. Her youngest brother, Frank J. Gould, also married a French woman named Florence Lacaze, with whom he lived in Juan-les-Pins.¹¹⁵ Further, in addition to Boni de Castellane, three other members of the Talleyrand-

¹¹³ "The Levy-Morton Incident"; "Levi P. Morton: A Review of His Career as Minister to France."

¹¹⁴ "American Society: The Singers," *Town Topics*, May 11, 1916, New York Genealogical and Biographical Society Collection, New York Public Library.

¹¹⁵ "Persistent Curse of the Gould Millions," *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, June 16, 1929.

Perigord family married American women.¹¹⁶ One of Ambassador Morton's daughters, Helen, married the Duc de Valeccay (formerly Comte Boson de Talleyrand-Perigord) in 1901; although, that marriage ended in divorce shortly after.¹¹⁷ Three members of the Sauvan d'Aramon family—Bertrand, Paul, and Jacques—each married American women.¹¹⁸ The hotel heiress, Minnie Stevens (née Mary Fiske Stevens, daughter of Mr. Parah Stevens) who was a relation of Miss Fanny Reed and also a social acquaintance of Boni and Anna was meant to marry the Duc de Guiche, the son of the Duc de Grammont. The marriage, however, never took place, and she later married prominent Englishman, Arthur Henry Fitzroy Paget, grandson of the first Marquis of Anglesey in 1902.¹¹⁹ Mrs. Arthur Paget, however, continued to reside in Paris until her death in 1919.

1.3 Social Comparability between American and European Members

But did American women like Helen Morton and Anna Gould really need titles of nobility in order to position themselves within the ranks of this transnational high Society? It is important to once again note that not all American cosmopolitans traveling on Grand Tours found their way into exclusive transnational social circles. As historian Harvey Levenstein convincingly shows, it is unlikely that many of those who were considered to be *nouveaux riches* in the United States would have had the social connections necessary to participate in the elite social events and

¹¹⁶ "Three French Dukedoms and a Prussian Principality Belong to the Talleyrand-Perigords: Historic House Which Has Already Formed Three American Alliances," *New York Times*, July 12, 1908.

¹¹⁷ *San Francisco Call*, November 22, 1905.

¹¹⁸ Green, *The Other Americans in Paris*, 88.

¹¹⁹ Castellane, *How I Discovered America*, 176.

marriage networks like those mentioned above.¹²⁰ Instead, they more often engaged in more superficial forms of tourism and travel with fellow Americans rather than keeping company with French nobility or diplomatic elite.¹²¹ However, we should resist the temptation to define transnational Society too closely according to the contemporary American concept of “old” and “new” money. Instead, nineteenth-century transnational Society was defined by broader, albeit still exclusive, elite social connections that transcended national borders among those who possessed a self-conscious sense of shared identity and superiority. Further, those who did make their way into elite transnational social circles, like Helen Morton and Anna Gould, often took their place with ease. As one member of the transnational community living in London explained, wealthy American women often saw themselves as equal to their noble European counterparts:

The one thing that gave her a foothold in [European] Society was perhaps the one thing about her which is most distinctly American—her sense of equality. ... She was, and she felt herself, the social equal of those whom she met, and her bearing was such that others perceived it instantly... So she glided into this brilliant company, and took her place as if it had always belonged to her, and she kept it with ease... without effort and without timidity... There are differences of all kinds: of wealth, of intellect, of distinction in public life, of superior virtue, as well as rank. But the meeting of all these various excellences becomes possible only when all agree to meet for social purposes on equal terms. We perfectly understand that in America, to suppose a different state of things here merely because there are degrees of rank is absurd. The best proof of the absurdity is the fact that rank alone gives no one social distinction, and that some of those whose position in [S]ociety is highest are of the lowest rank.¹²²

¹²⁰ Levenstein, *Seductive Journey*, 178.

¹²¹ Bradely, “Annie J Bradley Diary”; Libbey, “Laura Jean Libbey Journals.”

¹²² G. W. S., “American Girl Abroad,” *New York Daily Tribune: War Ships Sunk in Samoa, Library of Tribune Extras*, 1, no. 7 (July 1889): 83.

Another example of this assertion of social equality can be found in the memoir of Boni de Castellane, who described his American wife's self-awareness: "[Anna] was utterly unimpressed by rank. She disregarded it completely.... [This lack of] proper consideration for rank came less from the indifference which she felt toward rank in general than from her infernal pride which made her believe she was superior to everybody."¹²³ One time she remarked: "Oh dear, what a stupid Princess! You force me to curtsy her, but she isn't in the same street as an American like myself."¹²⁴ Such statements signify that even though New York's "artificial" and "arbitrary" elite were often juxtaposed against European nobility, which was viewed as "natural" and "constant,"¹²⁵ the concept of a *transnational Society* levels this differentiation between community members. One might even go so far as to argue that given the turbulent political history of nineteenth-century France, as well as its well-articulated anti-aristocratic, post-revolutionary discourse, New York's "social aristocracy" as Eric Homberger has called it,¹²⁶ was not all that different from that which had been created by Napoleon III. Nonetheless, we can conclude that rather than social or status anxieties of the American *nouveaux riches* driving these marriages, it was instead a sense of social confidence or, at least, a confident

¹²³ Castellane, *How I Discovered America*, 128.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 168.

¹²⁵ Ralph Pulitzer, *New York Society on Parade* (New York; London: Harper & Bros., 1910), 3 argued, "Instead of having an aristocracy whose caste is beyond question and beyond change and whose mutual hospitalities constitute Society, New York has an 'Aristocracy' whose elevation is largely artificial, whose membership is largely arbitrary, and whose existence vitally depends upon those activities which are known as social functions. In other words, while in Europe the mutual entertainments of an inherently stable upper class create Society, in New York the constant contortions of Society are indispensable to create and maintain a precarious upper class; while in Europe the pleasures of Society are among the prerogatives of rank, in New York the pleasure of 'rank' is the inducement to Society."

¹²⁶ Homberger, *Mrs. Astor's New York*, 1.

assertion of elite position among members of elite transnational communities that facilitated them. In other words, nineteenth-century elites continued the practice of marrying within their own socio-economic echelons; however, for some, those echelons were not defined by national boundaries, but rather by self-proclaimed social ones.

1.4 Conceptions of National Borders and Public Criticisms

While this work is better understood as a cultural examination of the spaces and process that produced transnational marriage, the legal questions regarding the connection between marriage and citizenship remain important ones in determining the extent to which participants saw themselves as marrying across national lines. The relatively unrestricted movement of members of the elite between different urban centers such as New York, London, and Paris along with the assumption of common socio-economic belonging between elite Americans and elite Europeans, meant that for nineteenth-century Franco-American titled marriage participants, their marital unions often emerged out of spaces that were not entirely defined by national boundaries. Their tenuous conception of being bound by national limits was further confirmed as legal questions of American citizenship were rarely raised for those taking up extended, and sometimes life-long, residence in places such as Paris. While the American Expatriation Act of 1868 did grant the right of a naturalized American citizen to “divest himself from former allegiance,” I-Mien Tsiang explains in his work, *The Question of Expatriation in America Prior to 1907*, that “congress did not, in the legislation of 1868, or in any until 1907 provide conditions under

which an American citizen might be deemed” to have lost citizenship. “The failure of the legislators to cover this phase of the question in 1868 was,” according to him, “due to the fear that a provision on the matter of losing American citizenship would in effect weaken the American position.”¹²⁷ He also notes that taking extended residence in places such as Paris between 1868 and 1907, as many members of transnational Society did, was also “not regarded by the American State Department or by the courts as a decisive factor in expatriation.”¹²⁸ Here, he cites the 1869 Court of Claims case 571, *Brown vs United States*, which proclaimed the following: “We cannot accept the idea that the matter of domicile affects that fact of citizenship not that a mere foreign residence of itself can work a forfeiture of political rights.”¹²⁹ Recognizing the lack of legal restrictions on extended residencies is important when examining the privileged position and transnational existence afforded to elite members of high Society who occupied social spaces beyond national borders.

Similarly, the coupling processes that accompanied this transnational existence were further facilitated by the ability to contract such unions across national borders relatively easily. When *Titled Americans* published its “carefully compiled list of Peers who are supposed to be eager to lay their coronets, and incidentally their hearts, at the feet of the all-conquering American girl,” it did so for

¹²⁷ Tsiang I-Mien, *The Question of Expatriation in America Prior to 1907*, The Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, LX 3 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1942), 94. He also notes on pages 88-89 that the passing of the Expatriation Act of 1868 was followed by a series of naturalization treaties in 1860s and 1870s, which accorded that naturalization along with five years uninterrupted residence in one nation was reciprocally accompanied by expatriation of the other. Those treaties were enacted with the North Germany Confederation, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, Great Britain, Denmark, Mexico, and Ecuador. However, no such reciprocal treaty existed with France.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 103.

¹²⁹ Quoted in *ibid.* Original citation: Court of Claims 571 (1869). Cf. *U.S. v. Wong Kim Ark*, 169 U.S. 704 (1898).

the explicit purpose of “arous[ing] the ambition of the American Girl with the prospect of other worlds to conquer” and without any mention of national citizenship and marriage laws.¹³⁰ The marriage of Anna Gould and Boni de Castellane, at least, to the extent that the historian understands it according to Castellane’s memoir, also shows that nineteenth-century marriage participants faced few international or legal hurdles in contracting their cross-border marriages. This marriage took place in New York in March of 1895. First it was celebrated in a civil ceremony at the Gould home, at which New York Mayor William Lafayette Strong officiated and then at a Catholic religious ceremony on the following Monday, which was performed by Archbishop Michael Corrigan.¹³¹ Neither Castellane’s memoir nor the numerous American newspaper articles covering the wedding mentioned any additional administrative steps that the couple was required to undertake before the transnational union could take place. Castellane also did not discuss any international legal issues that burdened their wedding planning. One article from the *Pittsburg Press*, entitled “American wives of French Husbands” explained in 1900 that both the United States and France recognized marriages contracted in the other country as long as the marriage was celebrated according to the laws of the country in which it took place and conformed with the regulations on marrying age, prior marriage, parental consent, and consent of both parties.¹³² One year later, French law student, Albert Cauwes, noted in his doctoral dissertation entitled “Des rapports du mariage avec la nationalité,” that while issues surrounding

¹³⁰ *Titled Americans*, 157.

¹³¹ “For the Gould Wedding: All Arrangements Have Been Practically Made,” *New York Times*, February 26, 1895.

¹³² “American Wives of French Husbands,” *The Pittsburg Press*, January 20, 1900.

the topic of marriage had been thought through in national law, very few international laws or bilateral agreements between nation-states dealt with the subject of “mixed marriages.”¹³³

The question of loss of citizenship (or expatriation) becomes an important one, but only at the turn of the twentieth century. According to the Article 19 of France’s 1804 *Code Civil*, it had long been established that “la femme française qui épouse un étranger, suit la condition de son mari” (the French woman who marries a foreigner, assumes the status of her husband). This condition was reaffirmed by the loi du 26 juin 1889.¹³⁴ Under the same logic, according to Article 12 of the *Code Civil*, “l’étrangère qui aura épousé un Français, suivra la condition de son mari” (the foreigner who marries a French man, will acquire her husband’s status).¹³⁵ Therefore, an American woman married to a French man in the nineteenth century would have been granted French citizenship, as would their children have; however, in the United States she faced different legal circumstances. Even though an 1855 law allowed a foreign woman who migrated the United States to become American as the result of a marriage to a U.S. citizen, with regards to the loss of citizenship of natural-born American women, as Cauwes noted that in 1901, the United States “refuse encore à permettre à la femme indigène qui épouse un étranger de perdre la

¹³³ Albert Cauwes, *Des rapports du mariage avec la nationalité*. (Paris: L. Larose & Farcel, 1901), viii–ix.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 60.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 41.

nationalité américaine” (still refuses to provide a means for the native-born woman who marries a foreigner to lose her American nationality).¹³⁶

This changed in 1907, as the American Congress became more and more concerned with the increasing numbers of naturalized citizens returning to their countries of origin.¹³⁷ The 1907 American Expatriation Law legislated that any American citizen who resided in a foreign state for five years “without intent to return” would be expatriated. Further, conceived under the same logic as laws of coverture that prevented women from voting, it also included a provision that American women who married foreigners would be stripped of their American citizenship and would take the nationality of her husband, even if they lived in the United States.¹³⁸

The 1907 Expatriation Law did not mean, however, that all American women who took French husbands were destined to remain in France and never return to the United States. Section Three of the law stipulated: “At the termination of the marital relation she may resume her American citizenship, if abroad, by registering as an American citizen within one year with a consul of the United States, or by returning to reside in the United States, or, if residing in the United States at the termination of the marital relation, by continuing to reside therein.”¹³⁹

¹³⁶ Ibid., xi. Martha Gardner, *The Qualities of a Citizen Women, Immigration, and Citizenship, 1870-1965* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 14 confirms “the law remained mute on the status of American women who married alien men until 1907.”

¹³⁷ I-Mien, “The Question of Expatriation in America Prior to 1907,” 71.

¹³⁸ For an analysis of the 1907 Expatriation Act from a gendered theoretical perspective, see Nicolosi, “‘We Do Not Want Our Girls to Marry Foreigners’: Gender, Race, and American Citizenship.”

¹³⁹ “An Act in Reference to the Expatriation of Citizens and Their Protection Abroad,” *The American Journal of International Law*, 1907, 258, https://archive.org/stream/jstor-2212395/2212395_djvu.txt.

Therefore, while some women such as Anna Gould, did remain in France even after divorcing their French husbands, others, such as Helen Morton, returned to the United States, and some contracted subsequent marital unions with other European members of transnational Society. The 1907 Expatriation Law also made it possible for extended residents to “overcome the presumption of expatriation by competent evidence produced to a diplomatic or consular officer of the United States” by simply proving that their stay was for reasons such as commerce, health, or education and that they intended, in good faith, to return to the U.S.¹⁴⁰ According to the Expatriation Law of 1907, Anna Gould’s 1908 second marriage to Boni’s cousin Hélié de Talleyrand-Périgord, Duc de Sagan should have stripped her of her American citizenship, even though a prior *New York Times* article already claimed she was a citizen of France.¹⁴¹ However, this did not stop her from returning to the United States to live on her father’s estate in 1939 for a period of time; though, she later died in Paris.

The 1907 Expatriation Law as it applied to the nationality of married women was upheld during the 1915 case *Mackenzie v. Hare*, which involved an American woman who had married a British citizen. However, once American women were granted the right to vote they began to argue that their citizenship should no longer be dependent upon that of their husbands.’ The 1922 Married Women’s Independent Citizenship Act (also known as the Cable Act) reversed the 1907 law. However, its implications remained racialized, as it only provided that a married American woman was entitled to keep her American citizenship as long as

¹⁴⁰ Quoted in I-Mien, “The Question of Expatriation in America Prior to 1907,” 106.

¹⁴¹ “Mme. Gould to Wed the Prince in Paris: Ill in Consequence of Family Opposition, She Decides to Return to France,” *New York Times*, April 1, 1908.

she married a man who would be *eligible* for American citizenship—a category that included only those legally defined as “white” or “of African descent.”

While citizenship and expatriation laws such as that of 1907 affirmed national borders in the establishment of cross-border marital contracts, the questions surrounding nineteenth-century elite conceptions of these boundaries should also be placed within the context of public critiques of these unions. As shown in the introduction of this section, contemporary public discourse painted a picture of these matrimonial unions as desperate, and sometimes ridiculous, and described them as attempts to exchange European titles and the social honor that accompanied them for large amounts of American money. These title-for-treasure caricatures were commonplace in nineteenth-century literature such as the novels of Edith Wharton, who mocked American *nouveaux riches* as crass and uncultured, and in the 1898 play *Les Transatlantiques* by Abel Hermant, which depicts a rich American father’s arrangement of his daughter’s marriage to a French marquis.¹⁴² The notion of elite American women as “title hunters” was even further perpetuated by the American press. During the Morton-Comte de Paris scandal, for example, the American publication *Truth* referred to those present as ladies who “quite unworthy of their great country, set up to be the leaders of society here, because they have large fortunes and have married idle Frenchmen of more or less dubious nobility.” It continued: “These ladies regard all untitled Europeans as mean whites, and have come to fancy that a nation without nobility is like a garden without flowers.”¹⁴³ For

¹⁴² Edith Wharton, *The Custom of the Country* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1913); Abel Hermant, *Les transatlantiques* (Paris: Michel, 1927).

¹⁴³ “Newspaper Clipping, Title Unknown,” May 30, 1884. Levi P. Morton Papers, Series VII Scrapbook, vol. 5, 130.

example, according to the *New York Times*, Americans scorned Anna Gould's second marriage to Boni de Castellane's cousin, Hélié de Talleyrand-Périgord, even more than they had her first. "Seldom, indeed," it explained, "has any of one of these so-called international marriages taken place that has excited such general and outspoken condemnation on the part of the people on this side of the Atlantic."¹⁴⁴ It should also be noted, however, that not all of the noble husbands were worthy of their opprobrium. *Town Topics* claimed that the name of Winaretta Singer's first husband the Prince de Scey-Montbéliard was "well known in circles of upper French aristocracy. The family is one of the oldest and most exclusive in France."¹⁴⁵ Likewise, the *Pittsburg Press* reported that the husband of Helen Morton was a "well-known figure in Paris Society, where he has to a large extent taken the place of his father who for a quarter century was known as the Prince de la Mode."¹⁴⁶ However, after their divorce the *New York Times* called him "one of the most unpopular figures in French life."¹⁴⁷

These national critiques largely stemmed from American, rather than French, public discourse. To this, Boni de Castellane remarked: "America alone is responsible for the outcry which invariably occurred whenever an heiress of the country married a foreigner, and the unfortunate man was at once described as a fortune hunter, whose sole aim was to restore the tarnished glories of his

¹⁴⁴ "Three French Dukedoms and a Prussian Principality Belong to the Talleyrand-Perigords: Historic House Which Has Already Formed Three American Alliances."

¹⁴⁵ "Saunerings," *Town Topics: Journal of Society*, July 14, 1887, New York Genealogical and Biographical Society Collection, New York Public Library.

¹⁴⁶ *Pittsburg Press*, October 5, 1901.

¹⁴⁷ "Three French Dukedoms and a Prussian Principality Belong to the Talleyrand-Perigords: Historic House Which Has Already Formed Three American Alliances."

escutcheon.”¹⁴⁸ And, like William H. Chambliss’ call for a titled European exclusion act, most critiques largely rested on the juxtaposition of American republican ideals with European monarchy and aristocracy, rather than shaming American women for marrying foreigners. The problem was not in their eyes that American women married French men, but that these French men were members of the nobility.

What is most notable about the public critiques of titled transnational unions is that when a marriage was criticized as being one motivated purely by financial arrangements, it was, for the most part, an attempt to render the union as illegitimate or at least, less legitimate than the alternative. This tells us much about contemporary emotional standards because the assumptive basis of such a critique rests on the notion that an ideal marriage was, therefore, an emotional one, rather than an economic one.

These national critiques, therefore, created a dichotomy when describing marriage as a practice—either one married for love or for money and status. As one contemporary commentator, Richard Harding Davis, pointed out: “It may be, after all, that she married for love in spite of the title, and not on account of it. But if these are love-matches, it would surely sometimes happen that the American men, in their turn would fall in love with foreign women of title, and that we would hear of impecunious princesses and countesses hunting through the States for rich brokers and wheat-dealers.”¹⁴⁹ Though marriage scholars have observed gender imbalances in many global patterns of transnational or mixed marriage,¹⁵⁰ the gendered nature

¹⁴⁸ Castellane, *How I Discovered America*, 132.

¹⁴⁹ Davis, *About Paris*, 201.

¹⁵⁰ “Concluding Roundtable” (International Conference on Inter-marriage and Mixedness: New Research Challenges on Inter-marriage and Mixedness in Europe and Beyond,

of these nineteenth-century elite marriages remains a characteristic worth addressing. Despite Davis's claim, it should first be noted however, that there were such exceptions. For example, wealthy American businessman, Isaac Singer married Isabella Eugenie Boyer; Thérès Mayer of New York had an American father and French mother; and Frank J. Gould, the youngest brother of Anna Gould, married a French woman, Florence Lacaze. Nancy Green addresses this imbalance by arguing that it was more acceptable for French aristocratic families to accept American money when the American was female because welcoming wealthy American women allowed for the continuation of the family name.¹⁵¹ Not only does this argument assume the title-for-treasure-exchange paradigm, but it also leaves contemporary female participants without agency and remains inherently unilateral as it attempts to explain the gendered nature of the marriages from the perspective of only one of the two cultures.

If the historian instead considers broader transatlantic travel patterns—more specifically the feminization of American tourism to France—and the gendered roles in which elite leisure time was spent, such as the female domination of balls and other social events, one can conclude that the gendered character of this particular marriage pattern is unsurprising. Prior to the Franco-Prussian War, Americans viewed Germany as a feminine place for artists, and they often described France by invoking its masculine, fear-inducing military. After the Franco-Prussian War, however, this changed as tourism in France increasingly became feminized and

Sorbonne, Maison de la Recherche, Paris, France, 2015) found that most patterns of transnational or mixed marriages during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were characterized by gender imbalances.

¹⁵¹ Green, *The Other Americans in Paris*, 89.

identified with women, and young American men were increasingly more likely to take extended residencies in places such as Germany or London. In a 1909 poem, Henry van Dyke proclaimed: “Oh London is a man’s town, there’s power in the air; And Paris is a woman’s town with flowers in her hair.”¹⁵² Likewise, Sinclair Lewis in his book, *Dodsworth*, (1929) also called Paris a “feminine and flirtatious refuge from reality.”¹⁵³ Levenstein explains: “In large part this was because [high] culture—still its chief desideratum for the genteel class—remained feminized in the public mind.”¹⁵⁴ Therefore, because cultural improvement was the goal, it was common that mothers and daughters maintained extended residencies in places like Paris. Contemporary sources support this conclusion. In their work, *Pairs is a Woman’s Town*, two American travelers explained:

Through diplomatic connections wealthy American fathers are sometimes able... to place their daughters in distinguished French families where... they have entrée into the most cultivated French society and make contacts which would be impossible under any other circumstances... For a young unmarried woman, a household with sons dominated by a clever, socially-inclined mother is to be recommended.¹⁵⁵

Further evidence can be found in the Morton Family Papers. The American Minister’s personal correspondence includes countless invitation responses from various “Mrs. and Misses” to his numerous transnational social events.¹⁵⁶ Morton’s

¹⁵² Henry Van Dyke, *America for Me - Van Dyke*, 1909.

¹⁵³ Quoted in Green, *The Other Americans in Paris*.

¹⁵⁴ Levenstein, *Seductive Journey*, 183.

¹⁵⁵ Helen Josephy and Mary Margaret McBride, *Paris Is a Woman’s Town* (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1929), 136–40.

¹⁵⁶ “RSVP,” n.d., Levi P. Morton Papers, Box 7 Social Correspondence, Folder “Accepts and Regrets, Ball 1884 April 24,” New York Public Library.

papers also include many letters of introduction or letters requesting introduction for young American ladies.¹⁵⁷ For example, one correspondent wrote:

Dear Sir,

I have a young friend in Paris, Mrs. Louis N. Thibault, of whom I think a great deal. She was a belle in San Francisco until about a year ago when she married a gentleman from Bordeaux and has gone to live in France. She cannot give up her love of America, though in the gay city of Paris and she asks me to send her a letter of introduction to the American Minister there. I do so cheerfully because she is the most charming and lovely person, and in her prosperity and happiness I take great interest. I recommend her to your kind attention and ask for her such consideration as you always give to the young, good and beautiful of our country-women.¹⁵⁸

Because there were far more American women such as this belle from California going to Paris than American men, and far more Americans going to France than French coming to America, the gendered character of this particular marriage pattern can be considered predictable. It is also important to remember that the transnational spaces out of which nineteenth-century elite transnational marriages emerged were spaces largely created by and dominated by American women.¹⁵⁹

However, what is even more interesting about Davis' critique is that he poses the question of motivation in a way that can only be explained by either love *or* money and titles as if they were the only possible desires to be satisfied by transnational unions. However, the institution of marriage in transnational context evoked emotions and satisfied desires far more complex and varied than simply

¹⁵⁷ "Correspondence," n.d., Levi P. Morton Papers, Box 2, Folder "Correspondence 1883 Jan-1888 Dec," New York Public Library.

¹⁵⁸ Stephen Fi___ to Levi P. Morton, January 26, 1882, Levi P. Morton Papers, Box 1, Folder "Correspondence 1882 Jan," New York Public Library.

¹⁵⁹ Anja Werner, *The Transatlantic World of Higher Education: Americans at German Universities, 1776-1914*, European Studies in American History, vol. 4 (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013).

one's personal affection for another person or their own economic well-being. Therefore, historians must also consider the array of other emotions involved—emotions that were far more complex once intertwined with cross-cultural encounter.

Chapter 2

Emotional Dimensions Of Elite Transnational Spaces

In the previous chapter, I argued that rather than attempts of *nouveaux riches* Americans to gain social status by participating in title-for-dollar exchanges, titled Franco-American marriages in the nineteenth century were instead the result of social interaction within elite transnational spaces that existed between the United States and Europe and among those who identified with others of similar economic and social status rather than national origin. What follows is a continued attempt to move beyond limited explanations of these elite marriages as mere socio-economic arrangements by more closely examining the cultural and emotional dimensions of those spaces. Here, I argue that at the intersection of encounter, elite class-consciousness, and transnational coupling stood a profoundly emotional experience, and because that experience was so intertwined with cross-cultural interaction, the marriages that emerged from these spaces can be, in many respects, characterized as even more (rather than less) emotional than their elite, national counterparts.

The following chapter is divided into four parts. In the first, I demonstrate how perceived notions of cultural difference within elite transnational social circles were the driving force of transnational elite marriages. As members of transnational Society encountered one another, perceived cultural stereotypes as well as processes of othering led to what I call *cultural infatuation*—affection not (only) for not

another person, but for the perceived culture to which they belonged. This long-standing, mutual fascination between French and American members of elite Society created for many marriage participants a *longing for the perceived “other.”* In this section, I also examine the role that the perception of one’s own otherness in these spaces played into marriage motivation and the extent to which this too was a profoundly emotional issue. Thereafter, the second and third parts of the chapter go further to contextualize these marriages within broader emotional and cultural shifts in European and American societies as they pertained to marriage practices. Here, I examine elite cultural rituals of transnational courting and divorce patterns in order to demonstrate how their details confirm that the emotionalization of marriage practices—a process that had begun over the previous centuries—was already deeply rooted in elite society by the nineteenth century. In this section, I argue that personal happiness and mutual affection were as much the aim of transnational marital unions as was material and social circumstance. Finally, I conclude the chapter by examining the decline of the titled-marriage pattern between France and the United States. Here, I argue that while the coming of World War I and the global economic crisis that followed did not end the pattern of titled marriages—as they continued well into the twentieth century—it did effectively end the domination of the transnational space that existed in between France and the United States by the upper echelons of society, thereby allowing for new transnational-marriage patterns to emerge.

2.1 Cultural Othering in Transnational Spaces

While the analytical concept of an *elite transnational community* (which in this case I have labeled transnational Society) levels socio-economic and national distinctions between American and European elites, it is important to note that as elite Americans and Europeans encountered one another in transnational spaces, processes of cultural differentiation still took place. These notions of perceived difference were sometimes marked simply by nuanced and overlapping cultural characteristics. For example, in her work *French Ways and Their Meanings*, elite American novelist and distinguished member of Society, Edith Wharton, justified the use of the terms “Latin” and “Anglo-Saxon” as “a loose way of drawing the division between the people who drink spirits and those who drink wine.”¹⁶⁰ Other times, notions of difference were labeled more strikingly. In 1882, one French journalist observed: “Les américains, établis à Paris, conservent un vif attachement pour leur pays; parmi nous ils gardent leurs mœurs, leurs habitudes, et cela sert à s’imaginer qu’ils sont encore de l’autre côté de l’océan.”¹⁶¹ Indeed, these notions of difference within transnational Society, whether constructed or assumed, played a central role in elite Franco-American marriage motivation. The role of difference in transnational marriages, therefore, presents for the researcher a unique opportunity for further exploring the concept of *othering*, its theoretical framework, and its applications in spaces of transnationality such as these.

¹⁶⁰ Edith Wharton, *French Ways and Their Meaning* (New York; London: D. Appleton and Company, 1919), viii.

¹⁶¹ “Newspaper Clipping, Title Unknown,” June 1882 Levi P. Morton Papers, Series VII Scrapbook, vol. 5, 64, New York Public Library.

The theoretical framework of *othering* has its roots in the work of German philosopher, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and proposes that the juxtaposition of the *other* is crucial to constituting the *self*.¹⁶² This theory has been most fruitfully employed in post-colonial and feminist scholarship. Notable examples include the works of Edward Said, who examined the “imagined geography”, in which the Orient is constructed as the “other”,¹⁶³ and Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex*, in which she describes men as the “self” and women as the “other.”¹⁶⁴ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak was, however, the first to use the concept in a systematic way in her 1985 work, “The Rani of Simur,” in which she examines the ways in which British colonial authorities constructed an Indian colonial “other.”¹⁶⁵ Like those of Said and de Beauvoir, Spivak’s “other” is constructed as inferior through a political process of unequal power relations.

While the concept has not been systematically applied to the context of the nineteenth-century Atlantic elite, the notion of *becoming the “self”* in opposition to the “other” during encounter has, to some extent, been explored by Maureen Montgomery in “‘Natural Distinction’: The American Bourgeois Search for Distinctive Signs in Europe.” Although it is not the central focus of her examination

¹⁶² Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Hans-Friedrich Wessels, and Heinrich Clairmont, *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Hamburg: F. Meiner Verlag, 1988); Although Lajos Brons in Lajos L. Brons, “Othering, an Analysis,” *Transscience* 6, no. 1 (2015): 69–90, argues that while the theoretical “roots of othering grew in Hegelian soil,” his dialectic of self-other identification and distantiation in the “Master-Slave Dialectic” is more of a necessary, unavoidable aspect of social existence, rather than a construction of unequal opposition driven by psychological and/or other needs.

¹⁶³ Edward W Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

¹⁶⁴ Simone de Beauvoir and H. M Parshley, *The Second Sex* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993).

¹⁶⁵ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “The Rani of Sirmur: An Essay in Reading the Archives,” *History and Theory* 24, no. 3 (1985): 247–72; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak., “Can the Subaltern Speak?,” in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271–313.

of the cultural work of class formation through elite American travel to Europe—and although she does not employ these terms—she concludes that such travel contributed to the making of a “national identity” as American travelers sought to define and differentiate themselves during their European stays.¹⁶⁶ In addition, this structuralist understanding of othering as a process of identity formation among nineteenth-century Atlantic elites has perhaps been most fruitfully explored by literary theorists’ examinations of the works of transnational Society member Edith Wharton. Publishing nearly one novel each year between 1897 and 1937, Wharton often depicted events, characters, and settings that were derived from her own cross-cultural experiences with the French. As biographer and litterateur Hermonie Lee explains, “In almost every one, there is a cultural comparison, a conflict, a journey or a displacement, a sharp eye cast across national characteristics.”¹⁶⁷ Literary theorist Maria Sträaf further argues that these cultural conflicts or encounters with Europeans produced for Wharton a hyper-state of national awareness as she and other elite Americans were forced to question, modify, abandon, or affirm their own cultural values. According to Sträaf, the Franco-American encounters that played out in Wharton’s novels demonstrate a “process through which contemporary French and Americans were made aware of their own and others’ distinguishing qualities.”¹⁶⁸ Literary scholar Millicent Bell reaches similar conclusions. She argues

¹⁶⁶ Montgomery, “‘Natural Distinction’: The American Bourgeois Search for Distinctive Signs in Europe.”

¹⁶⁷ Hermione Lee, *Edith Wharton* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007).

¹⁶⁸ Maria Sträaf, “In Between Cultures: Franco-American Encounters in the Work of Edith Wharton” (Linköping University, Department of Culture and Communication, 2008), 3.

that the longer Wharton stayed in France, the more American she *became*.¹⁶⁹ Embedded in the context of nineteenth-century nation-making, this process of othering as identity formation takes the form of *becoming a “national” self*.¹⁷⁰

But othering as identity formation and postcolonial and feminist othering as a political process through which unequal power structures are created and reinforced, seem to offer an incomplete picture in the context of the Atlantic elite. Further, the extent to which cultural othering is an emotional process has also yet to be fully explored. Examining othering as an emotional response to encounter reveals the intimate nature of the relationships between not only wealthy French and American elites but also between them and the transnational spaces that they created.

When Americans encountered Europeans in elite transnational spaces, despite identifying with them socially and economically, subsequent self/other distanciation still took place and, more importantly, sentiments for the “other” were created in the process. However, unlike feminist and post-colonial othering, this was neither a political process nor did it result from (or create) unequal power distribution. On the contrary, a perceived sense of socio-economic uniformity between European and American members of transnational Society more often

¹⁶⁹ Millicent Bell, “Edith Wharton in France,” in *Wretched Exotic: Essays on Edith Wharton in Europe*, ed. Katherine Joslin and Alan Price (New York: P. Lang, 1993), 64.

¹⁷⁰ Brooke Lindy Blower, *Becoming Americans in Paris Transatlantic Politics and Culture between the World Wars* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011) examines similar processes in the later interwar period of the twentieth century. Here, she argues that through temporary yet extended stays in Paris, Americans intellectuals participated in process through which they defined themselves as Americans. She argues that Americans in Paris manifested an offshore extension of their national lives, projecting an image of the nation as something not rooted in fixed geographical space but made up of moveable social institutions and cultural parts. In this process, she explains, *Americanness* emerged as a transnational concept—one that cannot be completely explained by an introspective analysis.

characterized these elite social spaces. Here, the result of the othering process not only contributed to the making of self-identity but also to the making of the other's identity and perceived cultural characteristics. Further, unlike Said's or de Beauvoir's othering, these processes were *positive* in that they often isolated desirable cultural traits and produced a fascination with the perceived "other." *Positive othering*—the process in which the "other" is constructed as desirable and fascinating through perceived cultural forms—I argue, is distinct from concepts such as the "colonial gaze" and "exoticism" of post-colonial theory,¹⁷¹ as these concepts are still largely embedded in an unequal power distribution. In this case, attraction to difference does not assume superiority of the "other" or the "self," merely difference. In elite transnational communities, these othering processes were accompanied by preconditioned cultural infatuation—affection for perceived culture itself—that was deeply embedded in national and gendered stereotypes. In the context of transnational marriages, this mutual cultural infatuation then produced in cross-cultural encounters more personal sentiments of *longing for the "other"* that were, for many, at the root of cross-border marriage motivation.

Evidence of these processes is best observed in ways in which members of transnational Society described one another in varied forms of media. An examination of these elite discourses demonstrates not only how notions of difference were marked but also how these perceived differences provoked certain emotional responses. Further, elite social events such as dinners and balls are of particular interest as they provided the stage on which many of these processes

¹⁷¹ Said, *Orientalism*; Charles Forsdick, "Travelling Concepts: Postcolonial Approaches to Exoticism and Diversity," in *Travel in Twentieth-Century French and Francophone Cultures: "The Persistence of Diversity"* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

played out. Therefore, their descriptions found in both the press and the writings and papers of hosts, like American Minister to Paris, Levi P. Morton, as well as those of attendees provide an important glimpse into the ways in which elite transnational social spaces themselves were perceived and interpreted and how these cultural systems of meaning were translated into processes of cultural othering and the production of sentiments for the perceived “other”.

For the French, the gendered and extravagant nature of transnational social spaces, such as the dinners and balls hosted by Morton and his wife at the American legation in Paris, facilitated the creation of an enchanting image of the American “other” with young, elite women and their wealth at the center. One French journalist writing for *Le Gaulois* tried to capture this allure. While covering one of Morton’s dinners, he wrote: “Et des beautés et des élégances, et des jeunessees américaines, à foison ! Quelle admirable race, et quelle grâce ardente elle déploie à la valse!”¹⁷² (And beautiful, elegant, youthful American ladies, galore! What an admirable race, and what ardent grace she displays dancing the waltz!) On the subject of a separate social event at the American legation, another French journalist for *La Patrie* wrote:

On sait qu’il n’y a plus guère, en effet, de fêtes à Paris sans que les ravissantes Américaines y apportent l’attrait d’une beauté idéale et d’une gaieté française. Les Américains sont un peuple en qui fleurissent la santé—virilité intellectuelle et force chez l’homme et la grâce—sérénité de la beauté—chez la femme. Aussi, le monde américain est-il depuis quelques années fort recherché à Paris, où les salons français se complètent, quand, pourvus déjà de l’élément gaulois, ils s’agrémentent du type délicieux de la femme américaine... A ce compte, la légation des Etats Unis à Paris était,

¹⁷² “Newspaper Clipping, Title Unknown,” *Gaulois*, May 26, 1883, Levi P. Morton Papers, Series VII Scrapbook, vol. 5, 84, New York Public Library.

hier, un véritable ‘keapside’, où éclatait la vivacité de la grâce parisienne à côté de la charmeresse beauté américaine. Avec cela, et comme cadre, l’originalité de toilettes la plus sui generis, c’est-à-dire... américaine, rehaussée de ce je ne sais quoi plein d’un bon goût dont on se plaît partout à emprunter le ton et le tact aux modèles parisiens.¹⁷³

(It’s well known that there are few festive occasions in Paris any more, without the delightful Americans bringing the attraction of ideal beauty and... cheerfulness. The Americans are a people in which health flourishes –intellectual virility and force in the men and grace, serenity of beauty in the women. Also, the American world has for a number of years been much sought after in Paris, where French salons already provided with the Gallic element are completed when combined with the delightful type of the American woman. On this account the Legation of the United States in Paris was, yesterday, a real ‘keapside’ [sic], where the vivacity of Parisian grace burst forth beside the charming American beauty. With that, and as a frame, the originality of the garments the most sui generis, that is to say ... American, enhanced by the tone and tact of good taste borrowed from Parisian models.)

Both excerpts show how notions of beauty, grace, and elegance that were transcribed onto American women were rooted in their perceived difference. Further, because elite social events like dinners and balls were used as elaborate displays of wealth and refinement, the process of positive othering and the fascination that it produced were linked directly to the spaces of encounter themselves. For example, when the recently widowed Mrs. “Plus” Moore, née Miss Kate Robinson of Philadelphia, moved to Paris in the 1880s, she quickly made her way into a prominent position in transnational Society.¹⁷⁴ The social events held at her private residence, like those of the American legation, became important gathering places for elite transnational Society, and as Boni de Castellane explained,

¹⁷³ “Les Receptions de Mme Morton,” *La Patrie*, June 19, 1882, Levi P. Morton Papers, Series VII Scrapbook, vol. 5, 59, New York Public Library.

¹⁷⁴ “Society at Home and Abroad,” *New York Times*, September 6, 1903.

“certain political men” of France were especially “attracted by the topsy turvy love peculiar to the house.”¹⁷⁵ This “topsy turvy love” was rooted in the elaborate cultural rituals of Mrs. Moore’s social events and others like them, and the passage further demonstrates how the spaces themselves were endowed with emotional forces of attraction and fascination.

But how was the image of the othered American woman fashioned into an attractive potential wife in ways that went beyond the sum of wealth that would be brought into the marriage? Juliette Adam, a French woman, wrote a piece for the *North American Review* in an attempt to offer a “European stand-point on [the attraction to] the young American girl in Europe.” She admitted that while she had never been to the United States, she knew America “by its history, its literature, and [by] important facts of its daily life” and that she knew its women by observing those who had been residing in France. She then went on to adorn them by writing:

The young American girl in France, even though she should reside there a long time, still remains a peculiar being, disturbing the men and a source of uneasiness to the women... She is beautiful with perfect beauty, or endowed with a triumphal grace... The Young girl is the aristocracy, the luxury, the art, the crown of American society, as the Epicurean was of ancient society. She alone enjoys and profits from her leisure. It is for her that man bends with such fury beneath the weight of the labor for his betrothed or his daughter... She never looks like a shopkeeper’s daughter... They may be charged with what we call in France *airs de coquettes*, but not one of them looks like a tradeswoman... The American girl has a science of pleasing which captivates even the old-world Don Juan’s unawareness. She seems to us exceptional, intelligent, putting for all her talent to attain the final end, which is trapping, often for his own good, a titled husband.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ Castellane, *How I Discovered America*, 106.

¹⁷⁶ Juliette Adam, “Those American Girls in Europe,” *The North American Review*, October 1, 1890, 404.

Like the writers for *La Patrie* and *Le Gaulois*, Adams transcribed the American woman's otherness as captivating, graceful, luxurious, beautiful, and as notably exceptional. For her, it was for these reasons that they so easily attracted titled husbands. Interestingly, her observation that such an arrangement was "for his own good" indicates a favorable judgment of such transnational unions, unlike the writers examined in the first chapter.

Other contemporary commentators also attempted to further explain the European attraction to American women as suitable wives—an attraction that was fervently rooted in her perceived difference. One member of transnational Society, writing from London speculated, "The reason which underlies all the others is social... American women were seen as far more social and less timid," he explained. "Men like variety... Her intelligence, quickness, freshness, animation, fullness of character, often her brilliancy, always her individuality were perfectly novel to him and perfectly delightful."¹⁷⁷ Likewise, French citizen and good friend to Edith Wharton, Louis Simonin confirmed during his visit to New York that American women possessed an "exaggerated love of pleasure." He wrote:

There are... in New York many young ladies who are, as they say, a little fast... [and] they astonish Europe with their carelessness of conversational restraints... Many persons accustomed to our usages would not choose these young ladies for wives. They are right and they are wrong; it matters little: the truth is, that these young Americans, on their introduction to [S]ociety so frivolous, and sometimes—to speak plainly—compromised by grave acts, make in the end good wives and excellent mothers.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ G. W. S., "American Girl Abroad," 82.

¹⁷⁸ Louis Simonin, "A Frenchman in New York," *Appletons' Journal: A Magazine of General Literature*, April 3, 1875, 433.

In elite Franco-American encounter, processes of cultural othering occurred bilaterally. However, for Americans, positive othering and longing for the French “other” was heavily rooted in perceived cultural infatuation. As Nancy Green explains, “Many Americans were in Paris for the love of the French, literally.” The idea of “being swept off one’s feet by a French nobleman remained the most visible image of the French-American marriages in the early part of the twentieth century.”¹⁷⁹ In the 1920s book *Paris is a Woman’s Town*, the two young female authors explained, “No more diverting and fascinating male exists than the aristocratic Parisian.”¹⁸⁰ They added that “to be perfectly frank, we were much more interested in the male human element than the female in Paris.”¹⁸¹ But for American women, the attraction to French otherness went a little deeper than the men with whom they wished to partner. They often found a love affair with France and French culture just as appealing. For many of these elite women, France had become synonymous with social luxuries in ways that Britain and Germany had not, and marriage was a way to permanently insert themselves into it. To fully understand this, an examination of the development of America’s elite social class and the ways in which it put culture to use is necessary.

By the second half of the nineteenth century, America’s growing economic development had begun to produce a wealthy population that flocked to fashionable New York. While elite cultural forms such as the dress, architecture, and gastronomy of places like Boston or Philadelphia were determined by historical customs; New York’s elite began to construct their own high Society based on

¹⁷⁹ Green, *The Other Americans in Paris*, 88.

¹⁸⁰ Josephy and McBride, *Paris Is a Woman’s Town*, 159.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 161.

European, and largely French, cultural models. As Thorstein Veblen in *Theory of the Leisure Class* first showed in 1899, New York's emulation of European aristocracy was a central element in the commerce and culture of luxury.¹⁸² In order to more fully understand the meanings that New York high society attributed to the cultural forms taken from European aristocracy, we must carefully examine how this fascination was materialized within their cultural rituals.

The social ambitions of Ward McAllister provide an excellent example. He went to New York determined to create a high Society and did so with French aristocracy in mind. As a young man, he had traveled widely in Europe. Overwhelmed with the hustle and bustle of Paris, he took residence in Pau, a small village overlooking the French Pyrénées where he spent most of his time with French aristocrats, learned about Bordeaux wines, and perfected his etiquette.¹⁸³ He wrote: "There I learned how to give dinners; to esteem and to value the *coq de Bruyère* of the *Pyrénées* and the *Pie de Mars*."¹⁸⁴ He began hosting one to two dinners a week in France, and they were so successful that he resolved to host a ball himself when he returned to New York from Paris based on this model.¹⁸⁵

New York's high Society also replicated European nobles' style of life through architecture and art. Multi-million-dollar, French-style *chateaux* were constructed on Fifth Avenue and at Newport. Mr. Rutherford-Stuyvestant (Stuyvesant Rutherford) built the first "French flat"—reproducing customs found in Paris, in which a concierge guarded the entrance. All suites were rented by young

¹⁸² Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*.

¹⁸³ Homberger, *Mrs. Astor's New York*, 164.

¹⁸⁴ Ward McAllister, *Society as I Have Found It*. (New York: Cassell Pub. Co., 1890), 65.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 69.

couples of New York Society. This model quickly dominated modern New York. In these lavish homes, extravagant collections of French antiques and art became “necessary expenditures.”¹⁸⁶ The art collection of William H. Vanderbilt featured many French artists. While he always had a taste for art, when he came into his fortune, he turned his nose on American art, as his tastes could only be satisfied by “the best and most costly in the world.”¹⁸⁷ Likewise, for American women, the best corsets were French.¹⁸⁸ From France they got dresses, gowns, cloaks, fans, jeweled combs, gold hairnets, and head ornaments. As American author and critic Lloyd R. Morris wrote: “[Ladies] had to send to Paris for everything, and the tyranny of Monsieur Worth—intransigent and perdurable—began.”¹⁸⁹ This cultural fascination also materialized in dinners and costume balls in New York. Mrs. William Colford Schermerhorn, for example, invited 600 guests to a magnificent “*affaire de luxe*.” All of the guests were asked to dress in costume of the period of Louis XV; however, according to Ward McAllister, many of the men rather preferred the imperial style of Napoleon III. The house itself was completely redecorated and refurnished in the style.¹⁹⁰ The servants were dressed in uniforms and wigs of Versailles. McAllister remembered, “It was intended to be the greatest affair New Yorkers had ever seen... The men, as well as the women, vied with each other in getting up as handsome costumes as were ever worn at that luxurious court.”¹⁹¹ The use of French words

¹⁸⁶ Jaher, “Style and Status: High Society in Late-Nineteenth-Century New York,” 279.

¹⁸⁷ W. A. Croffut, *The Vanderbilts and the Story of Their Fortune* (London: Belford, Clarke, 1886), 164.

¹⁸⁸ Homberger, *Mrs. Astor's New York*, 169.

¹⁸⁹ Lloyd R. Morris, *Incredible New York; High Life and Low Life of the Last Hundred Years*. (New York: Random House, 1951), 25.

¹⁹⁰ McAllister, *Society as I Have Found It*, 15.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

here is also interesting. Mrs. Schermerhorn's invitations did not request the pleasure of her guests' company but instead simply announced a "*bal paré*."

Here, like in other instances of intercultural transfers, modification and adaptations were made and the replication of French models was often less than precise. Menus at every dinner event were written in French, and the food prepared by a French chef. However, on his American tour, M. Simonin wrote:

The *cuisine* is neither good nor suitably prepared. Meals are served in the American fashion— all the dishes at once, and every variety of condiment is placed upon the table for seasoning the viands according to the taste of the guest. The head-cook is a Frenchman, but he is obliged to renounce good traditions by modifying his practice to suit the requirements of his employers. He is paid like a minister of state, receiving frequently four hundred dollars a month.¹⁹²

Likewise, when transnational-marriage participant Boni de Castellane visited New York, he came across a chef who had previously worked for his grandmother. In their discussion, the chef warned him that he would not like the cooking and asked that he not judge him too harshly as he was forced "to please [the Americans]."¹⁹³ One can therefore conclude that it was not necessarily the case that elite Americans preferred superiority of French cuisine, but instead the idea or representation that it was *French* made it a mark of elite status despite the fact that it was far from authentic. These kinds of replications are a crucial element of the emotion of cultural infatuation. American elites had been seasoned and enabled by cultural institutions of the transnational community, and there was a self-conscious sense of how their imaginaries were produced. How they placed themselves in this imaginary

¹⁹² Simonin, "A Frenchman in New York," 432.

¹⁹³ Castellane, *How I Discovered America*, 27.

world via the performance of their balls and social events is especially interesting. The historical researcher should not consider this mere imitation because the prestige came from the performance of French culture. Transnational marriage in this context gave further prestige to that performance; as the performance further give prestige to the marriages.

Finally, because cultural imagery creates emotions, one must also question how marriage participants saw themselves as subjects through its lens. Therefore, by examining the ways in which actors thought of their own flourishing in the context of their transnational community, we might consider the satisfaction that one receives from being the subject of *positive othering* or the emotional enjoyment that one's own otherness provided. The following example from contemporary American novelist, Booth Tarkington, provides the foundation for such an inquiry. He wrote: "Half a dozen Americans stand at one end of an aisle of Notre Dame in Paris, another half dozen at the other end. The two parties exchange glances of hostility at first sight. Says a lady of the first half dozen: 'The place is spoiled. One can never come here without finding a lot of *Americans*.' Says a lady of the second half dozen: 'Let us go. Here come a lot of Americans!'"¹⁹⁴ If we adopt Martha Nussbaum's concept of emotions as forms of evaluative judgment,¹⁹⁵ then by maintaining one's own otherness and their affection for this otherness, they attempted to distinguish themselves from the growing number of American tourists. This, therefore, can also be considered as one of the emotional goals of marriage participants.

¹⁹⁴ Quoted in Levenstein, *Seductive Journey*, 177.

¹⁹⁵ Martha Craven Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

2.2 Courting Practices and Emotions

A continued attempt to move beyond more limited explanations of transnational elite marriage unions as mere socio-economic transactions requires that they be contextualized within broader emotional shifts that pertained to courtship and marital practices in European and American societies. As marriage and emotions historians have shown, by the nineteenth century, the cultural notion of love-based marriage had become firmly rooted as a cultural ideal in both societies.¹⁹⁶ Further, while material circumstance remained important for elite participants, marriage was, nonetheless, a profoundly emotional issue for both men and women. In her examination of the marriage practices of British nobility over three centuries, Kimberly Schutte draws similar conclusions arguing that by the nineteenth century, the ultimate aim of elite courting for women “was to fall in love with a man whom their family would also consider fitting.”¹⁹⁷ Further, while family pressure to “marry well” occurred consistently within elite families in both Europe and America, women still exercised a great deal of agency in partner selection. Here, personal happiness was as much an aim of transnational marital unions as was material and social circumstance.

However, for the historian, using emotions as a category of analysis in examining personal and intimate relationships in nineteenth-century elite transnational communities is not without methodological limitations as most

¹⁹⁶ Bologne, *Histoire du couple*; Coontz, *Marriage, a History*; Matt and Stearns, *Doing Emotions History*; Reddy, *The Making of Romantic Love*.

¹⁹⁷ Schutte, *Women, Rank, and Marriage in the British Aristocracy, 1485-2000: An Open Elite?*, 87.

contemporary subjects often saw outward displays of public emotion as contrary to proper behavior. As one 1882 etiquette manual advised, "It is a mark of good breeding to suppress undue emotion, whether of disappointment, of mortification, or laughter, of anger, or of selfishness in any form."¹⁹⁸ Therefore, because very few openly discussed their private, personal relationships in an overt way, the few sources that do provide such descriptions, like the memoir of Boni de Castellane, are especially invaluable (albeit perhaps not representative) windows into emotions of the past. Therefore, a reexamination of the events leading to Anna Gould's marriage to Boni de Castellane—one that has been labeled as the most notorious and scandalous example of a fortune-hunting arrangement¹⁹⁹—and a re-reading of his memoir provide an interesting glimpse into transnational elite courtship practices, emotions, personal choice, and individual agency.

Finally, while little historical work has been done on courting practices in nineteenth-century transnational communities, comparative conclusions can, nonetheless, be drawn from those undertaken in national frameworks. In both the United States and France, elite courting was a semi-public affair. Its practices often adhered to strict cultural decorum, and potential matches involved not only families, but also chaperones and sometimes all of Society during costume balls, which came to often serve as quasi marriage markets and public theater of elite courtship. As Schutte has also shown, because by the nineteenth century overtly arranged marriages were seen as in poor taste, balls along with the ridged social exclusion that defined their guest lists were used to ensure that only appropriate social

¹⁹⁸ Walter Raleigh Houghton, *American Etiquette and Rules of Politeness* (Chicago: Rand, McNally, 1882), 214.

¹⁹⁹ Eliot, *Heiresses and Coronets*, 165.

interaction was promoted among those hoping to marry.²⁰⁰ Further, while the role of mothers in their daughters' partner selection was an important one, Schutte argues that for them, "the emotional aspects of a proposed match remained a deep concern."²⁰¹ Contrarily however, in the case of transnational courting practices, the role of the mother was not always an essential one. As one American member of transnational Society residing in London explained, "The American girl asks little or no help from her mother in choosing a partner for life. The English girl has always been dependent upon her mother for a husband. ... She has toiled, schemed, and intrigued to find husbands for her girls... Perhaps the very men she has fixed on for her own offspring have married Americans."²⁰² Such agency seems to have been the case for Anna Gould.

Anna Gould was the daughter of Jay Gould, the American railroad tycoon, who by the age of forty-five possessed more than 100 million dollars, had a yacht Atlanta, and owned "a massive brownstone at the northeast corner of fifth and forty-seventh, in the heart of the aristocratic section [of New York City]."²⁰³ When he died in 1892 at age fifty-six, unlike the Astors, Gould did not transmit the bulk of his wealth to his eldest son, but instead divided it among all his children.

Like many elite American women, Anna traveled frequently to France during her childhood, and according to Boni, she loved France very much. In the spring of 1894, she went to Paris to take extended residence with Miss Fanny Reed,

²⁰⁰ Homberger, *Mrs. Astor's New York*, 120; Schutte, *Women, Rank, and Marriage in the British Aristocracy*, 91–92.

²⁰¹ Schutte, *Women, Rank, and Marriage in the British Aristocracy*, 104.

²⁰² G. W. S., "American Girl Abroad," 82.

²⁰³ Gustavus Myers, *History of the Great American Fortunes* (New York: The Modern library, 1936), 89.

a relation of Minnie Paget (née Stevens). According to Boni, there was much gossip around Paris regarding her arrival, her reputable wealth, and her matrimonial future.²⁰⁴ Impelled by both curiosity and cultural infatuation, Parisian Society flocked to see her. According to him, while Reed, who was meant to chaperone Anna during her stay, did not care for Boni, she introduced the two of them nonetheless. Further, he explained that when they met, Anna had been unimpressed by both his name and rank, but she was happy to find a Frenchman who spoke English. Of his attraction to her, he insisted, it was her unusual personality—one that was both shy and childish but charming—that fascinated him the most rather than her wealth, which “played only a secondary part in her attraction.”²⁰⁵ It is important to note that he was writing in the period after their divorce and that he published his memoir in both English and French for the explicit purpose of “telling his side” of what became a rather scandalous separation. The public had been rather critical of their marriage and often classified it as the epitome of a fortune- and title-hunting marriage. Here, however, he insisted numerous times that her fortune was not his primary motivation for pursuing her and that, in fact, he had really loved her. His repeated insistence of that love is central to the examination of broader emotional shifts as they applied to elite marriage practices. In interpreting his claims, one can assume that either 1) he was telling the truth and that they both had mutual feelings of affection for one another and entered into the marriage with expectations of love and happiness or 2) one could consider the possibility that he was lying and that his memoir was merely an attempt to lessen a fairly prominent

²⁰⁴ Castellane, *How I Discovered America*, 13.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

scandal surrounding a divorce from a economically-motivated marriage. However, if in fact he was lying, his very insistence is evidence that he, nonetheless, recognized social norms of love-based marriages as a cultural ideal. In claiming that his marriage to Anna was in fact a love-based marriage, he was attempting to defend its legitimacy against critiques that viewed economically based marriages as less legitimate.

Further, it is important to note that Anna exercised tremendous agency and personal choice in their coupling process, at least from what the researcher can presume from Boni de Castellane's account. According to him, she needed to be convinced of both him and his affection for her. In this process he said, he was "determined to carry the warfare of love into the enemy's camp."²⁰⁶ He wrote to her several times, passed under her window on horseback, and sent her a Persian lilac—each action a courtship ritual that would denote genuine affection.²⁰⁷ After she returned to the United States, Boni followed her in order to "complete his conquest of this charming daughter of the new world."²⁰⁸ He called his trip an "amorous adventure" and said while he knew he would encounter "many difficulties and much opposition," he left at once to "win" her.²⁰⁹

According to him, their interactions during their courtship period were wrought with flirtation and teasing. He wrote: "Like most women who play with fire, she found it an exciting habit, and one excessively difficult to drop."²¹⁰ He also tried purposefully on occasion to make her jealous. He explained: "I summoned

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 16.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 37.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 42.

jealously to my aid” by holding a dinner for Anna and other charming Society girls. “I was not to allow her to retain the idea that foreigners were not sympathetic to other American beauties.” He subsequently explained that she was furious, but it worked. “The display of the temper told me that I was now regarded by her as her especial property, and little by little, I prepared the way for my ultimate proposal,” which he carried out during their visit to Quebec.²¹¹

His description of both his marriage proposal and their wedding was laced with romanticized emotions. He explained that during a mass at the cathedral, he “felt that the exquisite harmonies of color and sound, by which [he and Anna] were encompassed, were fraught with some subtle meaning.” He reminisced further in his memoir: “I listened to my beloved mother tongue, I was one with the indissoluble Spirit of France, and I was at peace. And as I looked at my companion, I thought that I could wish for no better fate than to share my life with this young girl, and to awaken love in her heart.” According to him, after they left mass, he “unveiled [his] inmost soul” to her and asked her to become his wife.²¹² Likewise, regarding their wedding, he recalled: “I was carried away by varying emotions... I visualized the possibilities of my chosen road, its brilliance, its romance, and I thrilled at the prospect. I dreamt of happiness for my wife; and for myself—success in everything that appertained to my tastes, my country, and my faith.”²¹³

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid., 45.

²¹³ Ibid., 48.

2.3 Divorce and Emotions

Boni de Castellane and Anna Gould were married for eleven years before the marriage ended in divorce. Divorce in the case of transnational elite marriages may be evidence of post-marriage disillusionment with pre-marital cultural expectations, as some, such as Elizabeth Eliot, have claimed.²¹⁴ However, that some of these women, Anna included, remained in France and married other Frenchmen shows that perhaps it was with their husbands rather than their husbands' culture that they became disillusioned. Like Anna, Daisy Foster also remained in France after her divorce from her first husband in order to marry her second, Pierre Alyn, who was well known as a singer and composer. According to *Town Topics*, regarding the decision not to return to the United States, "she professed to loathe the restrictions and conventions of her native heath."²¹⁵ Others, however, could and did return to the United States. One *New York Times* article discussed a Franco-American marriage, "which is of a much more ancient date than the Gould-Castellane match, which has turned out equally un-happy. In this case the American wife has left her husband and taken refuge with her parents."²¹⁶ Levi P. Morton's daughter Helen, also returned to the United States after her short marriage to the Duc de Valeccay. Further, having had the majority of her fortune tied to New York real estate, she managed to do so with most of it.²¹⁷ Anna's second marriage, by contrast, remained within the established familial and social networks from which the first had emerged; after her

²¹⁴ Eliot, *Heiresses and Coronets*.

²¹⁵ "Broadway Banter," *Town Topics*, 1919, New York Genealogical and Biographical Society Collection, New York Public Library.

²¹⁶ "Anna Gould May Take Back Count," *New York Times*, June 16, 1907.

²¹⁷ "Morton Suing Duke: Seeks to Recover Property Transferred before Daughter's Marriage," *New York Times*, March 7, 1905; *San Francisco Call*, November 22, 1905.

divorce from Boni, she married his cousin, Hélié de Talleyrand-Périgord, Duc de Sagan. After his divorce from Anna, Boni de Castellane also continued to surround himself with American women, claiming they were more lively and independent than their French counterparts.²¹⁸

While instances of divorce may or may not indicate cross-cultural disillusion, they can serve as a more important indication of emotional expectations. As Stephanie Coontz shows in her examination of marriage practices over the centuries, increased instances of divorce coincided with the rise of love-based marriage cultural ideals. She explains, “No sooner had the ideal of the love match and lifelong intimacy taken hold than people began to demand the right to divorce.”²¹⁹ For Anna a successful marriage meant one that was based on happiness, and for her the absence of happiness provided a valid reason for the marriage to be dissolved. When Boni proposed marriage to Anna, she had accepted without hesitation but with the disclaimer that she refused to become Catholic. “I will never become a Catholic,” she explained, “because if I were to do so I should not be able to divorce you, and if I were not happy I would not remain your wife for a moment longer than necessary.”²²⁰ The use of *happiness* in her own valuation of successful marriage was also reiterated in their annulment proceedings, when one of Castellane’s witnesses, Catherine Cameron, testified that Anna had told her that “it was the custom of American girls to divorce husbands who did not make them happy.”²²¹ Therefore, because the absence of love and happiness justified the

²¹⁸ Castellane, *How I Discovered America*, 86.

²¹⁹ Coontz, *Marriage, a History*, 8.

²²⁰ Castellane, *How I Discovered America*, 45.

²²¹ “Defends Church in Anna Gould Case,” *New York Times*, December 18, 1913.

dissolution of marriage, increasing divorce rates not only call into question the notion of these nineteenth-century transnational marriages as strictly economic arrangements, but also become a valuable indicator of emotional expectations among marriage participants in both national and transnational circumstances.

The United States Census Bureau already recognized in 1909 that American divorce rates had been steadily increasing. Between 1887 and 1906, divorce rates had increased at an approximate rate of 30 percent every five years. Thus, the divorce rate was almost three times as great in 1905 as it had been in 1870. Based on total population, the annual divorce rate in 1870 had been 28 divorces per 100,000-person population sample. In 1900, it had increased to 73 divorces per 100,000 people. Further, when they limited their analysis to only the married population, they found that in 1870 approximately 1 out of 625 marriages ended in divorce annually, and in 1900, approximately 1 out of 250 American marriages ended in divorce.²²²

Because their official records are spread across the Atlantic, the specific divorce and annulment rates among the transnational-marriage participants are nearly impossible to ascertain, much like their marriage rates. The sample of elite Franco-American marriages during the nineteenth century that I collected through mentions in the French and American press—which cannot, because of this limitation, be claimed as representative—included nearly one hundred marriages; of them, I found mentions of ten of them ending in divorce (leaving a sample divorce rate of about 1 out of 10).

²²² S. N. D. North, Director, *Special Reports : Marriage and Divorce, 1867-1906, Part One: Summary, Laws, Foreign Statistics* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1909), 12–13.

Whether or not these are representative, we do know that divorce was at the center of a broader cross-cultural negotiation within transnational-marriage spaces. In the dedication of his 1893 novel, *L'Américaine*, French writer Jules Claretie called divorce an “American importation.” “With you, divorces are obtained with prodigious facility,” he criticized. “We have not yet reached the same condition of things France.”²²³ Likewise, Boni de Castellane claimed that in the United States divorce was “a household word.” “Women take more than one husband, and men several wives,” he boasted.²²⁴ As Anna had noted in her refusal to convert to Catholicism when she accepted his marriage proposal, Protestant tradition rendered Americans relatively strong proponents of loose divorce laws, a quality on which Coontz also remarked in her cross-cultural marriage study.²²⁵

Dating back to the period of the *ancien régime*, French Catholics, by contrast, often held strict views of marriage as indissoluble. This view later eroded during the Revolution, when the French State recognized religious pluralism and became secular. In this process, marriage was detached from religious sacrament and became a civil contract. This, therefore, meant that divorce also had to be recognized as an individual liberty, and the 1792 *Loi de floréal an II* legalized divorce on the grounds of incompatibility.²²⁶ However, in 1816, as the Catholic religion became once again the religion of the State under the Restoration, these

²²³ Jules Claretie, *L'Américaine* (Chicago: W.B. Conkey, 1893), 3.

²²⁴ Castellane, *How I Discovered America*, 31.

²²⁵ Coontz, *Marriage, a History*, 181.

²²⁶ Jean-Paul Sardon, “L'évolution du divorce en France,” *Population* 51, no. 3 (1996): 717.

liberal divorce laws were repealed. It was not until 1884 that the right of divorce was reestablished under the Third Republic by the *loi Naquet*.²²⁷

The aforementioned U.S. census report on marriage and divorce in 1909 also examined foreign statistics, and those obtained from the French *Annuaire Statistique* noted that the general tendency in France from 1887 to 1905 also showed a steady increase in the divorce rates. In 1887, there were 10 divorces reported to every 100,000-person population sample, and in 1905, it was 26 to every 100,000-person population sample.²²⁸ While these records, unfortunately, do not also include an analysis limited to the married population like the American records, we can nevertheless conclude that while there were greater instances of divorce in the United States, French divorce rate also showed a similar rate of increase of nearly 30 percent every five years during approximately the same period and was also, like that of the U.S., nearly three times greater in 1905 than it had been in 1880s.

Because both France and the United States officially recognized marriages that had been contracted by the other State, they also recognized the divorces that had been granted in the other as well. Further, as the aforementioned census demonstrated, it was possible to dissolve a marriage in the United States that had been contracted in a foreign country. The number of divorces granted in the United States for marriages that had been contracted in France between 1887 and 1906 was 282.²²⁹ Of course, there is no way to know how many of these were titled marriages or how many were even between French and American citizens. The more

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 718.

²²⁸ S. N. D. North, Director, *Special Reports*, 436.

²²⁹ Joseph A. Hill, *Marriage and Divorce: 1887-1906*, ed. The United States Department of Commerce and Labor Bureau of the Census (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1908), 9.

significant conclusion is that elite transnational couples during the nineteenth century both contracted and terminated marital unions beyond national borders relatively easily. Rather than national borders, it was instead religious boundaries that proved to be more difficult to cross. When the Court of the Rota at Rome allowed for the annulment of Boni and Anna's marriage, it subsequently and inadvertently gave the public the impression that the Catholic Church was also weakening its stand on the indissolubility of marriage. The case still remained rather scandalous among Catholics; however, and in order to reaffirm the Church's position, one expert at the time responded that it "might be made harder [in the future] for Catholics and non-Catholics to marry."²³⁰

2.4 Decline of Titled Marriage Pattern

An effort to temporalize the pattern of elite Franco-American titled marriages and their decline is not without limitations. What was at the end of the nineteenth century a subject of much interest and gossip in both the French and American press soon lost its novelty, and references of titled marriages in the publications like *Town Topics* began to wane during the first decades of the twentieth century. Further, while the coming of the Great War temporarily halted their occurrence as transatlantic travel became not only dangerous but also difficult due to food and fuel shortages, new passport regulations, and travel restrictions, it did not end such marriages entirely. Notable twentieth-century Franco-American examples include the Comte de Janzé's early 1920s marriage to Alice Silverthorne of Chicago, who

²³⁰ "Defends Church in Anna Gould Case."

notoriously shot her English lover in the *Gare du Nord* in an attempted murder suicide a couple of years later;²³¹ the marriage of Lela Emery of Cincinnati to the Marquis de Talleyrand-Perigord in 1938; Arnaud de Rosnay's marriage with Jenna Severson of California in 1981; and New York socialite Luanne Nadeau's 1993 marriage to Alexandre de Lesseps.²³² However, these twentieth-century examples remain limited, leaving the greatest numbers of titled marriages between French and America citizens in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The global economic crisis that followed World War I further strained the position of elite transnational Society. When the crisis made its way to France by May 1931, many wealthy members of the transnational community abandoned France for other, less expensive parts of Europe. Characteristic of this period is Scott Fitzgerald's short story "Babylon Revisited," in which the main character finds Paris nearly absent of Americans during the Depression, a stark contrast to what had been known as the city's "American Colony" during the second half of the nineteenth century.²³³ Likewise, Gabriel-Louis Jaray also complained about the departure of elite Americans in the 1935 *Revue de Paris*. He wrote: "They were the best clients of the French resorts and the most faithful luxury lovers in France. How many bankruptcies of luxury establishments in Paris, in the spas, and the seaside, and high

²³¹ Paul Spicer, *The Temptress: The Scandalous Life of Alice De Janze and the Mysterious Death of Lord Erroll* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2011).

²³² These examples are limited to titled Franco-American marriages that took place during the twentieth century; however, countless other twentieth-century marriages between Americans and title holders from around Europe and the Middle East and can be found in various news sources.

²³³ F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Babylon Revisited," *Best Short Stories of ... and the Yearbook of the American Short Story* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1931) 122–42.

commerce have been caused by this exodus of resident Americans?”²³⁴ American historian William G. Baily also confirmed: “By the end of the 1920s the American Colony in Paris looked more like a gigantic garage sale what with automobiles, mink coats, and antiques on the auction block.”²³⁵ Levenstein, however, cautions against such watershed periodization and argues that elite cosmopolitans in France may not have been as directly affected by the economic crisis as previously thought, and maintains that elite travel continued to revolve around social engagements in both Paris and luxury resorts in places such as Deauville or Nice well into the mid-century. Here, he points to the Parisian edition of the *New York Herald*, also referred to as the *Paris Herald*, which was founded in 1887 by American James Gordon Bennett Jr. Since its founding, the *Paris Harold* frequently reported on the elite social events of Society in France and continued to do so well into the late 1930s.²³⁶ Further, Levenstein argues that new luxury ocean liners that catered to elite travelers, like the *Normandie*, a French liner built in 1935, still managed to turn profits.²³⁷ Even on the eve of World War II, the *Paris Herald* reported on the social events at the Deauville, which “were filled with a brilliant crowd of international socialites,” and listed barons, princes, duchesses, lords, and rich Americans in attendance.²³⁸

²³⁴ Gabriel-Louis Jaray, “La Crise Du Tourisme Étranger En France,” *Revue de Paris*, August 1935, 624.

²³⁵ William G Bailey, *Americans in Paris, 1900-1930: A Selected, Annotated Bibliography* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), 60.

²³⁶ Harvey A. Levenstein, *We'll Always Have Paris American Tourists in France Since 1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 22.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 13–14.

²³⁸ *Paris Harold*, August 27, 1939.

Nonetheless, the coming of the twentieth century brought with it important changes that contributed to the decline of Franco-American titled marriages— notably, as Nancy Green shows, the changing relationships between French aristocrats and the rest of the French population.²³⁹ After World War I, conceptions of rank and national identity changed in France and Great Britain alike.²⁴⁰ In France, the legal status of nobility had long been gone since the Revolution and was never completely recreated. French titles, however, which had been reinstated by the nineteenth-century monarchies, had not been entirely abolished by the subsequent republican governments, and continued to exist as part of a legal name, but without privilege or precedence. Moreover, long without a monarchy and an official aristocracy to support them, those who retained their titles into the twentieth century learned to be discreet about their backgrounds and melted into the various ranks of society. During the early 1930s, two titled Frenchmen were shocked to discover that the man carrying their bags in train station was also of rank, and in response, they created *l'Association d'entraide de la noblesse française* specifically to provide “financial, moral, and cultural support” to struggling titled families in France.²⁴¹ A simpler explanation of declining Franco-American titled marriages may also be that there were simply fewer French titles in existence. As French titles were no longer created after 1870, the number of titled families in France diminished steadily over the course of the twentieth century. A survey of directories shows that there were

²³⁹ Green, *The Other Americans in Paris*, 222.

²⁴⁰ Schutte, *Women, Rank, and Marriage in the British Aristocracy*, 7.

²⁴¹ ANF, “L’Association d’Entraide de La Noblesse Française - L’association,” accessed March 6, 2017, <http://anf.asso.fr/fr/page/42/l-association>. The story of the association’s founding was also noted in an interview with its president Jacques de Crussel, the Duc d’Uzes in Hugh Schofield, “Why France’s Aristocracy Hasn’t Gone Away,” *BBC News*, October 30, 2016.

approximately 5,000 titled families in the early 1900s,²⁴² 3,500 in the 1970s,²⁴³ and 2,300 by the end of the century.²⁴⁴ These numbers seem even more minimal when compared to the 25,000 on the eve of the French Revolution.

More importantly, however, the twentieth century brought with it transformations of the cultural spaces between the two societies. As it had in Europe, the war broke down many class barriers in the United States as well, and the American elite class also changed. With the rise of popular culture, film stars, rather than heiresses, dominated the public eye and sometimes, took a European titled spouse as well. Therefore, while the elite class in the United States retained its position in many ways, World War I and the global economic crisis of the 1930s effectively put an end to the elite domination of the space that existed in between France and the United States. The war and its consequences effectively changed the dimensions of the broader cultural and power relations between France and the United States. It created new transnational spaces and forced new emotions to the forefront of public discourse. Most importantly, however, it paved the way “for the invasion of the lower orders”²⁴⁵ into transnational spaces and gave rise to a new marriage patterns—like that of American soldiers and local French women.

²⁴² F. de Saint-Simon and E. de Seréville, *Dictionnaire de La Noblesse Française: Supplément* (Paris: Éditions Contrepoint, 1977).

²⁴³ Régis Valette, *Catalogue de la noblesse française contemporaine* (Paris: R. Laffont, 1977).

²⁴⁴ ANF, “L’Association d’Entraide de La Noblesse Française - L’association.”

²⁴⁵ Levenstein, *Seductive Journey*, Part 4.

CONCLUSION

While titled Anglo-American marriages have long captured the attention of historians and contemporary commentators, the Franco-American cases provide an interesting contrast in both motivations and outcomes. In the case of France and the United States, these marriages did not serve as the basis for or result in closer political and diplomatic collaboration between the two countries, as Dana Cooper has shown that Anglo-American titled marriages did.²⁴⁶ However, Franco-American marriages were deeply embedded in a cultural relationship between the two societies that was both striking and profound. Of course, these elite subjects were only a small sub-set of a larger population that occupied the Atlantic space, but by carving out these small moments in the past, and examining them through a cultural and emotional lens, we can shed further light onto the complex dynamics within which these matrimonial unions took place. Rather than simple emotionless exchanges of European titles for American dollars, these Franco-American titled marriages emerged out of transnational communities that produced a primary identity that was not aligned with a national identity but instead one which identified with a transnational elite social class. These marriage participants, therefore, retained the practice of marrying within their perceived social class, but theirs was not limited by national boundaries. Further, while transnational Society transcended borders, processes of cultural othering still occurred; however, they occurred through positive processes that produced emotions of mutual fascination and longing for association, making notions of perceived cultural difference within elite

²⁴⁶ Cooper, *Informal Ambassadors*.

transnational social circles one of the driving forces of transnational elite marriages. Therefore, at the intersection of encounter, elite class-consciousness, and transnational coupling stood a profoundly emotional experience, and because that experience was so intertwined with cross-cultural interaction, the marriages that emerged from these spaces can be, in many respects, characterized as even more (rather than less) emotional than their elite, national counterparts. An examination of these elite discourses demonstrates not only how notions of difference were marked but also how these perceived differences provoked certain emotional responses. Further, in an effort to contextualize these marriages within broader cultural and emotional shifts of the two societies, an examination of courting and divorce practices in the Franco-American context demonstrates that notions of personal happiness and mutual affection were as much an aim of transnational unions as material and social circumstance. The coming of World War I did not end instances of titled Franco-American marriage; however, as I have shown, the coming of the war meant that spaces of transnationality in the Atlantic world began to change, as would the social, cultural, and emotional dimensions of those spaces.

Part Two. ‘Paris Is Free—And So Are Its Kisses’: Wartime Marriages
During The Twentieth Century²⁴⁷

INTRODUCTION

In the first part of this work, I examined the ways in which marriages emerged out of cross-cultural encounter within elite transnational communities during the nineteenth century and the extent to which the cultural and emotional dynamics of those communities facilitated those unions. In this second part, I examine twentieth-century Franco-American marriages that occurred when national borders were most solidified—during and between the world wars. Unlike those discussed in the first part, wartime-marriage participants were no longer members of an elite, transnational social network that effortlessly carved out an existence and moved freely beyond national boundaries but were instead local women restricted by the conflict around them and soldiers who acted as representatives of a nation-state, who moved only insofar as the military regulations allowed. Yet despite encountering one another during a period of heightened boundary-making and hypernationalism,²⁴⁸ these men and women still managed to construct families that transcended those national limits in far greater numbers than the Franco-American marriages of the nineteenth century. In 1919, the *Literary Digest*, a weekly American magazine explained that “[s]o many of the American soldiers in France

²⁴⁷ “Paris Is Free-- and So Are Its Kisses,” *Stars and Stripes*, August 28, 1944.

²⁴⁸ Ian Tyrrell, *Transnational Nation: United States History in Global Perspective Since 1789* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

[had] married French girls that an official pamphlet [had to be] issued setting out the legal requirements governing marriage in that country.”²⁴⁹ Likewise, in a March 7, 1918 memo to the Adjutant General, one commanding general complained that 350 marriages to French women had taken place in his division alone in a period of only seven months.²⁵⁰ At the war’s end, American military newspaper *Stars and Stripes* estimated that 6,000 or more Franco-American marriages had been registered in town halls across France and speculated that many more went uncounted by authorities.²⁵¹ During World War II, marriages between American soldiers and French women continued to occur in roughly the same proportion. In a letter written to the President of France on January 8, 1947, the Ambassador to the United States Henri Bonnet estimated the number of French women who had followed their American husbands to the United States by that time was about 6,000.²⁵² While official immigration numbers are easier to ascertain than marriage records scattered throughout both France and the United States and provide important indications, one can assume that numerous marriages (and might-have-been marriages) undoubtedly also went uncounted.²⁵³

²⁴⁹ “Cupid Has Had to Print a Set of Rules for the Doughboys in France,” *Literary Digest*, July 12, 1919, 78.

²⁵⁰ Albert B Kellogg, *Marriage of Soldiers* (Washington, D.C.: Historical Section, Army War College, 1942), 5.

²⁵¹ *Stars and Stripes*, June 6, 1919; John R. Ellinston, “Paths of a French War Bride Are Rocky: In American Men They Seldom Find Husbands Who Understand Their Racial Needs,” *New York Times*, August 2, 1925, 10, which referenced records of the US Army, the YWCA, and the American Red Cross, put the number at only 5,000; however, its estimation likely reflected only the number of women who migrated to the United States with their husbands.

²⁵² Quoted in Hilary Kaiser, *French War Brides in America: An Oral History* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2008), xxxi.

²⁵³ It should also be noted that during WWI, what the American military considered a “marriage problem” was largely a *French* problem. However, during WWII, American soldiers married women from all over Europe and Asia. Based on a 1950 Committee on the

In an effort to explain the occurrence of transnational marriage during wartime, many historians have linked the motives behind them to the demographic dilemma faced by local women following the military deaths of local men.²⁵⁴ These demographic realities in war-torn France during each of the global conflicts were substantial and must be considered.²⁵⁵ During World War I, France lost nearly 1.3 million of its men. It should be noted, however, that of this number, only 332,000 were classified as *hommes mariables* (not including those that left widows, who would have or could have remarried).²⁵⁶ During World War II, military deaths were not the only factor that contributed to population disparities. As historian Mary Louis Roberts shows, by early 1944, two million French men had been sent to German labor or prison camps, and many others had gone into hiding or were engaged in the Resistance.²⁵⁷ The observations of contemporary American soldiers confirm these disproportions. For example, one World-War-II soldier noted: "I was

Judiciary report entitled "Immigration and Naturalization Systems of the United States," Jenel Virden, *Good-Bye, Piccadilly: British War Brides in America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996) estimates that a total of 115,000 war brides came to the United States during and after WWII. Of them, 70,000 were British and another 7,000 were from Australia or New Zealand.

²⁵⁴ Elisa Camiscioli, *Reproducing the French Race: Immigration, Intimacy, and Embodiment in the Early Twentieth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009); Bok-Lim C. Kim, "Asian Wives of U.S. Servicemen: Women in Shadows," *Amerasia Journal* 4, no. 1 (1977): 91–115; Susan R Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France During the First World War* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Mark Meigs, *Optimism at Armageddon: Voices of American Participants in the First World War* (Washington Square, NY: New York University Press, 1997), 134; Teresa K. Williams, "Marriage between Japanese Women and US. Servicemen since World War II," *Amerasia Journal* 17, no. 1 (1991): 135–54.

²⁵⁵ For more on the British case see: Virginia Nicholson, *Singled Out: How Two Million Women Survived Without Men After the First World War* (London: Viking, 2007).

²⁵⁶ Michel Huber, *La population de la France pendant la guerre, avec un appendice sur Les revenus avant et après la guerre* (Paris; New Haven: Les Presses universitaires de France; Yale University Press, 1931), 568. *Hommes mariables* were defined as unmarried men, ages 18-59.

²⁵⁷ Mary Louise Roberts, *What Soldiers Do: Sex and the American GI in World War II France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014) 61.

struck again, as I often was in France, by the absence of men. Only the very old were seen in any numbers.”²⁵⁸ This significant gender imbalance created by both World War I and World War II would not be fully reconciled in the French population until the 1970s. Nonetheless, such an explanation remains both oversimplified and limited as pointing to the lack of French men alone not only fails to consider the complex cultural and emotional dynamics involved in wartime interactions among American soldiers and French women but also leaves the intimate details of those interactions unexplained. Such rationalizations also fail to fully escape the analytical cage of the nation-state by explaining the occurrence of marriage from the perspective of only one society and largely ignoring the motivations of American soldiers for participating in transnational unions. They, likewise fail to account for broader changes in emotional standards over time, thereby reducing the practice of marriage to socio-economic arrangement that, in this case, was only beneficial to one of the two marriage participants.

The story of the “war bride” is also one that has become firmly embedded into American immigration discourse by both contemporaries and historians, who have approached the topic from social or migration perspectives.²⁵⁹ While their quantitative studies have told us much about the migration and post-marriage struggles of women in their new homes, they still leave us with an incomplete

²⁵⁸ Quoted in Roberts, *What Soldiers Do*, 61.

²⁵⁹ Kim, “Asian Wives of U.S. Servicemen”; Francisco Muñoz-Perez, “Mariages d’étrangers et mariages mixtes en France: Évolution depuis la Première Guerre,” *Population* (French Edition) 39, no. 3 (1984): 427–62; Elfrieda Berthiaume Shukert and Barbara Smith Scibetta, *War Brides of World War II* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1988); Williams, “Marriage between Japanese Women and US. Servicemen since World War II”; Susan Zeiger, *Entangling Alliances: Foreign War Brides and American Soldiers in the Twentieth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 2010).

picture of transnational marriages of the past. Further, the official records of the American and European militaries, on which these studies are largely based, not only overemphasize the nation-state but also rarely detail the personal motivations or emotional expectations of marriage participants.

Therefore, while these matrimonial stories cannot be completely separated from the conflicts that facilitated them, what follows is not an account of war. It is instead an account of encounter. As in the first part, the central question rests on the cultural and emotional dimensions of Franco-American interaction; however, in the absence of elite transnational social networks like those that produced titled marriages during the previous century, this part seeks to locate new transnational spaces that were created by the war and map them accordingly. Within these new spaces, cross-cultural encounter took a very different form than it had in the nineteenth century, but it produced transnational marriages, nonetheless.

By again shifting the position of inquiry to the space between two cultures and using emotions as a category of analysis, I seek to compliment the stories told by official records and more systematically capture the ways in which marriages emerged out of cross-cultural, wartime encounter. While very few marriage participants remain to directly inform this study, their personal accounts have been captured in numerous unpublished memoirs, self-published memoirs, interviews collected by contemporary journalists who were fascinated with their marriages and migration stories, and detailed in the invaluable oral histories that have preceded this work. By reading deeper into their recorded words, we are able to not only place ourselves within their cultural rituals—rituals that had been altered and reshaped by the conflict around them—but also further uncover the complex diversity of intimate

emotional experiences that coincide with the practice of marriage—emotional experiences that are even more multi-faceted in this transnational context. While some of these sources are not without their own limitations —personal accounts are often filtered through years of one’s recollections, memories, and later experiences, and some of the later published letters or memoirs have been edited for enhanced literary prose or to reflect the natural modernization of language—I have little reason to believe that the “simplest and deepest emotions” of the texts have not been maintained as their authors and editors have claimed.²⁶⁰ Further, as Paul Fussell shows, a great number of twentieth-century soldiers were not only literate but were “vigorously literary.”²⁶¹ Their accounts have produced incredible volumes of literature during both conflicts. And though Fussell admits that much of this literary repertoire holds a special fictional quality, it still remains largely historical and therefore of great value to cultural and emotional perspectives. Because the wars forced to the forefront a discourse of new emotional dimensions, these numerous personal accounts from both men and women allow us to push the theory of emotions further than the previous section. Unlike their nineteenth-century counterparts, wartime participants were much more likely to discuss personal, sexual, and emotional experiences surrounding their personal relationships.

For the sake of the broader temporal comparison of Franco-American marriage patterns during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in the two chapters

²⁶⁰ Such claims have been made by the interviewees in Kaiser, *French War Brides in America*; Aramais Akob Hovsepian, *Your Son and Mine*. (New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1950); Jacques Petit, *Au coeur de la bataille de Normandie: souvenirs d’un adolescent de Saint-Lô à Avranches : été 1944* (Louviers: Ed. Ysec, 2004) among others.

²⁶¹ Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 155–57.

that follow I examine both World War I and World War II as one continuous period despite their different natures.²⁶² This analytical continuity is also justified because the cross-cultural interactions that had occurred during the first conflict effectively shaped encounter during the second. Separated only by a generation, World-War-II soldiers arrived in France with preconceived notions of French women that had been conditioned by the experiences of their fathers or grandfathers during World War I. Therefore, while I attempted to maintain chronological order, the following chapters are more thematically organized and when necessary, I make overlapping analyses and draw similar conclusions about the marriages that emerged out of both conflicts. I do, however, take great care in highlighting the differences when appropriate, and maintain their traditional titles in order to do so.

²⁶² While the notion of WWII as a direct extension of WWI is generally accepted among historians, Ian Kershaw, *To Hell and Back: Europe, 1914-1949* (London: Penguin Books, 2016) goes further to introduce the concept of the “Thirty Years War” of the twentieth century.

Chapter 3

Longing for the Other Through the War

In the last chapter of Part One, I proposed for consideration the extent to which cultural othering could be successfully analyzed as an emotional process. In this chapter, I apply this inquiry to the changing contexts of the twentieth century and the subsequent pattern of Franco-American marriages during the world wars. Here, I argue that despite increasingly seeing their own identities through national lenses and despite changing cultural relationships between France and the United States, notions of perceived *difference* remained the driving force of transnational coupling during the world wars.

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first begins by contextualizing the broader temporal comparison of nineteenth-century elite marriages and twentieth-century wartime marriages by examining some of the broader global changes brought on by the world wars. These changes shifted the context in which wartime encounter took place by producing context in which marriage participants not only came from the working and middle classes but that they would also have an increased tendency to self-describe through national frameworks. In this setting, notions of difference were further heightened, and cross-cultural encounter during wartime was dissimilar from that which produced elite marriages in the nineteenth century. The remainder of the chapter examines more extensively the extent to which encounter and othering could be considered an emotional processes in the

context of war. By examining the accounts of marriage participants as well as national news publications, I show not only how notions of difference were marked but also how these perceived differences provoked certain emotional responses. Even though mutual attraction developed among both French and American marriage participants, the processes of othering for each took very different forms and are examined separately. In the second section, I trace the othering of French women by American soldiers and argue that rather than the elite, high cultural forms of the nineteenth century, cultural fascination of the French (or what was perceived as French culture) during the World War I became laced with notions of romance, sex, and pleasure. These conceptions were subsequently transcribed onto French women and the notions of their perceived difference, thereby creating the contradictory construct of war as an opportunity for romance. The third and final section examines the ways in which fear, uncertainty, and the longing for stability under German invasion and occupation during World War II were contrasted with the overwhelming excitement and euphoria of liberation. This drastic emotional shift provided an important context in which Franco-American encounter and marriages manifested. Here, I argue that the combination of the euphoria of liberation along with what was perceived as a striking and curious difference led young French women to actively engage American soldiers in their courting customs.

3.1 Shifting Contexts of Encounter in the Early Twentieth Century

The coming of the war in the beginning of the twentieth century allowed for a geographic mobility that had previously only been afforded to the transnational leisure class during the nineteenth century, thereby, effectively ending its monopoly

on both transatlantic travel and transnational marriage. In this context, wartime marriages did not emerge out of elite social networks like they had in the nineteenth century but rather were contracted throughout the social spectrum, largely among the working, rural, and middle classes. Evidence of this social shift among American soldiers can be found in the newspaper interviews of World-War-I marriage participants such as one in the *Saturday Evening Post*, in which one soldier Bernhard Ranger explained of the American husbands who remained in Paris after the war: “We come from every section of the United States, from every class and creed. Names range from Anderson to Zuckerman, from Galiaducei to Levy, from Bailey to Szlapka. Among us are Rotarians, Elks and Shriners, at least one Mormon, Mayflower descendants and sons of the steerage, A.B.’s, M.D.’s and D.S.C.’s, haves and have-nots, wets and dries—not many of the latter.”²⁶³ Even though an examination of American Navy World-War-I recruitment propaganda shows that many of members of the AEF were drawn to enlist with the hope of an “opportunity to see the world,”²⁶⁴ the majority of these participants differed greatly from their nineteenth-century counterparts who had been raised with private language tutors and in well-traveled families with far-reaching transnational social connections.

Shifting political and economic conditions at the turn of the twentieth century also meant a shift in broader cultural relationships between France and the United States. Therefore, for American soldiers Europe took on a different meaning

²⁶³ Bernhard Ragner, “The Permanent AEF,” *Saturday Evening Post*, November 11, 1939.

²⁶⁴ Joplin-Pugh Advertising Agency, *Here Is Opportunity See the World, Serve Your Country, Save Your Money: United States Navy World War One Propaganda*, 1918 1914, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress Washington, D.C. 20540 USA; Charles E. Ruttan, *A Wonderful Opportunity for You: United States Navy World War One Propaganda*, 1917, George F. Tyler Poster Collection, Temple University Libraries, Special Collections Research Center.

than it had in the nineteenth century when American elites went on grand tours in search of education, entertainment, and high cultural forms. Rather than the grandeur of art, architecture, and fancy dress that the elite class had coveted, American soldiers saw everything in France as old and tired. Angela Petesch, a volunteer for the American Red Cross, for example, made the following observation after arriving in France with the Clubmobile Group H in August of 1944, ten weeks after D-Day: “They were way behind the times—women still washed clothes in the little streams and pound the garments with stones; the cows and pigs and chickens still live in the same building as the family. Quantities of the people still wear wooden shoes, and in general they have a very simple way of life.”²⁶⁵ As historian Mary Louis Roberts points out, such observations were often made of the war-torn countryside rather than of urban landscapes like Paris.²⁶⁶ However, as Petesch explained, many of the same magniloquent sentiments were carried into urban spaces as well. During her time in Paris, she remarked, “There are no trains except the FE that the Army operates. Even right within the city of Paris there is no civilian postal service. Messages, if any, have to be delivered in person. And telephones in the country are non-existent.”²⁶⁷ In this manner, unlike their nineteenth-century counterparts, American soldiers cared little for the memory of aristocratic courts and were unimpressed with the crumbling chateaux.²⁶⁸ After spending the night in one, Petesch complained: “The building itself is not so elegant as the word ‘chateau’

²⁶⁵ Angela Petesch, *War Through the Hole of a Donut* (Madison, WI: Hunter Halverson Press, 2006), 145.

²⁶⁶ Roberts, *What Soldiers Do*, 50.

²⁶⁷ Petesch, *War Through the Hole of a Donut*, 149–50.

²⁶⁸ Ernie Pyle, “Brave Men,” *Stars and Stripes*, September 2, 1944.

might imply. The floors and woodwork are terrible, and it is not [due to] the ravages of the war and enemy Germans.”²⁶⁹

Additionally, even though working- or middle-class soldiers had not been members of an elite leisure class, those nineteenth-century cross-cultural interactions with American Society continued to resonate within the local French populations. The French therefore continued to apply national stereotypes of modernity, innovation, and especially wealth to the Americans that they encountered. Evidence of this continued ascription can be found in Eugène Brieux’s 1920s play, *Les Américains chez nous*, in which notions of American energy, money, and industry are set against French tradition, memory, quality, and art.²⁷⁰ Further, viewing American soldiers as wealthy like their nineteenth-century predecessors is not completely off base as historians Nancy Green and Mark Meigs have explained. According to them, even modest doughboys were far better off than the average French farmer.²⁷¹ In a letter to his parents during World War II, American soldier Alexander Hovsepian wrote: “Yesterday I bought our gang some cider. All by myself. No assistance from anyone. Even had a little chat with the girl (cute too). Paid 5 francs a canteen for it. A franc is 2c. When I figure I draw over 3,000 francs a month, it makes me feel like a millionaire.”²⁷² Even American novelist Winston Churchill (not to be confused with the British statesman) called the American soldiers “millionaire privates who have aroused such burnings in the heart

²⁶⁹ Petesch, *War Through the Hole of a Donut*, 151.

²⁷⁰ Eugène Brieux, *Les Américains chez nous: comédie en trois actes* (La Petite Illustration Théâtrale, 1920).

²⁷¹ Green, *The Other Americans in Paris*, 230; Meigs, *Optimism at Armageddon*, 114–15.

²⁷² Hovsepian, *Your Son and Mine*, 79.

of the French poilu, with his five sous a day.”²⁷³ This monetary exaggeration of “millionaire” brings about an interesting interplay with socio-economics that should not be entirely discounted. While the majority of these men were certainly not “millionaires”, they felt like it, and those they came into contact with perceived them as well- or even over-paid. Further, the American press frequently propagated this perception when attempting to explain to American audiences French women’s attraction to American soldiers. One *New York Times* article speculated: “It is, of course, painful to suppose that any of the American soldier’s charm depended upon the fatness of his purse, but it is also inevitable. In comparison with the 5 cents a day received by the poilu, or even the 35 cents a day of a Tommy, the American’s minimum of \$1 loomed pretty large. Nor did the latter make any bones about spending his wealth.”²⁷⁴

This Franco-American marriage pattern was also largely characterized by growing global nationalism in the twentieth century. Even though many of the soldiers in the AEF during World War I had been first- or second-generation immigrants to the United States, in the context of the war, most increasingly saw their own identity through national lenses and, therefore, increasing self-identified as quintessentially *American*.²⁷⁵ On this subject Ragner affirmed: “Quite naturally, we view the French side of problems with considerable leniency. Let no one infer, however, that our own citizenship and Americanism are thereby affected. We are incorrigibly American, to our wives among others. We are hypersensitive on that

²⁷³ Winston Churchill, *A Traveller in War-Time: With an Essay on the American Contribution and the Democratic Idea* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1918), 13.

²⁷⁴ Ellinston, “Paths of a French War Bride Are Rocky.”

²⁷⁵ Harriet H. Macdonald, “At the War Brides’ Home,” *Independent* 99, September 6, 1919, 329.

score.”²⁷⁶ He added: “Not a single member of the permanent AEF has forfeited his citizenship... But though we stay on and die in France, we shall always be sojourners, guests. Our spiritual home is across the Atlantic.”²⁷⁷ The emotional elements of national self-description and attachment to the notion of “home” are interesting here. Similar sentiments can also be found in the Hovsepian’s letters to his Russian immigrant parents during World War II. In one emotional letter to his father, he discussed the moment he sailed away to fight in France. He wrote:

Why did we cry? I don’t know about the other guys, but here I was alone, leaving my country, maybe for the last time. And then, I knew what my country meant to me. It was not a piece of geography any longer; it was very real in my heart. It was you and Mom, and our home, and our street, and the corner drug store, and the movie on Saturday night, and a ride to the beach with a girl on your arm. It was baseball, and radio, and your camera, and books, and a wonderful feeling when you wake up Sunday morning late knowing that you don’t have to get up, and hear Mom cooking breakfast in the kitchen. Hell, it is everything a guy loves and lives for, and here I was, leaving it all...²⁷⁸

In his introspective description of what “his country” meant to him, each of these everyday elements and experiences become *national* symbols and rituals. Further, the attachment to the notion of “home” became increasingly nationalized in a way that differed greatly from those that crisscrossed the Atlantic during the previous century and was further intensified in the context of leaving for war.²⁷⁹ In this way, an important tension between nineteenth-century cosmopolitanism and twentieth-

²⁷⁶ Ragner, “The Permanent AEF,” 38.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 40.

²⁷⁸ Hovsepian, *Your Son and Mine*, 71.

²⁷⁹ More on nationalism as a collective emotion can be found in Barbara H. Rosenwein’s work on “emotional communities.” Barbara H Rosenwein, Maureen C Miller, and Edward Wheatley, *Emotions, Communities, and Difference in Medieval Europe: Essays in Honor of Barbara H. Rosenwein* (London: Routledge, 2017).

century nationalism is brought forward in the broader temporal analysis of transnational-marriage patterns.²⁸⁰

Both the social shift in marriage participants to the middle, rural, and working classes and their increased tendency to self-describe through national frameworks provided the context for a heightened awareness of *difference* in cross-cultural wartime encounter. In this way, processes of subsequent self/other distantiation were even more profound than those in the nineteenth-century, elite transnational communities. Evidence of this heightened awareness and conception of difference in wartime encounters can be found in the accounts of soldiers in both wars. In a letter to his brothers, Hovsepian wrote of his arrival in France during World War II: “From the moment we hit the beaches, you could tell it was a different country. The air even smelled different.”²⁸¹ Likewise, when World-War-II soldier, Charles E. Frohman’s company arrived, a group of them stopped to marvel at a French street sign. “It was the first distinctly French thing we had ever seen,” he wrote. “It looked like something out of a fairytale book. It just didn’t seem real.”²⁸² Not only were notions of cultural difference heightened, but that in coming to France they experienced something they might have only been imagined in “fairytale book” also demonstrates a considerable *distance* of difference.

This distance of national and cultural difference was even further reinforced during this period by the tightening of borders, anti-immigration movements, and the pseudoscientific classification of people into racialized categories, such as those

²⁸⁰ This tension is also at the heart of Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*, which shows that American cosmopolitanism came to a close following WWII.

²⁸¹ Hovsepian, *Your Son and Mine*, 79.

²⁸² Howard H. Peckham and Shirley A. Snyder, *Letters from Fighting Hoosiers*, (Bloomington: Indiana War History Commission, 1948), 119.

found in the 1918 work of Madison Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race*. In his “hereditary history”, Grant not only claimed that the people of Europe could be divided into distinctive biological categories, but also that through manipulation, and namely, conservation, superior moral, intellectual, and physical attributes of the “Nordic race” could and should be maintained—in the name of American nationalism.²⁸³ While Grant’s work remained rather marginal during World War I,²⁸⁴ these notions of “innate differences” were, indeed, ascribed onto Franco-American marriage participants. In one *New York Times* article, for example, one contemporary commentator John R. Ellinston speculated that Franco-American wartime marriages would inevitably “fail” due to what he called “racial differences [that] promised incompatibility.”²⁸⁵ By juxtaposing what actually amounted to varied everyday cultural rituals and attitudes through the dichotomy of “Latin and Anglo-Saxon races,” the author effectively insinuates that these differences were inherently embedded in the two societies. His claim calls into question the continued notion of a shared Atlantic culture that had developed in the previous centuries.²⁸⁶

Yet, while national and cultural perceptions as well as changing global contexts at the onset of the twentieth century drastically changed the nature of cross-cultural encounter, and while Ellinston argued that participants were “too different” to expect a successful marriages with one another, American soldiers and French

²⁸³ Madison Grant and Henry Fairfield Osborn, *The Passing of the Great Race: Or, the Basis of European History* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1916), viii–ix.

²⁸⁴ Jonathan Peter Spiro, *Defending the Master Race: Conservation, Eugenics, and the Legacy of Madison Grant* (Burlington, VT; Hanover, NH: University of Vermont Press ; Published by University Press of New England, 2009), 167.

²⁸⁵ Ellinston, “Paths of a French War Bride Are Rocky.”

²⁸⁶ R. R. Palmer and American Council of Learned Societies, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution a Political History of Europe and America, 1760-1800* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1959).

women still found themselves *longing for the “other”* through the wars. The following section examines this ongoing process.

3.2 War, Romance, and Sex: The Othering of French Women by American Soldiers



Figure 1: Advertisement in *Stars and Stripes*, April 4, 1919

3.2.1 Conflicting Constructs of Wartime Engagement

During World War I, relationships between soldiers and local women seem to have begun quickly after initial encounter. In November 1917, before the majority of soldiers had even arrived, the *Literary Digest* already speculated that many marriages between the two groups would occur. It declared, “Dispatches say...that when the war is over, France will have some sturdy Yankee citizens... that a good many of them will marry French wives can hardly be doubted.”²⁸⁷ As the war ended, another article in the *New York Times* went so far as to speculate that as many as 200,000 soldiers would stay in France “to marry French women” and because “they were charmed with French life.”²⁸⁸ While this number was, of course, a gross exaggeration, its supposition that many American soldiers were “charmed” by both

²⁸⁷ “Franco-Yanko Romance,” *Literary Digest*, November 10, 1917.

²⁸⁸ “Cupid’s Success in AEF: Expected 200,000 Soldiers Will Stay in France, Most Marrying French Girls,” *New York Times*, January 30, 1919.

French life and by French women suggests a broad fascination with not only the “other” but also the other’s culture. Further evidence of widespread wartime relationships can be found in a 1919 edition of the American military newspaper *Stars and Stripes*, which printed an advertisement for a translation guide that offered to help soldiers overcome language barriers during their time in France. However, rather than advertising more practical phrases such as those needed to accomplish everyday tasks, the guide, entitled “Compree? -Je t’aime” included “16 pages of snappy love stuff—in French and English” as well as various pick-up lines such as “Where are you going Bright Eyes?” and “When shall I see you again?”²⁸⁹ While *Stars and Stripes* is often classified as a military newspaper, the extent to which it was state-sanctioned during the world wars is debated among scholars familiar with the publication; therefore, one should question the extent to which its printing of an advertisement denotes promotion of its subject and should be cautious in concluding that the military attempted to perpetuate this fascination with local women. However, what is evident from the publication is that American soldiers in World War I seemed to have developed parallel and contradictory views of the war in which they were engaged—both as a destructive, devastating conflict and ironically, as an opportunity for *romantic* encounter. Viewing war as an opportunity for romance is perhaps unexpected given that war is most often associated with notions of violence, pillage, and rape. However, that these conflicting views of engagement developed during World War I is less surprising when one considers the conditions in which transnational spaces of encounter were created. While small numbers of American soldiers, along with members of the Red Cross and Young Men’s

²⁸⁹ *Stars and Stripes*, April 4, 1919, 6; cited in Zeiger, *Entangling Alliances*, 19.

Christian Association (YMCA), began to arrive in France in the summer of 1917, the majority of the AEF did not arrive until the following year as the war was ending and remained there for an additional year until the summer of 1919.²⁹⁰ Therefore, unlike during World War II, when encounter happened largely during active military engagement, during World War I, the greatest opportunity for encounter occurred outside the context of battle and in urban spaces that were well separated from the trenches. During his 1917 tour of World-War-I France, American novelist Winston Churchill for example, noted that Paris had been “saved from violation.” “In spite of the soldiers thronging the sunlit streets,” he explained, “Paris was seemingly the same Paris one had always known, gay—insouciance, pleasure bent. The luxury shops appeared to be thriving, the world renowned restaurants to be doing business as usual; the expensive hotels were full.”²⁹¹ The same type of spatial dichotomies cannot be found during the conflict in the 1940s, when cross-cultural encounter largely took place as military troops moved through villages and urban areas when pushing eastward through France to Germany.

Nonetheless, similar constructs of wartime participation as an opportunity for romantic encounter also continued into World War II as well, as later issues of *Stars and Stripes* demonstrate. One issue from September 9, 1944, for example, included an image of several French women along with the caption, “Here’s what we are fighting for.”²⁹² That only women are depicted in the photo rather than children is telling—as is the fact that all of the women are smiling and reaching up at the camera rather than devastated by the effects of war. The corresponding article

²⁹⁰ Churchill, *A Traveller in War-Time*, 3.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 14.

²⁹² *Stars and Stripes*, September 9, 1944. Cited in Roberts, *What Soldiers Do*, 64.

opens by boasting, “The French are nuts about the Yanks.” It goes on to say that in winning the war, they won not only their gratitude but also their “love.” By invoking images of opened-armed women and using emotion words like love, this publication suggests ways in which the notion of war as an opportunity for romance permeated both conflicts among American servicemen.



Figure 2 "Here's What We're Fighting For," *Stars and Stripes*, September 9, 1944

Popular World-War-I folk music, such as the song “Mademoiselle from Armentières,” further demonstrates World-War-I soldiers’ own perceptions of the construct of war as an opportunity for romantic encounters. Lyrics included lines like the following: “From gay Paree he heard guns roar, and all he learned was *je t’adore*”²⁹³ and “You might forget the gas and shell but you will never forget the mademoiselle.”²⁹⁴ The song included over 40 verses, and existed in many different versions. According to John Jacob Niles and Douglas Stuart Moore’s 1929

²⁹³ John Jacob Niles and Douglas Stuart Moore, *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me* (New York: Macaulay, 1929), 18.

²⁹⁴ Billy Murray and Ed Smalle, *What Has Become of Hinky Dinky Parlay Voo* (audio recording), 1924.

collection of World-War-I songs, *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me*, it had been adopted by the American troops from British soldiers who likely engaged in similar cross-cultural relationships with local women. Historian Mark Meigs argues that the song transcended both linguistic and cultural barriers because “hinky dinky”, which was close to “hanky panky,” was a term that most listeners understood as a description of a sexual act. Therefore, its use insinuated a proposition of sexual relations easily understood by both parties. What Meigs finds most notable about the song, however, is that, similar to the dichotomy previously demonstrated by the *Stars and Stripes* images of war as both a conflict and an opportunity for romantic encounter, the song suggested that soldiers’ experiences went beyond obligations of battle by placing personal and sentimental life in opposition to military duties.²⁹⁵

3.2.2 *Sexualized and Romanticized Cultural Othering*

But within this construct of war as an opportunity for romance, how were images of the othered French women and their perceived differences shaped by wartime encounter with American soldiers? Evidence of these processes is best noted in the ways in which participants described one another in varied forms of media and later personal accounts. Further, an examination of these discourses demonstrates not only how notions of difference were marked but also how these perceived differences provoked certain emotional responses. Here, as was the case in nineteenth-century elite transnational Society, these othering processes were accompanied by a preconditioned *cultural infatuation*—or affection for perceived culture itself. But during wartime, this infatuation manifested in very different

²⁹⁵ Meigs, *Optimism at Armageddon*, 106.

forms. As the song suggests, rather than the elite high culture of art, architecture, and fancy dress of the nineteenth century, this *appreciation* for French culture (or what was perceived as French culture) during World War I became laced with notions of romance, sex, and pleasure—conceptions that were subsequently transcribed onto French women and their perceived difference. As a result, the attraction to French women was largely a romanticized and sexualized one. For example, the song lyrics of “Mademoiselle from Armentières”, “If I get you chocolate, will you coucher or will you not” and “My Froggie girl was true to me. She was true to me, she was true to you, She was true to the whole damned army too, Hinky-dinky, Parlez-vous” suggest the creation of an image of the typical French woman as being both promiscuous and sometimes unfaithful.²⁹⁶ However, in the process of othering French women, the distinctions between pleasure, sex, romance, longing, love, and even marriage often overlapped in contradictory ways.

In her work, *What Soldiers Do*, Mary Louise Roberts explores the sexual objectification of French women by American soldiers extensively. Roberts shows how soldiers exploited sexual fantasies based on preconceived notions of French women they already had. According to her, Americans viewed the Gallic race as “uncivilized, primitive and over-sexed” and therefore “made sex the defining element of French civilization.”²⁹⁷ However, the simple sexual objectification of French women by American soldiers is an incomplete explanation of marriage motivation, and it places female participants of these relationships in both passive and objectified roles. Therefore, deeper analysis into cultural and emotional

²⁹⁶ Niles and Moore, *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me*, 21.

²⁹⁷ Roberts, *What Soldiers Do*, 20.

constructs driving and shaping these relationships between French women and American soldiers is necessary. An examination of space is also important here. As historian of emotions Margrit Pernau shows in her work “Space and Emotion: Building to Feel”, different spaces often shape and are linked to certain emotions.²⁹⁸ Therefore, it is important to examine how both spaces of war and the popular construct of places, such as Paris as a place of pleasure, effectively shaped the encounter between American soldiers and French women that led to marriage.

3.2.3 Origins of Sexualized Constructs

Such an inquiry first requires an examination into the roots of such constructs. Already during the nineteenth century, when Americans imagined the city of Paris as the seat of high culture, they also imagined it as a place of great temptation. One nineteenth-century guidebook, *Paris-Guide: par les principaux écrivains et artistes de la France 1867* explained that this reputation was well-established around the world and that everyone knew of the famous Bal Mabille, an outdoor dancehall on the avenue Montaigne, which was, it explained, an “asile un peu bruyant de la jeunesse à son aurore, la curiosité des provinciaux, le rêve des couturières, la folie des étudiants, quelquefois aussi, mais en cachette, le caprice des femmes du monde” (asylum of noisy youth at dawn, the curiosity of the provincials, the dream of seamstresses, the madness of the students, sometimes also, but in secret, the impulse of the high society ladies of the world). According to the guidebook, this park, “a vu passer au clair du gaz tous les hommes les plus en renom des temps modernes; quelques-uns y ont dansé peut-être” (has seen all the most

²⁹⁸ Pernau, “Space and Emotion: Building to Feel.”

renowned men of modern times; some of them may have even danced there).²⁹⁹ Likewise, *Paris at Night*, an English-language guidebook published in 1875, called Paris “the City of Pleasure” and pointed visitors to a range of brothels, dance halls, and gambling houses.³⁰⁰ French historian Patrice Higonnet notes that by the 1890’s, one could count roughly thirty burlesque shows in and around Paris. “Because of shows like this”, he explains, “Paris became ever more closely associated with sexual transgression in the minds of Europe and of Protestant America.”³⁰¹



Figure 3 Le bal Mabilille: [estampe], Bibliothèque nationale de France

These constructs can be better positioned within the distantiation of the French “other” in relation to the American “self,” and this nineteenth-century

²⁹⁹ *Paris-Guide. 2 / par les principaux écrivains et artistes de la France*, vol. 2 (Paris: Librairie Internationale, 1867), 1249, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k200160r>. For image in Figure 3 see: Provost. Lithographe, “Le Bal Mabilille [Estampe],” (Paris, Ledot Jeune), département Estampes et photographie, Bibliothèque François Mitterrand. <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53026346c/f1.item>.

³⁰⁰ *Paris at Night: Sketches and Mysteries of Paris High Life and Demi-Monde. Nocturnal Amusements: How to Know Them! How to Enjoy Them!! How to Appreciate Them!!!*. (Boston: Boston and Paris Publ. Co., 1875), <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/ucw.ark:/13960/t2j687m1v>.

³⁰¹ Patrice L. R. Higonnet, *Paris: Capital of the World* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 301–2.

periodization of this process is important. Higonnet's literary examination of Paris in the American imagination traces the roots of these images even further into the past as he explains, that this "sexualized American appreciation of the charms of Paris existed even before the Revolution of 1789. For John Adams, the immorality of the French aristocracy, both in Paris and in Versailles, was a matter of public knowledge,"³⁰² he also admits that during the eighteenth century, such images still remained peripheral and only spread more widely among the American imagination at the end of the nineteenth century. During the nineteenth century, American society underwent a series of social, religious, and moral reforms, in which puritan values became more deeply rooted. Set against these reforms, France's perceived sexual liberty became further marked in its cultural distinctions.

Hilary Kaiser likewise notes, that other ways in which the sexualized images of French women, in particular, became stereotyped in the American national imagination was through American's limited experiences with a handful of French women who, after the discovery of gold during the first half of the nineteenth century, worked as *les dames de comptoir* in the saloons and gambling houses in the American West.³⁰³ French scholar Albert Benard de Russailh argues that through this very particular and limited kind of Franco-American encounter in the American West, "the French woman [became] ... a new object of attention. Her way of walking, her lithe, graceful casualness and charming behavior that can only be found chez nous was an irresistible attraction. Men followed the French woman whenever she strolled down the street. For them, she was a rare curiosity, which they never

³⁰² Ibid., 321.

³⁰³ Kaiser, *French War Brides in America*, 155.

tired of watching and admiring.”³⁰⁴ Even though most of the French women in the American West had worked as dancers or actresses, and only a few of them had been prostitutes, Annick Foucier explains, “There [was, nonetheless,] a very fine line between liberated woman, libertine, Courtesan, kept women, woman of easy virtue, and prostitute. And from one culture to the next, the distinctions get confused, depending on the woman's position in society, her possibilities for economic and emotional autonomy, the degree of social mobility in relation to marriage, and the relationship between money and sexuality.”³⁰⁵ When American men went to war in France, they took with them some of these preconceived and often misconstrued understandings with them, and subsequently the same forms of othering of the French woman in the American West had in many ways been transplanted across the Atlantic during the world wars.

As these sexualized images and representations of French women spread quickly throughout the AEF, they not only increased soldier curiosity of, or allure to, French women but they also shaped the cultural encounter that took place between the two groups. Just before arriving in France, Leslie Langville of the 42nd artillery division, for example, recalled: “According to the Lieutenant, we were in much danger of being raped the minute we put foot on French soil. Most of the fellows would have been willing victims of such treatment.”³⁰⁶ In this way, “wine,

³⁰⁴ Albert Benard de Russailh and Sylvie Bostsarron Chevalley, *Journal de voyage en Californie à l'époque de la ruée vers l'or: 1850-1852* (Paris: A. Montaigne, 1980), 205.

³⁰⁵ Annick Foucier, *Le rêve californien: migrants français sur la côte Pacifique, XVIIIe-XXe siècles* (Paris: Belin, 1999), 164.

³⁰⁶ Leslie Langille, *Men of the Rainbow*, (Chicago, IL: The O'Sullivan Publishing House, 1933); cited in George Browne, *An American Soldier in World War I*, ed. David L. Snead (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 43; James H Hallas, *Doughboy War:*

women, and song” became the unofficial anthem of the AEF stationed in France during and after World War I.³⁰⁷ Further, sexualized images of Paris and French women coincided with romanticized images of the French in general. One American commentator noted in the American press: “The prime interest of the Anglo-Saxon in life is achievement, adventure, action. In French life, love is the supreme rite. All the Frenchman’s education reading, observation train him to perfect himself in the art of making love.”³⁰⁸ This racialization of sexual mores shows how notions of difference became even further transcribed onto the “other” in cross-cultural encounter.

It should also be noted that while soldiers created and recreated cultural preconceptions (both romantic and sexualized) of French women through songs, comics, and photos in military publications such as *Stars and Stripes*, they also recreated and retold them through war stories between generations. In 1944, *Stars and Stripes* published the cartoon pictured in Figure 4. Here, as soldiers walk through a French town (denoted not only by the label on the top, but also by the wine on the table), their conversation is captured in the caption, “This is th’ town my pappy told me about.”³⁰⁹

The American Expeditionary Force in World War I (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000).

³⁰⁷ Martin Marix Evans, *American Voices of World War I: Primary Source Documents, 1917-1920* (London: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 2001); Don V. Paradis, *The World War I Memoirs of Don V. Paradis, Gunnery Sergeant, USMC*, edited by Peter F. Owen (self-published: Lt Col Peter F. Owen, 2010), 29.

³⁰⁸ Ellinston, “Paths of a French War Bride Are Rocky.”

³⁰⁹ “This is th’ town my pappy told me about,” *Stars and Stripes*, *Stars and Stripes*, September 6, 1944. Cited in Roberts, *What Soldiers Do*, 3.



Figure 4 "This is th' town my pappy told me about," *Stars and Stripes*, September 6, 1944

Other examples of this generational transmission of cultural preconceptions can be found in one of Hovsepian's letters to his father. Here, he wrote of his mother's constant inquiries: "You shouldn't have told us all those stories about things you did in the first war. [Mom] still believes them."³¹⁰ The generational transfer of these sexualized preconceptions can also be found in the World-War-II accounts of Bernard Dargols. Dargols was a Parisian student who had been interning in New York when the conflict in France began, and he decided to join the American Army. Because of his background, he was tasked with offering cultural lessons to other GIs before the D-Day landings in order to prepare them for what to expect in France. He recalled during a series of interviews that were later compiled and published by his granddaughter that during these lessons, his American comrades overwhelmed him with questions about French women and were eager to know if they were really as

³¹⁰ Hovsepian, *Your Son and Mine*, 86.

pretty as the men had heard.³¹¹ Likewise, evidence of the generational transfer of these images can be noted in the discourses of the American population that remained in the United States during World War II. For example, in an interview with *Life Magazine* in 1944, an American woman named Nora Schuck expressed that she was worried about soldiers indiscretions with local women when she said, “I didn’t mind the fall of Paris so much as the capture of Armentières!” making a reference to the popular World-War-I song.³¹²

3.2.4 Spatial And Emotional Analysis Of Romanticized and Sexualized Othering

Soldiers in both wars played into these romanticized and sexualized constructs via their own performances during encounter. In a letter, World-War-I AEF member Otis Emmons Briggs explained: “The American soldier is having his hardest fight right now and thousands will not go home with their comrades. They will ‘fall’ wounded at the battle of Paris or Marseille or Bordeaux or any place where attractive women are. They ‘fall’ fighting alone, in a one sided contest. And believe me, it is no easy fight with a real and constant temptation presenting herself in a most alluring form at almost every turn.”³¹³ Likewise, the author of an article in the *Atlantic Constitution* declared: “I want to go on the record as saying both French and English girls went wild over our American men. Anyone who watched the developments over there will tell you the same thing. The Yank was a revelation. He was like a new toy. He was outspoken. He was full of fun. Laughing. Optimistic. He

³¹¹ Bernard Darglos, *Bernard Dargols, un GI français à Omaha Beach*, ed. Caroline Jolivet (Rennes: OUEST FRANCE, 2012), 68–70.

³¹² “Some Iowa Girls Didn’t Like That Kissing in Paris,” *Life*, September 25, 1944. Cited in Roberts, *What Soldiers Do*, 70-71.

³¹³ Quoted in Meigs, *Optimism at Armageddon*, 112.

had supreme confidence in himself and sublime faith in everyone else.”³¹⁴ In this way, soldiers propagated their own constructions of both women and war.

In further considering how, why, and to what extent this kind of sexualized and romanticized othering took the form that it did, I propose that it is also important to consider the intersectionality of these cultural processes with gendered elements such as the hyper-masculinization of military service and with the emotional and rhetorical connections that are often made between war and sex (or between war and romance) specifically in military spaces and spaces of war. Here, as Frank Costigliola reminds us, men's quest for sexual adventure was a commonplace during wartime.³¹⁵ Likewise, military historian and World-War-II soldier Paul Fussell further examines the links between combat, emotion, and sexual activity extensively in his 1975 work, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, in which he points to the writings of Marcel Proust who noticed that “war provokes an almost tropical flowering of sexual activity behind the lines which is the counterpart to the work of carnage which takes place at the front.”³¹⁶ Further Wystan Hugh Auden's *The Age of Anxiety* (1947), explained: "In times of war even the crudest kind of positive affection between persons seems extraordinarily beautiful, a noble symbol of the peace and forgiveness of which the whole world stands so desperately

³¹⁴ Jane Dixon, “It’s Love’s Blue Monday for the Doughboy Now Who Took Himself a War Bride,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, September 14, 1919.

³¹⁵ Frank Costigliola, “‘Mixed Up’ and ‘Contact’: Culture and Emotion among the Allies in the Second World War,” *The International History Review* 20, no. 4 (December 1998): 799.

³¹⁶ Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, 271.

in need."³¹⁷ Here, in the spaces of war, the lines between masculinity, sex, and emotion become difficult to distinguish.

Given this overlap, it is worth further questioning to what extent the sexualized othering of French women can be actually described as *positive othering* given that the enlaced and nuanced power dynamics make it harder to distinguish from other concepts like the “colonial gaze.” This is even further complicated when we consider the most extreme extent to which the sexualization of French women was taken. For example, a 1945 article in *Life Magazine* warned: “In France, the hard feelings between the French people and the US soldiers were boiling over in riots and mutual recriminations. GIs in Le Harvre, angrily impatient to get home, rampaged through the town. The French were complaining that GIs acted more like conquerors than allies.”³¹⁸ Instances of sexual violence in Europe were more extensively documented during World War II than they had been during World War I. One marriage participant, Pierrette S. recounted in a later interview one such story: “One of my classmates at the *Ecole Normale* was really unlucky. She was hitchhiking between Aix-en-Provence and Marseille, or someplace like that. Nowadays, it isn't wise to hitchhike, but, back then, we young French people used to do it all the time. So, she was hitchhiking after the Americans arrived, and she was picked up by two black Americans, who raped and killed her. She was only 19 or 20. It was horrible! We'd been studying together for four years and were like sisters. That was really hard. No, the Americans weren't all gentlemen.”³¹⁹ Sociologist and

³¹⁷ W. H. Auden, *The Age of Anxiety: A Baroque Eclogue* (Princeton University Press, 2011), 88.

³¹⁸ “GIs In Paris Flock to Pig Alley,” *Life Magazine*, November 26, 1945, 29.

³¹⁹ Interview with Pierrette S. in Kaiser, *French War Brides in America*, 140.

criminologist, J. Robert Lilly estimates that between 1942 and 1945, some 17,000 women and children in Britain, France, and Germany were victims of rape by American GIs.³²⁰ And as Pierrette's account suggests, such instances were disproportionately attributed to soldiers who had been racialized as "black." In an attempt to challenge romanticized popular memory of the generous, protecting GI along with the grateful young French woman, both Judith Surkis and Mary Louise Roberts have produced extensive and riveting counter-narratives centered on wartime sexual violence.³²¹ Roberts argues that because soldiers often saw the Gallic race as "uncivilized" and "over-sexed", American soldiers exploited the myth of sexually available French women and committed theft, rape, and physical assault almost daily.³²² By intersecting gender and cultural analyses, both Roberts and Surkis similarly conclude that following the invasion of Normandy American men's sexual access to French women demonstrated the broader shifting power relations between the two societies—especially, insofar as soldiers understood their own role in the war's outcome. Sexual violence embedded within these kinds of gender and political power relations, therefore, resembles more closely the forms of othering studied by post-colonial and feminist scholars and provides an interesting contrast to the numerous romantic relationships that have been categorized as "handsome liberator/grateful girl" narratives.

³²⁰ J. Robert Lilly, *La face cachée des GIs: les viols commis par des soldats américains en France, en Angleterre et en Allemagne pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale, 1942-1945* (Paris: Payot, 2003), 43; Anonymous, *A Woman in Berlin*. (London: Virago, 2011); and Gabriele Köpp, *Warum war ich bloß ein Mädchen? das Trauma einer Flucht 1945* (München: Knauer-Taschenbuch-Verl., 2012) both provide first-hand accounts of the rape of German woman during Russian occupation of Germany.

³²¹ Roberts, *What Soldiers Do*, 110; Judith Surkis, "Sex, Sovereignty, and Transnational Intimacies," *The American Historical Review* 115, no. 4 (October 2010): 1089–96.

³²² Roberts, *What Soldiers Do*, 20, 109.

Nevertheless, while this extreme of sexual violence is important to consider in the examination of the sexualized forms othering of French women by American soldiers, for the purpose of this study, the analytical focus will rest on more consensual encounters and the ways in which they intersect with marriage motivation. More importantly, even though the great majority of the interactions between American soldiers and French women during both World War I and World War II could be best described as fleeting sexual encounters by their very nature, a closer analysis of soldiers' accounts demonstrates that many of them were far more embedded with emotions than one might initially expect.³²³ The collected and published letters of World-War-II soldier Alexander Hovsepien, for example, provide notable insight into not only these emotions, but also their complexity within spaces of war. More importantly, his letters demonstrate that in the process of othering French women, the lines between sex, emotion, and even marriage overlapped in many contradictory ways.

Hovsepien, who joined the army after the attack on Pearl Harbor, was sent to Europe in 1944 as part of a combat intelligence unit. While the letters between him and his parents do not indicate his age, his mother described him as merely “a boy” who was both “young and underdeveloped.”³²⁴ During his time in France, he had numerous and varied sexual and emotional relationships with French women, each of which he detailed in letters to his father. These letters demonstrate many of the same themes already discussed, notably how hyper-masculinization of military

³²³ United State Army report in Walker, *Venereal Disease in the American Expeditionary Forces*, 101 showed that seventy-one percent of American soldiers claimed to have had sexual relationships with French women while serving in the American Expeditionary Forces during World War I. Similar data is unavailable for World War II.

³²⁴ Hovsepien, *Your Son and Mine*, xi.

service led to a quest for sexual activity—about which he wrote that “everybody [had been] talking about women all the time.”³²⁵ In another letter, he wrote that “French girls were easy to get”, and in referencing one of the military’s major concerns—the spread of sexually transmitted disease—he explained insouciantly: “I am not going to be so choosy from now on, and get my fun where I can get it while I’m still alive. I hear that Penicillin will cure G.C. 95% of the cases in one day.”³²⁶ However, a deeper analysis into his accounts reveals an interesting and perhaps unexpected emotional complexity to his proclivities and, undoubtedly, others like him.

The letter that describes his first sexual encounter with a French woman is the most telling. In it, he wrote:

I had my first real experience with a woman last night... We went to a village, four of us, and were hell-bent on having a good time. The idea of having a good time here is pretty simple—you get drunk. You drink whether you like drinking or not, just for the hell of it... At first you feel like a great guy, ready to lick the world, but after a while you get awfully sad and mushy... So we went to a couple places and got pretty drunk, and that left us awfully dissatisfied, and then a corporal we met at one place told us he knew where we could get a couple good girls, and not too expensive, so we thought it was a great idea.³²⁷

Here, the contradictory tension of “having a good time” and ultimate dissatisfaction demonstrates the ways in which soldiers used both drinking and women to create spatial dichotomies of their wartime experience. The “good time” of drinking and physical engagement with women provided a way to escape the spaces of active

³²⁵ Ibid., 100.

³²⁶ Ibid., 114.

³²⁷ Ibid., 100–101.

conflict. What is most notable in this passage, however, is that he thinks that he is going to engage in prostitution—an arrangement best characterized as a transaction or exchange in which emotions and sexual activity are typically viewed as mutually exclusive. During both World War I and World War II, American soldiers engaged so frequently in prostitution with French women that in each, French and American officials debated whether or not the American military should allow and oversee licensed brothels in locations near their camps as a way to combat venereal disease.³²⁸ In this case, however, much to Hovsepian’s surprise, he did not find himself in a brothel, but rather at farm house in the company of a family, their daughters, and a couple of their daughters’ friends. He admits given his expectations, this made him feel both uneasy and ashamed; however, he was reluctant to leave because, according to him, he was the only one that could speak French, and the French family did not speak English. After a while however, his uneasy feelings wore out and he “fell in the groove”, he explained. Then he continued:

Before I knew it, one of the girls got on my lap and was kissing me and whispering all sorts of things to me, and I all of a sudden started to cry, tears rolling down my cheeks and she was trying to wipe them off, and it was so damned silly but I couldn’t stop. I felt so sad and lonely. Then there was another girl trying to stop me from crying, and she was so sympathetic that she cried herself, and that made me feel even sadder. She gave me a glass of wine, and that was my end,

³²⁸ Edward M Coffman, *The War to End All Wars: The American Military Experience in World War I*. (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2014), 133 cites February 1918 letter from Premier Clemenceau to GHQ, in which such arrangements are suggested. When the letter was transmitted to Secretary Baker, he responded famously by saying, “For God’s sake, Raymond, don’t show this to the President or he’ll stop the war.” Roberts, *What Soldiers Do*, 1–2 cites WWII exchange between Le Havre mayor, Pierre Voisin, and American general commander Colonel Weed. The request was denied for fear that news of military-sanctioned promiscuity would spread back in the United States.

because all of a sudden there was a blackout, and when I opened my eyes, everything was dark... then I felt somebody's arm on me, and I groped in the dark and I felt a girl lying next to me under the blanket. Well that was a new experience to me and I got terribly excited. She must have waken up because she pressed her body to mine, and it was so warm, and she kissed me, and before I knew it, it was all over.³²⁹

Unfortunately, the woman he was with remains as anonymous for the reader as she did for him, and her own expectations and experience remain likewise unknown. While the desperate conditions of war and lack of food in World-War-II France led many to participate in prostitution, it is impossible to know if this encounter was truly meant to be an economic exchange or if he wrongly assumed this. He later mentions that upon waking, he realized that she had not taken any of his money. Therefore, given the communication barrier, that he went there with incorrect assumptions is possible. Still, as the letter continued so too did his internal emotional struggle to come to terms with what just happened:

[W]hen it was all over, I felt terribly ashamed and disgusted, and I was getting physically sick too, my stomach was turning and chocking me, and I know I had to get out... The night was pitch black, but somehow I got dressed and started to walk until I hit the main road. I got sick several times before I got there, and it was so ugly and so different from how I imagined it would happen—that I was getting more and more disgusted and mad. I felt like somebody had robbed me. I was mad at the girl, and mad at myself for doing what I did—I knew that I would never be the same again. I was still pretty drunk and some of the silliest thoughts were going through my mind, like that I should go back and marry the girl and then I remembered that I didn't even know which of the four girls she was and even what her name was because we never spoke a word in the dark room, just tore into each other like two animals... When I woke up in the morning it all seemed like a dream.... The thing that was bothering me most was that I didn't even know which of the girls was with me, and I was ashamed to ask the boys... —they came back in

³²⁹ Hovsepian, *Your Son and Mine*, 102.

the morning, and I felt that they, too, were pretty depressed, even though we all talked big as if it was nothing, but a usual thing for us... I don't know if I would ever want to know another woman again, not the way I feel now.³³⁰

His invocation of marriage here is notable, and something that he does several times in his letters regarding various other relationships. It demonstrates the cultural constructs in which sex was linked to marital unions as well as the contrasting feelings of guilt and shame that were attributed to sexual engagements outside of those constructs. His internal emotional struggle is also perhaps indicative of the breakdown of traditional marriage and moral standards during wartime—standards that would only return in the 1950s as part of the “return to normalcy” social campaign.

Finally, in the closing of his letter, he not only linked sex with both notions of romance and as a rite of passage to masculinity, but he also showed how his emotional struggle was linked directly to the space of war:

Well, anyway I am a man now, and damn it, I don't know whether to be proud or not. It wasn't very romantic—if anything it was silly. I am not ashamed—I had to go through it sooner or later, but why the hell couldn't it be nicer? But then, *c'est la guerre*, as we say here, and it seems that everything that is supposed to be fine and noble turns into dirt when it gets mixed with blood.³³¹

That the lines between sex, emotion, and even marriage overlapped in opposing and contradictory ways is even more evident in the response letter from his father. It not only acknowledged the romantic expectations that his son had linked to

³³⁰ Ibid., 103.

³³¹ Ibid., 104.

sexual encounter, but it also indicates the shift in emotional standards surrounding the role of sex in courtship and love-based marriage as a proliferating practice:

Love is the greatest creative force in the world—and love of a woman is the strongest and holiest of all forms of love—because woman is the holiest and most sacred of all God’s creations. You may think that this is an exaggerated statement of an old romanticist, but if you would consider all the great and noble works of art, literature, music, etc., which have been inspired by man’s love for woman you would understand that only a great and noble subject could inspire them. The poor girl who slept with you in a French barn wanted to make you happy, to make you forget the horrible things you have been through. She was more than a lover to you, she was sister and mother and wife, all rolled into one. How would you otherwise explain her action? She did not put any claim on you or ask for any reward. She did not want to be even recognized—and in some strange way, what she did was spiritually pure. It was a crude way of expressing her compassion to all you boys torn away from your homes and your loved ones. She acted as only a woman could act—with complete disregard for her own welfare... Years will pass. You will fall in love and marry—and then you will know the overwhelming power of pure love, the greatest of all human emotions. You will learn to love and respect one woman who will become for you the most worthwhile thing in life. But never forget that poor French girl, think of her with respect and reverence—because she was a woman in the purest and most sacred sense of the word, giving away all she had in an awkward and crude attempt to alleviate the pain of loneliness when you needed this most. After every war they build monuments to unknown soldiers. Let there be a monument in your heart to an unknown woman—and keep this monument beautiful and clean at all times.³³²

Shortly after, Hovsepian’s other letters to his father regarding relationships with other women demonstrate more closely sentiments of longing based on positive othering processes, and it seems that he quickly heeded his father’s advice. He also warns his father, not to “worry about [his] love affairs.” He wrote: “I *am* careful. I am not an innocent boy anymore, it’s true, but I’m not a promiscuous bastard

³³² Ibid., 105–6.

either.” In the same letter he describes his last relationship with another French woman named Julianne. Here he wrote:

Each time she passed me, I slowly turned my head and watched her figure glide through the room. She was tall, about five seven or eight. She wore her chestnut hair up on top of her head. She had a gorgeous figure. The kind you see in Greek statues. She had the face of a Greek goddess. But her eyes were like smoldering embers. She had the eye of a tiger. They made me shudder to look at them. They didn't belong on that face. That face was so serene, so godly, and had eyes that belonged to the devil himself. She was the type of woman that personifies the word 'woman'. She looked like she could stick a knife in your heart while kissing you. I was fascinated. If I had to marry her to get her, I would have done it at the drop of a hat... Well, Pop, you can guess the rest. But what you'd never guess was that I really fell in love with her—like you read in the books and in the movies.³³³

In characterizing her as “a Greek goddess” he noted what he perceives as foreign and almost exotic qualities that make her attractive to him. Here, his notions of romantic love in this context were very idealized and storybook-like, and again, he invoked marriage, though he would not marry this or any French woman. While Hovsepien writes of several relationships with French women, it should be noted that he rarely described them as French, simply as women—some of them by name, others not. What is even more interesting, however, is once he arrived in Luxembourg and Germany, he never mentioned further relationships with women in those areas. By contrast, he actually continued to discuss the French women he left behind.

It should be further reiterated here that soldiers' performance (and subsequent propagations) of the sexualized and romanticized constructs of not only

³³³ Ibid., 179.

women but their own roles in encounter were linked directly to spatial dichotomies of war. Here, Paul Fussell explains: “The reason why theater and modern war seem so compatible is that modern wars are fought by conscripted armies, whose members know they are only temporarily playing their ill-learned parts... in an attempt to distance themselves from the annihilations occurring around them.” According to Fussell war was much like theater in that the life of the soldier was not real life; “You were never you. The ‘I’ part of you was somewhere else,” he explains. Moreover, this sense of theater also offered a means of interpretation and familiarity in a search for meaning and structure.³³⁴ Therefore, if we further examine the emotional dimensions we can observe the ways in which soldiers attempted to reconcile these kinds of very contrasted emotions on this “theatrical stage”—on one hand, the excitement of liberation and grateful women waiting for them contrasted with fear as the war was not entirely over, on the other. For example, Hovsepian attempted to explain this emotional reconciliation in one of his many letters to his father. He wrote:

The strain of war sure does something to you. They say you get used to it, but I guess it’s all a lot of baloney because you can’t get used to a thing which isn’t normal... When you start each day without knowing whether you go to bed the same night, or whether other boys in your section will be alive or dead... believe me, you’re better off without thinking too much about it. Just do your job the best you know how and let it go at that... It’s only when you’re pulled back from the front and out of danger that all those thoughts and feelings which were kept back hit you like a ton of bricks. You feel like laughing, shouting, rolling on the ground, kissing every girl you meet, getting drunk and telling everyone that you’re alive and to hell with everything else.³³⁵

³³⁴ Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, 191, 193, 199.

³³⁵ Hovsepian, *Your Son and Mine*, 99.

By juxtaposing these two spaces—one of war and one of women—soldiers were able to use the latter as a way to escape the realities and emotions of the former. In another letter, Hovsepian similarly recounted:

Pat and I had a pass to a swell big city. We had more fun. We had a huge dinner, drank champagne, flirted with some beautiful French girls. They came over to our table. Pat and I can speak French very well now. Never have any trouble anywhere. The girls offered to show us the famous spots in the city. We had more darn fun. We gave them each a big chocolate bar we had. Over here it's like a fur coat in America. They saw us to the trucks when it was time to go. Just as we were going they threw their arms around us and kissed us right in front of about four truck loads of soldiers. Did they whistle and did we blush! But it was fun to feel a girl's arm around your neck—we almost forgot how it felt.³³⁶

Of one girl in particular he revealed: “She sure did wonders to me when I needed it most. The two days there and I already forgot the war.”³³⁷ Likewise, after being wounded in the east of France, World-War-II soldier Joe Sacco explained of a visit from a girl that he had met in a nearby village:

The flowers were nice but it was seeing Monique that cheered me up. We'd known each other only a few weeks, but I'd changed a great deal in that time. The days had gone by quickly, yet the transformation within had been profound. Since landing at Normandy, I'd seen horrors on a magnitude I could have never imagined and had been changed by the sadness, the anger, and the fear that surrounds me. Doubt and uncertainty had become my constant companions. Sorrow and death had haunted me without reprieve. But now I felt different in a way I didn't know it was possible to ever feel. With a word, with a gesture, with a smile and a kiss, Monique had touched my heart and reconstructed my soul.³³⁸

³³⁶ Ibid., 109.

³³⁷ Ibid., 120.

³³⁸ Jack Sacco, *Where the Birds Never Sing: The True Story of the 92nd Signal Battalion and the Liberation of Dachau* (New York: Regan Books, 2003), 241.

3.3 Emotions of War and the Othering of American Soldiers

War as opportunity for both romantic encounter and marriage between American soldiers and French women was a bilateral construct; however, the process through which French women othered American soldiers differed significantly from the ways they had been othered by their partners. For example, during World War I, Denyse Dorville of Paris, who would meet and marry AEF service member Henry Marston of Overbrook in April 1918, explained to a reporter for *Literary Digest*: “I met my husband quite by chance; it was a real romance! ... He was using his leave to study singing... in Paris... we met through the window, just like that! We used to hear him practice and one day my brother ... called to him across the window ... and spoke to him. We knew he was American. It was the fashion to be hospitable to American officers and men. In fact, we adored them!”³³⁹ Likewise, World-War-II bride Denise J. Rossow explained in an article that she wrote for the *Chicago Tribune*: “In September 1944 Ray asked if I would marry him. I replied, ‘Why not?’ Since 1942 I admit I was really taken by the Americans. They seemed so different. For the most part they were young, full of life.”³⁴⁰ In both accounts, notions of difference remain central to both cross-cultural attraction and marriage motivations. But how were the differences of American soldiers marked by French women, and in what ways did these differences provoke certain emotional responses that would lead to marriage?

³³⁹ “French Envoys of Cupid in America,” *Literary Digest*, February 14, 1920, 60.

³⁴⁰ Denise J. Rossow, “French War Bride,” *Chicago Tribune*, December 16, 1999, sec. Voice of the People (Letter).

In the case of French women, this emotional process of othering was deeply embedded within the spaces of war and the emotions that the war had prompted. Among the local French population, emotions like fear, uncertainty, and the longing for stability under German invasion and occupation during World War II were soon contrasted against the overwhelming excitement and exhilaration of liberation. This emotional shift provided an important context in which Franco-American encounter and marriages would manifest. In her self-published memoir, transnational-marriage participant Liz Lawson provides a glimpse into the emotional turbulence of this shift. When the German army invaded Paris, her family like many others fled to the countryside. When they were finally able to return to their home in the occupied territory, she explained, “there was a certain sadness and melancholia hanging in the air” and every day sounds were muffled “as if people wanted to hide their feelings from the occupier.”³⁴¹ For another marriage participant Jeannine Ricou-Allunis, occupation, defeat, and restrictions on foodstuffs somehow had taken away France’s *Frenchness*. She explained in her memoir: “The worst was that they deprived us of food. You don’t do that to French people.”³⁴² On the same subject Lawson wrote: “Can one imagine France without its wonderfully light, crisp baguettes of bread early in the morning when the aroma of their baking would lilt the spirit of the most morose minds? During the war years French bread was transformed into a dark heavy mass of dough and when cut, the loaf would expose very unorthodox

³⁴¹ Liz Lawson, *Memoirs of a French War Bride, 1940-1950* (Santa Cruz, CA: n.p., 1998), 17, 19.

³⁴² Jeannine Ricou-Allunis, *Memoir of a French War Bride* (Bloomington, IN: Author House, 2004), 17.

contents, small strings, particles of stone, a dead fly, a piece of rubber band!”³⁴³

Further, as many of her neighbors joined the civilian occupation force (or the collaboration), most people were overcome by feelings of distrust and suspicion. According to Lawson, those whose favorite pastime had been to debate politics were soon “shuttered” as such exchanges became dangerous. To this she said: “Silence was advisable and it proved a great hardship for the French people who always enjoyed a debate on political issues.”³⁴⁴

These negative emotions of occupation further intensified the subsequent euphoria and excitement that was then created by the arrival of the American soldiers. This emotional contrast is described in Lawson’s memoir. She wrote:

The days that followed the D-Day landings were shrouded in our memories with the emotions that one feels when hope is so near yet so uncertain and when the courage of many men sets the path to final victory... We wanted to believe that the Allies were fighting for democracy and freedom and we were filled with gratitude. From D Day on, the American soldier and everyone who was involved in the final battles became our hero, and we were ready to give him everything we had and celebrate his arrival with the joy and enthusiasm we felt they deserved.³⁴⁵

However, the emotional processes driving the othering of and fascination with American soldiers went far beyond mere gratitude for their role in the liberation of French cities from German occupation. As Charles Lemeland of Glatigny, who was twelve years old at the time of the D-Day landings, recounted in a later interview, anticipation of the Americans arrival quickly evolved into fascination and enchantment, even for him as a young boy. He recounted:

³⁴³ Lawson, *Memoirs of a French War Bride, 1940-1950*, 30.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 19.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 69.

On April 29th a gray, cool and tense Tuesday, we heard about the Allied landings. It was not a surprise. The Americans had landed, we were told, but that raised a number of questions. When would they arrive in Glatigny, where we were staying? How did American soldiers really look? What kind of uniform did they wear? What guns and equipment would they have? What would their faces be like? What was their style as soldiers? We had to wait exactly one month for the answers.

When he did finally observe some of the soldiers in the town of Barneville, Lemeland described them as “friendly, good-humored, and good-looking.” He continued:

[T]hey were quite popular, especially with women. Best of all, they did not look or act like fanatical, professional soldiers. As if they did not take the war quite seriously or, at least, not all the time. They had a great talent for enjoying themselves whenever they could. We were fascinated by their demeanor, their gestures. In a word, they were ‘cool’. The way they got into their cars and drove was classy, with a touch of wildness... They were definitely a different breed of cats. With the American soldiers it was the wonderful world of laughter, play, and permissiveness: candy galore, the thrill of getting inside tanks and other fascinating machinery and touching all those levers and pedals, posing for pictures, looking at pictures of relatives, of girlfriends usually in bathing suits and appearing to us like movie stars! ... The Eldorado had come to us. The Americans were nothing but demi-gods haloed with a kind of supernatural prestige.³⁴⁶

For Lemeland, the American soldiers exhibited an awe-invoking quality. Here, their perceived difference was marked by their lighthearted demeanor, as well as what he interpreted as elegance and class. That he described them as similar to “movie stars” and “demi-gods” depicts the ways in which othering of American soldiers took the form of not only fascination and enchantment but also idolization in many respects.

³⁴⁶ Interview with Charles Lemeland in Hilary Kaiser, *WWII Voices: American GIs and the French Women Who Married Them* (Scottsdale: Summertime Publications Inc., 2011), 57–59.

Such conceptions were also likely shaped by the cultural representations of actual movie stars. As Darglos noted, before going to New York for his pre-war internship, the only prior interaction that most French people had had with Americans had been through the prism of American popular cultural forms such as literature, music, and film. According to him, before World War II, his entire American “universe” had been comprised of Benny Goodman, Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, Fred Astaire, Duke Ellington, Glenn Miller, and Louis Armstrong.³⁴⁷

Further, the striking and curious difference of the American soldier was distinctly marked by his military uniform, which provided a clear materialization of distinction. In a later interview, one World-War-II-marriage participant, Marcelle S., who was born in Oran, Algeria, explained of her American husband in his uniform, “Moray was the most gorgeous officer! I took one look at him and said, ‘I don’t believe this!’ It was one of those things. I fell head over heels.”³⁴⁸ Likewise Jeannine Ricou-Allunis recounted the first time she saw her husband remarking specifically that “he was good looking, and he wore a beautiful uniform.” She continued in her memoir to explain: “Our eyes were like that - we never saw such good-looking men in our life.”³⁴⁹ For some women, especially those who had engaged in relatively short courting periods, the military uniform became a perpetual display of their American partners’ physical appearance and identity. Jennette Davis of Granville, for example, was only fifteen years old when she met her husband. After a short courtship, they continued their relationship through written correspondence until they met again in Paris five years later. Of that meeting she said: “I didn’t recognize

³⁴⁷ Darglos, *Bernard Dargols, un GI français à Omaha Beach*, 25.

³⁴⁸ Interview with Marcelle S. in Kaiser, *French War Brides in America*, 67.

³⁴⁹ Ricou-Allunis, *Memoir of a French War Bride*, 99.

him at first... because he was no longer in uniform!”³⁵⁰ Though the military uniform provided a clear materialization of difference and distinction, it also simultaneously served as a clear sign of the nation-state, and attraction to it meant that in a rather paradoxical way, nationalism led to transnationalism through these wartime coupling processes.

As Lemeland remarked, young French women were especially taken by the awe-invoking enchantment of the American soldiers. For them, the excitement of liberation paired with an apparent celebrity-like magnetism—marked by the uniform—created an environment that both fostered and facilitated transnational relationships. As Lawson continued in her memoir, she provided a further glimpse into the depth of the emotional experiences young women like her felt when they first encountered American soldiers. One day, she had been riding her bike to the next village to get some bread for dinner, and she ran into an American convoy for the first time. She wrote:

I felt faint with excitement. I could have jumped and embraced them hugging their oil-smearing faces and telling them how happy and free I now felt. I wanted to cry, shedding tears I had kept under control for too long. I wanted to scream at the top of my lungs *Vive les Américains!* But I did nothing but stare speechless and dumbfounded. I was totally overcome by my emotions.³⁵¹

While Lawson was left confounded in her first encounter, other young women actively sought out American soldiers for the purpose of engaging them in their courting customs. For example, during his later interview, Lemeland recounted some of his observations regarding the enthusiasm of the young women that he

³⁵⁰ Interview with Jennette Davis in Kaiser, *WWII Voices*, 127.

³⁵¹ Lawson, *Memoirs of a French War Bride, 1940-1950*, 73.

knew. He said: “The Americans were unbelievably successful among French girls. There's no other way to say this. My sister, who was only fifteen, didn't stop talking about them with her friends from school. My brother and I would see them endlessly plotting how to get close to the young liberators.”³⁵² Other examples can be found in the writings of Simone de Beauvoir who described a young French woman named Lise whose “main sport since the Liberation was what she called 'hunting the Americans’.”³⁵³

A brief comparison of the liberation celebrations during both World War I and World War II demonstrates generational shifts in cultural attitudes regarding the ways in which men and women interacted publically during such post-conflict merriments. Even though one World-War-I soldier’s journal entry from November 14,1918 explained that “there was a big celebration with lots of pretty women everywhere”, a later interview with that soldier’s Franco-American daughter, Liliane, suggests that it was not the same kind of “kissing celebration” that would take place in World War II. She claimed: “At that time, an 18-year old girl didn't jump into the arms of people, didn't fling their arms round people's necks; she didn't have boyfriends left and right.”³⁵⁴ According to historian, Mary Louise Roberts, it was not until the mid-twentieth century, that “the Victorian restrictions of sexual continence and self-control had largely disappeared from white middle class American society, particularly among the younger generation.” By that time, “heterosexual pleasure and sexual satisfaction were defined as important for

³⁵² Interview with Aubert Lemeland in Kaiser, *WWII Voices*, 61.

³⁵³ Quoted in Antony Beevor and Artemis Cooper, *Paris After the Liberation, 1944-1949* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 129.

³⁵⁴ Interview with Liliane Schroeder in Kaiser, *French War Brides in America*, 19.

personal happiness as well as a successful marriage.”³⁵⁵ Likewise, in their work *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*, John D’Emilio and Estelle Freedman characterize the period beginning in 1920s to mid-century as one of sexual liberalism in the public sphere.³⁵⁶ Therefore, the ways in which courtship behaviors and sexuality were publically displayed by transnational couples likely differed greatly between the two conflicts.

The broader cultural fascination that fostered processes of *positive othering* and *longing for the other* in cross-cultural encounter was further complicated by the rise of anti-Americanism in France during both the interwar years³⁵⁷ and the allied bombing campaigns of World War II, which targeted and subsequently destroyed local infrastructure such as bridges, roads, and railways. This led to contradictory emotions of resentment, fear, anger, loss, distrust, and suspicion of the American soldiers. Jacques Petit, who was an adolescent at the time of the American invasion, explained in his journal how the “romantic enthusiasm” of the Americans arrival quickly evolved into an uncontrollable fear as his town was destroyed by the bombardment.³⁵⁸ According to Roberts, in 1944, 35,317 civilians were killed by the allied campaign and thousands of homes and farms were destroyed.³⁵⁹ As Hovsepian made his way through the Norman peninsula he noted this destruction in a letter to his parents: “The country is getting more and more beautiful—except for the

³⁵⁵ Roberts, *What Soldiers Do*, 53–54.

³⁵⁶ John D’Emilio and Estelle Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*, 1st ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), Part IV.

³⁵⁷ For more see Green, *The Other Americans in Paris*.

³⁵⁸ Petit, *Au coeur de la bataille de Normandie*, 9.

³⁵⁹ Roberts, *What Soldiers Do*, 21.

bombed towns. Not a building left standing in some places. Boy, I didn't think we could do so much damage."³⁶⁰

In a full examination of the process of positive othering, one should consider to what extent these sentiments of fear, anger, and distrust were indicative of the emotions felt by the French women who went on to marry American soldiers. Marriage participant Jeannine Ricou-Allunis discussed extensively the bombardment in her memoir; however, she never mentions feelings of resentment for the American soldiers responsible. She wrote:

Orleans was bad, very bad. On some streets there was nothing left, such as the Les Aubrais, near the station. The bombings killed many people. Some of my friends were killed. Sometimes when the bombs were not exploded, they just laid there on the street. But you know, we just walked over them. We were not worried about it. I cannot explain the feeling; I think we were not feeling anymore when there was so much going on. You lose the fear. It becomes everyday life.³⁶¹

Likewise, Liz Lawson explained in her memoir that even though fear had overtaken their lives as bombing and air raids frequently sent them to the metro tunnels for shelter in the night: "We always rooted for the Allies. We knew that through their expeditions we would eventually become free, and the sacrifices of sleepless night and runs for shelter were worth the outcome of their battle."³⁶² Even Andrée McLatcher of Caen, another transnational-marriage participant whose childhood home had been demolished in the allied bombing explained in a later interview:

We loved our house but it was completely destroyed when the Allies bombed Le Havre in September 1944. It's incredible that we hardly

³⁶⁰ Hovsepian, *Your Son and Mine*, 80.

³⁶¹ Ricou-Allunis, *Memoir of a French War Bride*, 26–27.

³⁶² Lawson, *Memoirs of a French War Bride, 1940-1950*, 26.

had any damage during the whole war and then it was the Allies who bombed us! I know they wanted to get rid of the Germans, but most of them had already left. Thousands of civilians were killed, and all sorts of buildings, including schools, hospitals and churches were destroyed. There were fires and rubble everywhere. It was awful. Luckily none of my family members were killed. A lot of people from Normandy are still angry about the bombing of Le Havre. [But] my family accepted what happened because my father told us it wasn't the Allies' fault.³⁶³

While contrasting feelings of fear and resentment among the French population during the bombing campaign are visible, as these passages suggest, for those women that entered into marriages with American soldiers, such resentment remained peripheral within a broader spectrum of emotions invoked by war and liberation.

As they made their way from places such as Normandy or Marseille to the interior, American soldiers in World-War-II France also got caught up in this excitement that followed their arrival and played well into the role that had been imagined for them (and by them). For example, George Hook of Middleton, Ohio, who later married a French woman, explained in an interview:

I must say it was an emotional thrill to liberate a French town. After the fighting was over and all the Germans had been killed or captured, or had fled, the streets were suddenly filled with joyous crowds of people who appeared from nowhere. We were offered everything and anything they had in the way of food and drink. A lot of Calvados, I seem to remember. In one town a pretty young girl climbed up on my tank and presented me with a small French flag she had made and kept for the day of liberation. It is still one of my most treasured possessions.³⁶⁴

³⁶³ Interview with Andrée McLatcher in Kaiser, *WWII Voices*, 129.

³⁶⁴ Interview with George Hook in *ibid.*, 66–67.

Likewise, World-War-II soldier and member of the 92nd Battalion, Joe Sacco explained:

Of special importance in the war being waged by the boys of the 92nd Signal Battalion was getting to the next town before the infantry so that we could be the first to find and grateful-to-be-liberated girls. Sometimes we would let the infantrymen fight up to the edge of a town, and then we'd go in ahead to start setting phone lines. It wasn't the safest way to operate, but the prospect of discovering pretty girls made us more willing to take the risks... Each town was fanaticized to be a dream town... the town in which lived nothing but beautiful French women, all anxiously waiting for the day they would meet a handsome young American soldier and be swept off of their feet.³⁶⁵

Of course, the city that held the most promise for them was Paris. As one American private explained, it was the liberation of the city of Paris that saw “the greatest night the world has ever known.” Invoking the World-War-I idiom, he called it “a glorious night of wine, women, and song.”³⁶⁶ Even though the French Forces of the Interior marched down the Champs d'Elysees first, it was still the American soldiers that found themselves at the center of so much attention. One Parisian woman Raymonde Liska, who also went on to marry an American soldier, recounted further details as she remembered them in a later interview:

On our way home, when we reached the Caulaincourt Bridge near the Montmartre Cemetery, we saw two American soldiers in a sidecar. They were lost and had stopped on the bridge to ask some passers-by how to get to the Place de la Concorde. First one woman stepped up to talk to them, then three, then six, then 15, 20 - you can imagine the scene. All the women wanted to kiss the soldiers, who were soon covered in lipstick! Poor guys, they didn't know where to turn. My sister and I couldn't get very close because there were so many women, but we could see the scene. Those women were so happy to

³⁶⁵ Sacco, *Where the Birds Never Sing*, 199.

³⁶⁶ Quoted in Levenstein, *We'll Always Have Paris American Tourists in France Since 1930*, 75.

see the Americans, so very happy. I'm sure those soldiers had never been around so many women like that in their lives. And a lot of the women were very pretty. In 1944, because there was so little to eat, the women were very thin. But they were also still very coquette; they tried to dress nicely and they wore make-up. Those American boys didn't know what hit them. They had lipstick on their foreheads, on their cheeks. Everybody wanted to touch and kiss them because they came from another world.³⁶⁷

The last line of this passage again suggests the importance of perceived difference in mutual attraction on both sides. However, the role of kissing here was one of cultural negotiation and, as Roberts notes, sometimes misunderstanding. Here, she argues that as the French frequently used the *bisou* as simple greeting, many of the soldiers may have misinterpreted this gesture in their own othering process of French women. However, Liska's remark that these particular women were "*coquette*" and dressed nicely and wearing make-up seems also indicative that they were engaging in mate-seeking practices. Therefore, perhaps a better interpretation can be found in the statement of another young French women who explained, "We were all young, in love, and full of hope."³⁶⁸

CONCLUSION

During the world wars, Franco-American encounter and processes of transnational coupling remained a profoundly emotional experience, much as it had in those of the nineteenth century. While Westerners in the nineteenth century had already come to view emotional- or love-based courtship and marriage as ideal, by the mid-twentieth century, such notions became customary across social spectrums. However, even though economic arrangements may not have been the primary motivating factor for

³⁶⁷ Interview with Raymonde Liska in Kaiser, *WWII Voices*, 141–42.

³⁶⁸ Interview with Pierrette S. in *French War Brides in America*, 142.

marriage participation, many female participants nonetheless remained aware of their social and economic situations as a result of the wars. Yet, this economic interpretation, while valid, still fails to explain the emotional or cultural motivations of both parties engaged in cross-cultural courtship during wartime. As I have shown in this chapter, the cultural and emotion-latent constructs that largely drove Franco-American infatuated encounter to marriage during the world wars included processes of positive othering by both sides. Despite increasingly seeing their own identities through national lenses, notions of perceived difference remained the driving forces of transnational coupling, much like they had in the nineteenth century. But here, the romanticized sexualization of French women, along with the idolization of American soldiers created for both sides a conception of the conflicts that surrounded them as both destructive and, at the same time, momentary blissful. The ways in which the subsequent courtships proceeded and transcended national boundaries after these initial infatuated encounters is the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Transnational Courtship in Spaces of War

Throughout, this study has built upon Wen-Shan Yang and Melody Chia-Wen Lu's concept of *transnational marriage*, which successfully situates the concept of *cross-border marriage* within a context of wider transnational processes by placing the analytical focus on the transnational networks and spaces from which marriages emerged.³⁶⁹ Based on that working definition, in the case of wartime marriages during the twentieth century, the relative absence of a transnational community or social network among marriage participants, such as that which produced elite marriages in the nineteenth century, creates a methodological imperative to locate and define new transnational spaces that were created during the world wars. Therefore, in what follows, the focus shifts from wartime othering as an emotional process to a spatial analysis of transnational courtship and marriage.

This chapter is divided into four parts. In the first, I attempt to locate and trace transnational cultural formation across and within multiple sites of wartime encounter by examining where and how soldiers and local women met and courted one another. Here, I argue that because most couples did not share a common language, other forms of mediated cultural cues, such as dancing, provided the translinguistic means of communication that became important cultural devices in courting rituals and transnational coupling. In this fashion, public dances, like those

³⁶⁹ Yang and Lu, *Asian Cross-Border Marriage Migration*.

organized by the American Red Cross, came to serve as one of the most important examples of wartime transnational spaces that produced Franco-American marriages. In the second part of this chapter, I further explore subsequent courtship rituals among participants as well as the important role of their families in the cultural negotiation of these spaces. Finally, the third and fourth parts of this chapter examine how those transnational spaces of courtship and marriage existed in opposition to national spaces. Through an analysis of the conditions and frameworks that transnational couples had to navigate in order to form recognized matrimonial unions, I argue that state and military regulations, as well as the national criticisms of wartime Franco-American marriages further solidified participants' conceptions of the national borders that they attempted to cross. Here, not only did state and legal structures indirectly force couples to choose to enter into marriage after shortened periods of courtship in ways national couples were not, but also national apparatuses used notions of an *ideal* marriage as being a *national* one in their criticisms as a way to reconstruct and redefine the nation and national belonging in the twentieth century.

4.1 Locating Transnational Spaces of War

Examining where and how soldiers and local women met and courted one another allows us to both locate and map transnational cultural formation across and within multiple sites of wartime encounter. By identifying these spatial typologies, and determining which of those spaces can be classified as transnational spaces, we are not only able to move beyond national frameworks of history, but also, and more

specifically, can examine the cultural dimensions of transnational marriage motivation during this period. Because of the vastly different spatial contexts of World War I and II, as well as the availability of sources on which this analysis is based, the sites of encounter during each war will be dealt with separately in this section.

4.1.1 Transnational Spaces of Courtship during World War I

As Susan Zeiger has shown in her work *Entangling Alliances: Foreign War Brides and American Soldiers in the Twentieth Century*, during the World War I, where and how soldiers and local women met and courted one another varied greatly and was often linked to both social circumstance and the soldiers' military rank.³⁷⁰ For middle- and working-class soldiers in the AEF, it was largely France's urban public spaces such as streets, parks, and cafés that provided the stage for casual transnational encounters. World-War-I soldier Robert Scudder, for example, met a girl in a park as she was walking with her friends. They arranged a date to the movies one week later, and soon after he met her parents. Within a couple of months he asked her to marry him.³⁷¹ In 1917, another American soldier explained in an interview with a reporter from the *Literary Digest* that he had been frequenting a small café in Paris for days just because there was a girl there that had sparked his interest. During the interview he revealed enthusiastically: "Why she wouldn't let me walk home with her last night, but said maybe she would tonight!"³⁷² Likewise, during a later interview with the *Sunday Evening Post* in 1939, AEF service-member and transnational-marriage participant Bernhard Ranger depicted a similar story:

³⁷⁰ Zeiger, *Entangling Alliances*, 17.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*

³⁷² "Franco-Yanko Romance," 46.

Take Sergeant Major Elhert Lee Dodds from Wichita, for example. Twenty years ago he knew not a single word of French and, alone in Paris, scuttled to the first haven he encountered, the Pension Simonet, which advertised English Spoken. He was in such trepidation that he did not even notice the comely cashier, Yvonne Simonet, daughter of the proprietor. She, however, noticed him and caused her mother to gasp, an hour later, by announcing that she felt sure ‘the American in No. 37’ would take her away.³⁷³

Officers, by contrast, often met women through social networks and at formal events. One French woman, Marie-Jeanne, met her husband at a reception held for American soldiers in Nice that was hosted by Colonel Webb C. Hayes, son of the former American president, and his wife. Mrs. Hayes had been specifically looking for young French women to accompany their AEF guests, and invited Marie-Jeanne on the recommendation of a mutual acquaintance, Mrs. Hamilton. In a later interview with Hilary Kaiser, her daughter Myriam, explained:

Maman was very vivacious and lively. She had dark, green eyes, very black hair, lovely fair skin, and beautiful, even white, teeth. My father fell in love with her immediately. So the next day he arrived at my grandparents' home with an armful of roses. My grandmother opened the door, and there was a young man with a huge bunch of flowers. This sort of thing wasn't done at the time! But he was allowed to come in.³⁷⁴

One transnational couple during World War I had not even met in person before commencing a courtship, but rather within what one might describe as a literary space. In 1917, a First Division soldier submitted a poem to the *New York Herald, Paris edition*. A young lady from Agen read the “eleven graceful lines and wrote her appreciation to the warrior-poet.” He replied, in prose and poetry. After a

³⁷³ Ragner, “The Permanent AEF.”

³⁷⁴ Interview with Myriam H. in Kaiser, *French War Brides in America*, 11.

year's correspondence between Paris and the trenches, they finally met, and “a whirl-wind courtship ensued.” Then, shortly after Armistice, Mademoiselle Helene Siegel became Mrs. Myer.³⁷⁵ In this case, the site of the cross-cultural space of encounter was not in a physical location such as a café, but rather in their written correspondence to one another. Nonetheless, the process of its construction occurred in the same fashion as the other transnational spaces of courtship, only outside of physical proximity. Like the others, Mr. and Mrs. Myer’s story of a “whirl-wind” romance is depicted here not only as a chance encounter but also one that sparked a rather immediate and forceful emotional reaction. Ragner attempted to explain this by arguing that it was “destiny” that had played the most obvious role in how and where American soldiers met French women. Nonetheless, that these World-War-I, transnational-marriage participants often depicted their own stories as chance encounters suggests that they were perhaps unaware of the cultural spaces that they themselves were creating.

Unfortunately, because these descriptions of encounter are so brief, a full analysis of the cultural characteristics of these transnational spaces that the actors created becomes difficult for the historian. However, Ranger’s references to the linguistic boundaries of these encounters provides both a suitable and thought-provoking entry point for the further untangling of some of their more nuanced cultural dynamics. Such linguistic references are numerous in both World War I and World War II accounts. In the same *Sunday Evening Post* interview, another World-War-I, transnational-marriage participant F. B. Huger recounted this story of encounter: “I met my wife on the beach at Cannes. I spoke no French, she no

³⁷⁵ Ragner, “The Permanent AEF.”

English, and I really can't understand how it all happened, but here we are."³⁷⁶ Likewise, during World War II, a soldier of the 92nd Signal Battalion, Joe Sacco, in later interviews collected and published by his son, reported that one of his comrades had begun a relationship with the daughter of a local mayor. "She didn't speak English, and he only knew what French he'd studied in high school, so they weren't able to have much in the way of meaningful conversations. Still they liked each other's company enough to go for afternoon walks."³⁷⁷ While many of these casual encounters were likely awkward at first, one writer for the *Literary Digest* in 1917 claimed that linguistic barriers actually facilitated cross-cultural romances more than it hindered them. The author explains: "The difference in language seems to form no bar; in fact, the kindly efforts of each to learn the language of the other acts as an aid."³⁷⁸ Likewise, World-War-I, transnational-marriage participants Margurite Ferrard and William Wiles explained during an interview in their new home in Philadelphia after the war that even after their marriage he still did not speak French, nor she English, but "no words are needed in [their] radiant little Franco-American household."³⁷⁹

This absence of common language is important for two reasons. First, it demonstrates the emotional and cultural expectations of contemporaries who engaged in transnational courtships. When cultural encounter that produces marriage goes beyond language, perceived notions of difference are even further highlighted. Therefore, one can again conclude that processes of *positive othering* and the

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

³⁷⁷ Sacco, *Where the Birds Never Sing*, 244.

³⁷⁸ "Franco-Yanko Romance," 46–47.

³⁷⁹ "French Envoys of Cupid in America."

emotion of *longing for association with the other* continued to remain central in the processes of transnational coupling in this wartime context. Second, it raises interesting methodological questions about the theory of emotions history, the ways in which emotions history is intertwined with cultural history, and the role of language in emotional constructions. Notable emotions historians Susan Matt and Peter Stearns argue that emotions cannot exist independently from language as individuals define emotions in the process of expressing them.³⁸⁰ These assertions are largely based on the constructionist theory of emotions—which, according to the Max Planck Institute for Human Development, maintains that, “feelings and their expressions are shaped by culture and learned or acquired in various social contexts. What somebody can and may feel (and show) in a given situation, towards certain people or things, depends on social norms and rules. It is thus historically variable and open to change.”³⁸¹ While the research that is presented here, unfortunately, does not go far enough to successfully contribute to the debate of whether emotions are universal and innate or culturally constructed and variable, it does demonstrate some of the analytical limitations of attempting to understand the ways in which those historical actors understood the mediated feelings of others in the past. In the case of Franco-American marriages during wartime, when education background, social circumstance, and national self-identification created a context in which cross-border-marriage participants did not share a common language (unlike their well-traveled, well-educated, nineteenth-century, elite counterparts), the historian must be cautious of reducing language to its oral components. Therefore, in

³⁸⁰ Matt and Stearns, *Doing Emotions History*, 43.

³⁸¹ “History of Emotions | Max Planck Institute for Human Development,” accessed November 30, 2016, <https://www.mpib-berlin.mpg.de/en/research/history-of-emotions>.

examining the cultural and emotional dimensions of these transnational spaces, one must seek out and examine other forms of non-verbal language and mediated cultural cues that provided the translinguistic means communication in courting practices.

4.1.2 *Transnational Spaces of World War II*

During World War II, one of the most notable of these non-verbal constructs was dancing. In 1944, *Stars and Stripes* printed an image of an American soldier dancing with a local young French woman and titled the image “Savee [sic] Jitterbug Mademoiselle?” The image included the following caption: “You may not speak French, and they don’t savee English, but Cpl. Rossario Tallient of Brooklyn demonstrates there is a universal language as he teaches the French cutie to jitterbug in the streets of liberated city.”³⁸² This caption demonstrates how what was considered “the universal language” of dancing became central in transnational coupling and courting rituals. In this fashion, public dances, like those organized by the American Red Cross, came to serve as one of the most notable examples of the wartime transnational spaces that produced Franco-American marriages. For both American men and French women, dances provided an opportunity for not only entertainment but also for coupling with the “other.” In an interview with Harvey and Mona Levenstein, one World-War-II American soldier Ernie Ricci [pseud.] confirmed that the “dance halls were packed with carousing GIs.”³⁸³ Likewise World-War-II, transnational-marriage participant, Jennette Davis, explained in a later interview of the other girls in her town: “I think quite a few girls from [her

³⁸² “Savee Jitterbug Mademoiselle?,” *Stars and Stripes*, August 24, 1944.

³⁸³ Interview with Ernie Ricci [pseud.] in Levenstein, *We’ll Always Have Paris*, 78.

hometown of] Granville married GIs... the Granville casino had a lot of dances and shows on Sundays, and that's where most of the girls and the GIs would meet.”³⁸⁴

While transnational cultural formation occurred across and within multiple sites of encounter during World War II, such as on top of a liberating tank, in the street or metro, in their homes over a meal, or at an army base where they worked, examining Red Cross dances as a space of transnationality provides one of the most ideal opportunities for uncovering mediated cultural cues that provided a translinguistic means of communication in courting practices.

In organizing dances, the American Red Cross played a significant—though perhaps unintended—role in transnational coupling processes and the creation of transnational space. During World War II, the American Red Cross mobilized and joined troops in Europe in an effort to provide both relief aid and “compassionate support” to servicemen. Angela Petesch, a Red Cross volunteer who arrived in World-War-II France with the Clubmobile Group H in August of 1944 explained: “One of our organizations greatest accomplishments was bringing the Red Cross to the men in isolated areas rather than waiting until the men got to the Red Cross.”³⁸⁵ Scattered around France, these volunteer groups provided mobile recreational clubs, entertainment, and “simple pleasures of home”—such as the donuts that Petesch served—to soldiers who were unable to make it to leave areas. While President Eisenhower called these efforts the “friendly hand of this nation reaching across the sea to sustain its fighting men,”³⁸⁶ what was meant to serve as a national agency, came instead to serve as a facilitator of one of the most important transnational

³⁸⁴ Interview with Jennette Davis in Kaiser, *WWII Voices*, 127.

³⁸⁵ Petesch, *War Through the Hole of a Donut*, vii–viii.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 135.

spaces for wartime marriage participants. In a later interview, one of these participants, Jacqueline B.-P., explained how she had met her American husband at such an event: “At that time, after the war, we'd go dancing. There were clubs, American Red Cross dances... I was young and innocent at the time. I thought he was sexy and had a lot of charm. And it's true that he really was charming, ...I thought I loved him!”³⁸⁷ Like the spaces created during World War I, encounter with the “other” at dances, is depicted here as producing a rather immediate and forceful emotional reaction; however, in this case, unlike the former, it is depicted as less of a chance encounter.

During Occupation, local dances and gatherings had been banned in French towns. While many young French people, nonetheless, managed to hold some gatherings during that time, a sense of freedom from oppression that followed liberation contributed to the popularity of the Red Cross dances and the emotional experiences of French girls who attended them. One young woman from Marseille who married an American soldier explained in a later interview: “When the Americans came, the first thing they did was to hold dances and to invite the local girls from Marseille. It was all chaperoned and very respectable. The American Red Cross organized everything. So then we were able to go dancing.”³⁸⁸ Another French woman who wrote extensively about her relationship and marriage in a self-published memoir, Liz Lawson, also met her American GI husband, Warren, at a Red Cross dance. She explained:

³⁸⁷ Interview with Jacqueline B.-P. in Kaiser, *French War Brides in America*, 114.

³⁸⁸ Interview with Pierrette S. in *ibid.*, 140.

A ripple effect of the newly gained freedom was to launch young people on a search for social pleasures that had been illegal during the occupation. Dancing in public places was one of them... Now public dancing was authorized and the well-attended parties were under the sponsorship of the American Red Cross, which requisitioned dance halls in big hotels and hired well-known bands to play for the GIs who came to the afternoon tea parties. Coffee and donuts were served during intermissions. The ambiance was very chic. The dance floor was of well-polished hardwood the walls were decorated with damask draperies; the floor-to-ceiling mirrors breathed refinement and elegance.³⁸⁹

The dances hosted by the American Red Cross often took place during the evening or on weekend afternoons. Because the American forces usually prohibited fraternization with female American volunteers like those serving as nurses or in the Clubmobile groups,³⁹⁰ the Red Cross actively sought local French women to attend these events. These local women, however, did not need much convincing. Jeannine Ricou-Allunis, who also wrote extensively about her marriage in her memoir, recounted in it the evening she met her husband at a Red Cross dance. “After five years, on May 8, 1945, the war was over. I wasn't feeling very good. I was sick, but I told my dad and my grandmother, ‘No matter what, I'm going to dance with everybody.’”³⁹¹ Some like, Jacqueline C. S. of Châteaubriant, had parallel motives for attending. She explained: “We went to the dances to meet Americans, but also because of the refreshments and food.”³⁹² Others, like Lawson, viewed the dances as an opportunity for far more. In her memoir she wrote:

My friend Christiane and I attended the parties with great expectation. We went to as many as possible so long as it did not

³⁸⁹ Lawson, *Memoirs of a French War Bride, 1940-1950*, 82.

³⁹⁰ Petesch, *War Through the Hole of a Donut*, 168.

³⁹¹ Ricou-Allunis, *Memoir of a French War Bride*, 34.

³⁹² Interview with Jacqueline C. S. in Kaiser, *French War Brides in America*, 41.

interfere with our studies... I still remember clearly the Sunday afternoon when I entered the big dance hall at the Crillon near the Champs-Elysees. It was a balmy summer day; the air was light with a warm breeze blowing through the large windows covered with beige voile curtains... The girls were near the front door, a bit shy to enter such an imposing place, hesitant to start a new acquaintance that seemed often to be a gamble. It was like throwing the dice and watching the winning number come up. If only the right partner would step forward and ask each one of us to dance! We had already created the imaginary person. In our minds, he would be tall, good looking, friendly and polite—the perfect gentleman. Of course, we didn't have to dance more than one dance with the same person if we didn't care for our partner. We didn't even have to complete a succession of dances, usually four or five, before we would excuse ourselves with a legitimate reason for not wanting to pursue the acquaintance.³⁹³

Here, her emotional expectations demonstrate how the Red Cross dances acted as a quasi- transnational-marriage market, much like the balls and dinners of the nineteenth century had for elite transnational Society. For many, like for Lawson, attending such an event was about much more than dancing and entertainment linked to the excitement of liberation, it was about looking for a potential marriage partner in the othered American soldier. Her use of the word “gamble” connotes both the hurried nature in which such encounters took place and the impersonal aspects of the non-human affection of cultural infatuation and positive othering. Finally, this account demonstrates how women like her exercised a tremendous amount of personal choice in their coupling processes.

Moreover, like the elite transnational balls and dinners of the nineteenth century, the Red Cross dances during World War II came to be characterized by important cultural forms that regulated both social interaction and pleasure through mediated cultural codes. Understanding the cultural rituals that developed here are essential for further uncovering how marriages and courtships emerged from spaces

³⁹³ Lawson, *Memoirs of a French War Bride, 1940-1950*, 83.

of transnationality. Here, Lawson's memoir provides an important glimpse into some of these cultural codes, as she understood them. She wrote:

So many subtle things were involved in dancing with a stranger! The way he came to you, his smile, the tone of his voice as he introduced himself, his one hand on your back, the other hand being held at the proper level, the way he would draw his partner to him and hold tight, but not too tight, the expertise of his steps. Some just hopped along regardless of the rhythm, some would quickly break into a sweat and reach for a handkerchief to wipe a damp brow, some squeezed one's waist too hard and put an iron grasp around it. The informality of the dances eliminated more complex introductions. One simply moved forward, smiled and let oneself be drawn into the rhythm of the dance in progress. From the start, we felt comfortable together. The slow dances were the best; they allowed us to talk without too much distraction. A tacit harmony seemed to exist between our steps and the words we exchanged.³⁹⁴

As this excerpt suggests, the cultural facets of the act of dancing produced a profoundly emotional experience for many of the transnational couples. Further, the ways in which Lawson attributes meaning to the personal proximity and the physical contact, for example, tells us much about how actors came to understand the mediated emotions of others in ways that transcended linguistic boundaries. Here, the “unspoken harmony” of her and her would-be-husband's steps, as well as what she describes as the instant emotional sensation of comfort and ease suggests that marriage participants developed intuitive skills that they used to evaluate potential emotional connections with their partners. Further, that “the informality of the dances eliminated more complex introductions” connotes how existing cultural understandings from more local contexts created the dimensions in which the emotions and actions of others were understood. In the same fashion, it also

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 83–84.

demonstrates some of the changes these codes underwent as they were renegotiated and applied to transnational (or transcultural) spaces. That, as she notes, such negotiations worked for some of her dancing partners and not others, suggests the varying degrees in which this process occurred as well as the varying degrees in which others were able to apply meaning to such cultural signals.

4.2 Courting Practices in Transnational Spaces and the Role of the Family

But how did relationships progress from an emotionally charged construct such as dancing to the act of marriage? The following sections examine not only the subsequent courtship rituals in these culturally negotiated spaces but also the role of the participants' families within them as well. After Ricou-Allunis met her husband, Albert, at a dance, he offered to walk her home. Of the progression of the relationship she recounted:

We walked home and he had a little dictionary of French-English, English-French. We sat in front of the house and he showed me the dictionary and told me the names of things. And guess what, he told me he's going to marry me. I thought, my God, that guy must be crazy. I had just met him a few hours ago. When I went in, my grandmother asked me, 'Who were you talking to in the front?' I said, 'Well, an American soldier. He tells me he's going to marry me. He's crazy.' My grandmother started laughing and said, 'Be careful, Jeannine. Lots of times we marry those crazy guys.'³⁹⁵

When Albert returned to her home the next day, her father was less than pleased. The role of the family in courting practices is important here. While relationships formed between marriage participants, the process was rarely independent of the rest

³⁹⁵ Ricou-Allunis, *Memoir of a French War Bride*, 36.

of their families, especially the one geographically present, in this case the French family.

The reaction of Lawson's family differed from that of Ricou-Allunis's father. In her memoir, Lawson explained:

As the afternoon [of the dance] came to an end, Warren asked if we could see each other again. I was to select our entertainment. We went to see "Sergeant York" with Gary Cooper in the starring role. While Warren was deeply involved in the plot, I was more interested in him and curious about his feelings towards me. The following day, he came to our house. My mother fixed some tea. I played the piano and sang "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes." We both smile now at the recollection of the song. Was it quite appropriate at the time or was I scheming to ensnare Warren in a cloud of smoke? Aunt Tonie, who could speak English, started a lively conversation, which broke the ice and made us all feel more comfortable with the visit. I found out that Warren was stationed at Melun near Paris and that he had only two days left before returning to his squadron... On our last day together, we walked in the Tuileries gardens and talked about our future. Warren expected to fly to the Eastern front to fight the still unfinished war with Japan.... It would be a year before I would hear from him while I was working in Berlin.³⁹⁶

It is important to note that many of the young French women that participated in these marriages were adolescents when the war began. According to the directress of one of the hostess houses in New York that helped relocate the new brides to be with their husbands in the United States, the average age of French brides during World-War-I was between seventeen and twenty.³⁹⁷ A similar average age range also characterized those during World War II,³⁹⁸ and one marriage participant Jeanette Davis was only fifteen when she met her husband, John.³⁹⁹ Another World-War-II

³⁹⁶ Lawson, *Memoirs of a French War Bride, 1940-1950*, 85.

³⁹⁷ Macdonald, "At the War Brides' Home."

³⁹⁸ Virden, *Good-Bye, Piccadilly*, 1.

³⁹⁹ Interview with Jeanette Davis in Kaiser, *French War Brides in America*, 125.

marriage participant, Nicole explained that the “American soldiers were the first men [she] ever went out with.”⁴⁰⁰ Further, World-War-II marriage participant Jacqueline C. S. explained in a interview: “During this time, we French girls would go out with Americans, but always in groups. Otherwise, our families wouldn't have agreed.”⁴⁰¹

The dominant would-be role of the French family in these transnational relationships was not unknown to the soldier participants. In June of 1944, *Stars and Stripes* published an article, entitled "So you're going to France," which declared the following: "It's not true that all French women are easy. Any guy who has the idea that the way to make friends and influence Frenchmen is to slip up alongside of the first good-looking gal he sees and slip her a quick pat on the fanny is going to be in for trouble." A cartoon on the same page shows a GI with a French girl. In the image the couple is being followed by a large group of her French relatives. The caption reads, "French cuties are well chaperoned."⁴⁰² After meeting a girl in Alsace, Sacco explained that a number of men in his unit had courted girls there. With regards to one of them he recounted, “Hodges had struck up a romance with the daughter of the mayor”... and when they went on afternoon walks, they “were chaperoned by the girl’s mother, little sister, and aunt who followed several steps behind the love birds, watching their every move. Within days the escort grew to include an uncle, a couple of cousins, and the mayor himself. Eventually other members of the 92nd joined the parade while Hodges and his mademoiselle happily walked along smiling

⁴⁰⁰ Interview with Nicole in *ibid.*, 48.

⁴⁰¹ Interview with Jacqueline C. S. in *ibid.*, 41.

⁴⁰² “So You’re Going to France,” *Stars and Stripes*, June 15, 1944.

but hardly saying a word.”⁴⁰³ However, he recounts the story like an oddity, implying that many of the American were unaccustomed to this social convention.

During World War I, the role of the family extended to the United States when some French families requested letters of reference from the soldiers’ familial and social networks. During World War I, one member of the AEF from Philadelphia had been courting a young woman named Madeleine. Their daughter explained in a later interview that despite having been “in good favor with the whole family,... it was customary, necessary to look for some references about him and his family through persons who knew them well, especially having to deal with someone of another country, so far away.” She explained further that her mother “wrote to his parish in Philadelphia, and ...received an excellent report.” “One saintly priest in Clermont, l’Abbe Germain, knew him well too,” she said. “He told them that he was, by far, the best of the American soldiers he had ever met; he even thought he might have had a vocation to be a priest.”⁴⁰⁴ Likewise, the daughter of another World-War-I couple similarly explained: “My parents were never alone until the day of their marriage... My grandfather had announced that his daughter would never marry an American soldier... So then all my family went about trying to convince my grandfather. But before considering anything, my grandfather required letters of reference from my father’s family in Fremont and from his church.”⁴⁰⁵ Therefore, while transnational marriage participants in both world wars exercised a tremendous amount of personal choice in both their partner selection and their

⁴⁰³ Sacco, *Where the Birds Never Sing*, 244.

⁴⁰⁴ Interview with Therese H. in Kaiser, *French War Brides in America*, 5.

⁴⁰⁵ Interview with Myriam H. in *ibid.*, 11.

courting practices, the role of their larger families remained significant in the processes of cultural negotiations within spaces of encounter and courtship.

4.3 Transnational Courtship to Transnational Marriage (and Might-Have-Been Marriages)

Amorous encounter that had been intensified by the contrasting emotions of war and liberation, hyper-masculinity of military service, mutual curiosity, fascination, positive othering, and cultural infatuation led to countless romantic and sexual encounters between American soldiers and local French women during both World War I and World War II. However, only some of these transnational relationships would produce marriages. As the lyrics of the popular World-War-I song suggest, “Quand la guerre est fini[e], les américains parti[s], mademoiselle seule au lit, bouncing the new baby,”⁴⁰⁶ the reality for many French women in both wars was that they would be left behind as soldiers’ regiments continued on or soldiers were demobilized and returned to the United States. Sacco explained what it was like to leave the girl, Monique, with whom he had developed an emotional relationship, when the 92nd Battalion left Alsace-Lorraine. He recounted: “We spent the last minutes talking about how we would see each other again, and about how I would come back for her after the war and how she would come to Alabama with me. She made me promise a hundred times that I wouldn’t get hurt. I hugged her and tried to reassure her, but I didn’t know what would happen to me as the war progressed from here.” He nonetheless promised he would return for her. They embraced one final

⁴⁰⁶ Niles and Moore, *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me*, 56–57.

time, and his unit departed. He continued: “I can never forget her face, her smile, her tears as we pulled away—she standing beside the road, waving hugging her mother’s arm, looking directly into my eyes even as the distance between us increased, wiping a stream of tears from her beautiful face and then... hidden behind dust and trucks and men of war.”⁴⁰⁷ Likewise, in the letters to his father, Hovsepian recounted a similar experience. He wrote:

There is a difference between going out with girls, necking and having fun, and the way I felt toward Jeannie. It was not kid stuff anymore; it was man-and-woman stuff, and I suddenly felt like a man feels towards his wife, I guess... Well then we got the orders to pull out of these parts. We knew it was our last night and we were sad. Jeannie would put her arm around me and started crying. It was sad. I promised her to write to her often, and then come back to see her when the war was over, and I meant it too. The next A.M. when we were loading on the trucks she stood there crying, watching us... the truck started and she wouldn’t let go. She kept hanging on... we pulled out and there she stood in the middle of the road waving at me with great big tears rolling down her face.... It was so sad leaving her there crying.⁴⁰⁸

While Hovsepian invoked marriage and marriage-like terms numerous times in his letters about various sexual and emotional relationships with French women, neither he nor Sacco entered into matrimonial contracts with any of their French partners. Nonetheless, these passages are suggestive of a profoundly emotional courtship experience that should not be discounted simply because an act of marriage did not occur. Further, in examining transnational marriages, these passages create an inquisitional imperative for the further examination of the ways in which transnational spaces of courtship existed in opposition to the national

⁴⁰⁷ Sacco, *Where the Birds Never Sing*, 250–51.

⁴⁰⁸ Hovsepian, *Your Son and Mine*, 120.

spaces that participants occupied. By examining the external structures and frameworks that transnational couples had to navigate in order to form recognized matrimonial unions, I argue that state and military regulations, as well as the conditions of war not only played a role in whether or not a marriage would take place but also further solidified participants' conceptions of the national borders that they attempted to cross.



Figure 5 "Quand la Guerre est Fini" in *The Songs My Mother Never Taught Me*

While neither Sacco nor Hovsepian ever went back to marry the girls they left behind, those who did either did so with a sense of urgency and or did so by continuing the courtship through correspondence. World-War-II-marriage participant Jennette Davis, for example, corresponded with her American GI, John, for five years before they met again when he returned to Paris.⁴⁰⁹ Likewise, Andrée McLatcher only spent three consecutive Saturdays with her would-be GI husband

⁴⁰⁹ Interview with Jeanette Davis in Kaiser, *French War Brides in America*, 126.

before he was sent elsewhere. They corresponded for approximately one year before deciding to marry.⁴¹⁰ By contrast, those who married quickly soon found their marriages at the center of critiques by national onlookers who propagated notions that wartime unions had been hurriedly undertaken without full regard for the inevitable “consequences.” In the August 2, 1925 issue of the *New York Times*, John Ellington called the Franco-American marriages of World War I “marriages of haste, under impulse of abnormal excitement and of ignorance.”⁴¹¹ Similarly, the *Literary Digest* claimed that French mothers had been “flooding the mails with letters of inquiry as to the status of their daughters who have been so rash as to enter into matrimonial alliances with that khaki-clad youths... from the other side of the ocean.”⁴¹² And in 1919, one American woman who had been serving in World-War-I France attempted to explain the transnational courtship-to-marriage process to the *Atlanta Constitution*. She said: “I have known cases wherein a doughboy strolled down a boulevard in Paris, was picked up by a French girl ... had a few glasses of wine, and broke out with ‘wouldn’t you like to take a little trip to America dearie—’ ‘Oui—I go—très bien’ gushed the girl... Off they went to the nearest civil authority... and were married.”⁴¹³ Even Hilary Kaiser drew similar conclusions when she noted that one of the major themes that she found among marriage participants was “a certain amount of naïveté and unconsciousness on the part of the young war brides.” According to her, “They made the hasty decision to marry a man they hardly knew, to leave their native land and to immigrate to America, often

⁴¹⁰ Interview with Andrée McLatcher in Kaiser, *WWII Voices*, 131.

⁴¹¹ Ellington, “Paths of a French War Bride Are Rocky.”

⁴¹² “Cupid Has Had to Print a Set of Rules for the Doughboys in France,” 78.

⁴¹³ Dixon, “It’s Love’s Blue Monday for the Doughboy Now Who Took Himself a War Bride.”

without considering the consequences should it not work out... [they] had romantic notions that everything would be fine once they were together, that love would 'conquer all'.”⁴¹⁴

This perception of the process demonstrated by both Kaiser and the *Atlanta Constitution* were relatively overly simplified, and while it may have been indicative of contemporary national views of the wartime unions, and perhaps indicative of what were relatively short courting periods among couples, this notion of “hasty, naïve” marriages fails to account for the complicated administrative and emotional processes that many couples went through in order to form marital unions during wartime. For example, one of Kaiser’s interviewees, Jeanne-Marie L. C. explained in detail her decision to enter into a marital union so quickly:

I was very surprised my parents didn't object to our marrying. They really liked Tom. But they told me there was one condition: I had to wait until the end of the war. So, we got officially engaged and were going to wait till the end of the war. But shortly after our engagement, someone told Tom that during the post-war period-and nobody knew how long that would last-it would be just as impossible for him to come back to Algeria to get me as it would be for me to go to the United States. So my parents agreed to our marrying rather quickly... We started the paperwork in January 1944. However, that was when the American army began realizing that a lot of GIs had married undesirable women—sick ones and others—and that they were all going to be coming to the United States. So the army, or perhaps Washington, decided to make it much more difficult to obtain authorizations to marry. We had to start the paperwork all over again and get affidavits from Papa's bank, from the police, etc. And I also had to be interviewed by all of my fiancé's superior officers. We wanted to get married in July and hoped the papers would arrive in time. But by the time the papers finally arrived, the landing in France had started, and Tom was put on a two-hour alert, so we had to keep waiting. Then one day Tom arrived at my house and announced:

⁴¹⁴ Kaiser, *French War Brides in America*, 150.

‘Guess what? We have permission! We're getting married on the 11th.’ It was September 5 or 6, so we had to work fast.⁴¹⁵

American-Red-Cross volunteer Angela Petesch also explained some of the more practical considerations as to why such “hasty” undertakings were sometimes necessary. She wrote: “Planning a marriage under conditions [of wartime] presents many problems. In the first place, nobody knows where the bride and groom might be at any future date or where the ceremony will be performed. The poor boy can get only a 48-hour pass at most. Then there is the transportation problem, where to spend the honeymoon.”⁴¹⁶ Here, one might also consider a shift away from an interpretation of naivety on the part of marriage participants and, as Jeanne-Marie L. C.’s account suggests, consider the ways in which state and legal structures indirectly forced couples to choose to enter into marriage after shortened periods of courtship in ways national couples were not. Moreover, transnational couples during the world wars were bound by not only military regulation but also by stricter immigration laws that their elite counterparts had been in the nineteenth century. Therefore, for those twentieth-century couples that wished to continue courtships in close physical proximity, an act of marriage transcended national borders in ways that courtship did not.

It should also be noted that not all marriages occurred in the haste of wartime. Elenor Kiler, who oversaw the work of the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) to help French women join their husbands in the United States after World War I revealed to a *New York Times* reporter in 1921 that “romances

⁴¹⁵ Interview with Jeanne-Marie L. C. in *ibid.*, 58–59.

⁴¹⁶ Petesch, *War Through the Hole of a Donut*, 171.

that started during the war [were] still resulting in marriages.” “Only last week,” she explained, “a young woman came through here to join her fiancé in California. They had met and became engaged during the war, while he was still overseas. A highly accomplished girl, she had a splendidly paid position with a famous French house in Paris, and was reluctant to leave. Finally her fiancé wrote us to meet her and she went on to begin life in California.”⁴¹⁷ Of course, the notion of what was or was not an appropriate pre-marriage courtship period is also culturally, socially, and even individually variant. For example, one 1920 article in the *Literary Digest* claimed: “Under French laws there cannot be any marrying in haste... French laws are strict. No elopements are possible, what with the parties obliged to have lived in the same household at least four weeks, the posting of marriage bans at least sixteen days before at the mairie (town hall), and the production of birth certificates to prove that you were born!”⁴¹⁸ Petesch also claimed that the Army required a sixty-day waiting period before wedding could take place.⁴¹⁹ Likewise, in a later interview, World-War-II-marriage participant Marcelle S. recalled that she and her husband Morry (who had been stationed in Algeria) had to wait a “ninety-day ‘cooling-off’ period” before she could get any of the needed papers. After such time, she was also interviewed before they were allowed to proceed. However, she admits that her husband’s captain had been supportive of their relationship.⁴²⁰

The likelihood that a marriage would occur was dependent on several structural factors that participants had to navigate—one of them, as stated in the

⁴¹⁷ “French War Brides Happy in America,” *New York Times*, December 4, 1921.

⁴¹⁸ “French Envoys of Cupid in America,” 57.

⁴¹⁹ Petesch, *War Through the Hole of a Donut*, 185.

⁴²⁰ Interview with Marcelle S. in Kaiser, *French War Brides in America*, 68–68.

previous passage, was the support of commanding officers. During both World War I and World War II, marriages between American soldiers and local women posed a problem for the American military. As Mark Meigs explains during World War I, this was not only because the military believed that these women would become dependent upon the army and would require transport to the United States after the war, but also because marriage fostered a loyalty that was self-serving rather than for the organizational military collective.⁴²¹ This opposition to marriage is demonstrated in military correspondence. For example, one cavalry colonel reported on March 19, 1918:

When Private W. asked permission to marry I refused, as I did in other cases, on the ground that this was no time to be undertaking new responsibilities and obligations; that we were over here to fight when the time came; and to spend the rest of the time getting ready for it and not to marry and raise families. If Private W. is allowed to marry this girl it will lead to a number of other cases just exactly like this. I have been through the whole thing twice before in Cuba and the Philippines.⁴²²

Similarly, in a wartime memo from Judge Advocate General to the AEF, W. A. Bethel stated that “under present conditions marriage of American soldiers to French girls, is prejudicial to military interests.” However, he continued:

The matter of prohibiting marriage is a very delicate one, since it is the policy of our country to encourage matrimony, and the view has always been taken, heretofore, that marriage is a personal privilege with which the Government, in general, has no right to interfere. A military order forbidding matrimony would, in time of peace, in my opinion, be illegal, and such, I think is the view that has always been taken. As a temporary measure, in time of war, when personal rights must give way to the needs of the State, I believe such an order is

⁴²¹ Meigs, *Optimism at Armageddon*, 125.

⁴²² Kellogg, *Marriage of Soldiers*, 4–5. Also cited in Meigs, *Optimism at Armageddon*, 127.

legal and appropriate, although some, of course may take the contrary view.⁴²³

No such order was issued, however, and conflicting views of marriage as an individual freedom and as a threat to a successful military campaign led to confusion regarding how to deal with the AEF's "marriage problem" in World-War-I France. In that confusion, some couples managed to marry successfully on their own. Others requested officers' permission, while others fell into the administrative maze of misinformation and redirection. In a letter to General Pershing, Sargent Orley Hill wrote: "I have permission to ask the General for permission to marry. Officers of my regiment cannot give me the permission and I am asking you this great favor Sir. The French authorities say I must have permission from you. Sir hoping to get the permission by mail... I hope this is not asking too much of you Sir."⁴²⁴ While some commanding officers refused permission to marry, others simply refused permission for leave during which time a marriage was meant to take place. By contrast, it is also important to note that some officers were supportive of the matrimonial endeavors of their soldiers. *Time Magazine*, for example featured a World-War-II rest area in the Riviera and explained that the "GIs 'heaven' was staffed with officers ready to do anything to make the soldier happy: they have even arranged weddings."⁴²⁵

⁴²³ Quoted in Zeiger, *Entangling Alliances*, 29.

⁴²⁴ Quoted in *ibid.*, 28.

⁴²⁵ "U.S. At War: G.I. Heaven," *Time Magazine*, June 18, 1945.

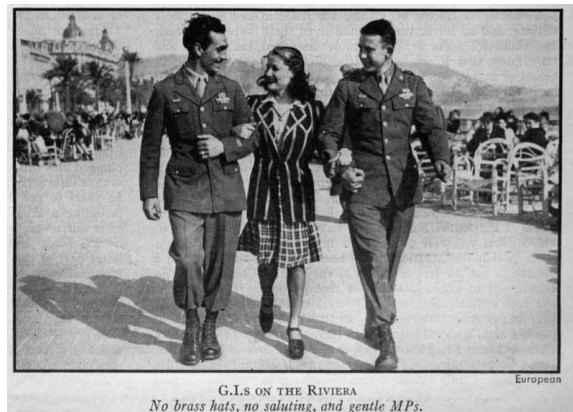


Figure 6 "U.S. at War: G.I. Heaven," *Time Magazine*, 1945

Unfamiliarity with French marriage laws also created an obstacle for couples wishing to marry. In 1919, the *Literary Digest* published an article, entitled “Cupid Has Had to Print a Set of Rules for the Doughboys in France” that explained for American readers the complicated processes through which soldiers and their brides would have to endure before a wedding could take place. It explained that French law, which defined marriage as a civil contract, required civil registration documents that proved identity including birth certificates, which many soldiers were unable to produce in time, as marriages procedures in the United States rarely included such requirement. French law also required the publication of bans or intent for a certain period of time before a marital contract could be enacted, typically ten to sixteen days. One of the parties was required to reside in the town where the marriages would take place for a minimum period of one month and was required to prove residency by a certificate of domicile. An affidavit from the American consul was also required, which was to be written in French and legalized by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This document certified the birth of the American, whether or not he had ever been previously married, if divorced those details as well, that he is of marrying age in the state from which he comes, that he does not

require the consent of his parents, and that the publishing of bans in the United States is not required.⁴²⁶ Some French municipalities agreed to accept sworn affidavit from American officers in place of some of the requirements listed above—a measure that kept American officers involved even in French administrative marriage procedures.⁴²⁷

Yet, while some structures hindered the practice of marriage in wartime, others helped to facilitate it. Groups such as the YWCA and the Red Cross were notable in these efforts, both directly and indirectly. The Red Cross had not only organized the dances where many couples met and began courtships, it also assisted soldiers in obtaining the letters of reference for French families who might have been suspicious of the men courting their daughters.⁴²⁸ Further, Public Law 271 also known as the War Brides Act allowed for new wives to benefit from transportation provided by the U.S. Army and enter the United States as non-quota immigrants after World War II. The American Red Cross not only assisted with paperwork for entry into the United States but also gave the brides cultural training to prepare them for their lives in a new society.⁴²⁹ The YWCA arranged for the new brides to be housed in Hostess Houses, which had originally been established for American women, but were converted to temporary shelters for the French brides of American servicemen as they awaited transport to the United States. The YWCA was also charged by the army with transporting new brides (and often children) to the United

⁴²⁶ “Cupid Has Had to Print a Set of Rules for the Doughboys in France.”

⁴²⁷ Zeiger, *Entangling Alliances*, 36.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁴²⁹ Kaiser, *French War Brides in America*, xxxvii–xxxviii.

States and looking after them at ports of departure in France.⁴³⁰ Lastly, they provided other kinds of assistance, even financial assistance in the form of loans, until soldier husbands were discharged from the army.⁴³¹ World-War-II-marriage participant Jeanne Marie L. C. explained in a later interview, “Upon our arrival, we war brides were greeted by the Red Cross and then put up in [a luxurious hotel] overlooking Central Park, the Saint Moritz. They took us to visit night clubs, museums, Saks Fifth Avenue, and other department stores.”⁴³² Finally the YWCA also helped establish social clubs in the United States for recently arrived brides, such as the *Union des femmes de France* in Boston, which offered not only a social network but also English and child-care classes.⁴³³

4.4 Reinforcing National Borders and Defining Marriage Through Public Opinion and National Critiques

The legal and military restrictions faced by wartime marriage participants were not be the only force that further solidified their conceptions of the national borders that they attempted to cross. As many participants soon discovered after their marriages took place, so too would external public opinions of their unions reinforce these barriers. The sexualized reputation and gendered national stereotypes of French women exacerbated national criticisms in the United States and affected the post-marriage migration processes of marriage participants. As Zeiger shows in her

⁴³⁰ “French Envoys of Cupid in America,” 57.

⁴³¹ Nina Mjagkij, “YMCA,” in *The United States in the First World War: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Paul L. Miles and Anne Cipriano Venzon (Taylor & Francis, 1999), 811.

⁴³² Interview with Jeanne Marie L. C. in Kaiser, *French War Brides in America*, 59.

⁴³³ “French War Brides Happy in America.”

examination of World-War-I marriage and immigration regulation, France's risqué reputation was often set against a period of progressive moral reform in America, and with an army that was supposed to be "pure and clear through and through."⁴³⁴ Interviews with World-War-II participants demonstrate that these views persisted well into the middle of the century. Jacqueline B.-P., for example, explained in a later interview that Americans often perceived French women like her as "ooh la la girls."⁴³⁵ Likewise, another World-War-II-marriage participant, Jeanne-Marie L. C. said of her personal experiences after moving to the United States: "I was French. And all of a sudden, you'd see the women withdrawing and the men's eyes starting to sparkle." When speaking of her mother-in-law, she said that "she'd probably read that French girls were all... how can I say, all prostitutes! In fact, one day she even told me the only thing French women could do was paint their fingers and their faces and wear black underwear!"⁴³⁶ Newspaper headlines such as "Yank Must Prove French Wife Has Good Character" and "New Order Refuses To Take Girls To The U.S. Unless They Are Ladies" confirm how these views influenced the immigration structures that couples had to navigate. Immigration officials in New York, for example, requested that the husband's commanding officer send a statement that the wife was of "reputable character."⁴³⁷ Such sentiments also infiltrated the agencies meant to assist in the wartime marriage and post-marriage migration processes. For example, in a memo to Emmet White of the American Red Cross's Department of Civil Relief, Elizabeth Hutchin complained that the French

⁴³⁴ Zeiger, *Entangling Alliances*, 13.

⁴³⁵ Interview with Jacqueline B.-P. in Kaiser, *French War Brides in America*, 118.

⁴³⁶ Interview with Jeanne-Marie L. C. in *ibid.*, 61–62.

⁴³⁷ Zeiger, *Entangling Alliances*, 43.

brides were “far from a desirable class of citizens” argued the army should “cease to furnish transportation” for them as soon as possible.⁴³⁸ Zeiger concludes that such criticism and suspicion of World-War-I marriages were not only representative of but also linked to early-twentieth-century nativism and anti-immigration movements in the United States.

However, a broader temporal and geographical analysis of national critiques of transnational marriages shows that these criticisms are neither surprising nor a development particular to the early- and mid-twentieth century and its anti-immigration climate. As the first part of this work has shown, the view that the women of wartime transnational marriages were “foreign war brides” who may or may not have been “desirable,” fails to fully consider that other transnational marriage participants of various backgrounds and social statuses faced similar national criticism at different moments in the past. Therefore, I contend that the perceived role of the practice of marriage in the making of national culture as well as its relationship to the state need to be more systematically considered. As Nancy F. Cott has shown, the practice of marriage is an essential aspect in the making of the nation-state, through underlining national belonging, establishing cohesion, and setting national moral standards.⁴³⁹ However, when families construct themselves beyond national borders, they fail to fit into national narratives of identity. Therefore, an attempt is made by both the state and national apparatuses to shape relationships according to national agendas and criteria by defining what are or are

⁴³⁸ Quoted in *ibid.*, 39; Original citation: Elizabeth Hutchin, “Memo to Emmet W. White, Department of Civil Relief, American Red Cross” October 31, 1919, RG 200, American Red Cross Papers, National Archives and Records Administration.

⁴³⁹ Cott, *Public Vows*, 5.

not acceptable family formation practices.⁴⁴⁰ Such sentiments are then permeated through public discourse as part of the imagining of the national community.⁴⁴¹

As with the elite Franco-American marriages in the nineteenth century, the American press, which sensationalized story of the “war bride”, was largely responsible for perpetuating national criticisms, which further solidified participants’ conceptions of the borders that they crossed. The 1919 *New York Times* article that had grossly exaggerated that as many as 200,000 World-War-I soldiers would stay in France “to marry French women,” for example, had caused such an outrage among the American public that the publication was compelled to correct it only a few months later in another article, entitled “Doughboys and French Girls: Not Many of Them are Marrying, and Soldiers Long for Their Homes.”⁴⁴² What is most interesting, however, is the justification used for the national resentment. In the latter article, the author explained that “American mothers, wives, and sweethearts” were “suffering” at the thought that they will be abandoned for “French girls.” This is curious when set against the nineteenth-century titled marriages, which were viewed as “problematic” because of the ideological juxtaposition of American republicanism and European aristocracy and because, according to onlookers like Gustavus Myers, American heiresses were taking money out of the United States and pouring it into Europe.⁴⁴³ By contrast, in the case of the twentieth-century wartime marriages, the national reaction is far more personal and far more emotional

⁴⁴⁰ Williams, *Global Marriage*.

⁴⁴¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London; New York: Verso, 2006).

⁴⁴² “Cupid’s Success in AEF”; “Doughboys and French Girls: Not Many of Them Are Marrying, and the Soldiers Long for Their Homes,” *New York Times*, May 11, 1919.

⁴⁴³ Myers, *History of the Great American Fortunes*, 1936, 92.

as such unions were perceived as leaving “poor American girls left crying and alone.” The same image of “the girl back home” was also used during World War II. For example, in 1944, in response to iconic images of soldiers kissing French women during liberation celebrations, *Life* claimed, “Some Iowa Girls Didn’t Like That Kissing In Paris” and quoted one Mrs. Hubert Hanson, who complained: “I want him to save his kisses for me.”⁴⁴⁴

Other forms of critiques tell us much about the cultural attitudes surrounding the practice of marriage. In 1919, the *Atlanta Constitution*, published an article entitled, “It’s Love’s Blue Monday for the Doughboy Now Who Took Himself a War Bride”, which was based on an interview with an American woman, Byrd McFall, who had been aiding French women with their transfers to the United States after World War I. Here, she and Jane Dixon, the article’s author, depicted the image of a “good wholesome American boy” who had fallen victim to the “dangerous, money-seeking French woman”—both of whom were “foolish and irresponsible.”⁴⁴⁵ By othering French women as loose, gold-diggers, they attempted to illegitimize wartime marriages between French women and American soldiers as merely based on economic considerations. Like in the case of elite transnational marriages of the nineteenth century, when a marriage was criticized as being solely motivated by financial arrangements, it was, for the most part, an attempt to render the union as illegitimate or at least, less legitimate than the alternative. That means that if economic-based marriages were viewed as illegitimate, love-based marriages

⁴⁴⁴ “Some Iowa Girls Didn’t Like That Kissing In Paris,” *Life Magazine*, September 25, 1944.

⁴⁴⁵ Dixon, “It’s Love’s Blue Monday for the Doughboy Now Who Took Himself a War Bride.”

were perceived as the normative cultural ideal. Further, even though McFall admitted that there may have been some “beautiful unions between American fighters and the women of our allies,” she claimed that “there were more sordid, ugly matings” suggesting that lustful or sexually based marriages were also viewed as less legitimate.

Finally, these national discussions and critiques of wartime transnational marriages largely focused on what was perceived to be inevitable disappointment and rejection. Shortly after World War I, an incident in St. Maries, Idaho where “three French war brides tearfully begged to go back to France” provided a baseline for rumors and news reports that most of the brides, after having settled in the U.S., were unhappy and homesick.⁴⁴⁶ The *Literary Digest* asserted in an article entitled, “French Envoys of Cupid in America” that plenty of French women were returning to France “disillusioned” after divorce or abandonment.⁴⁴⁷ Already on September 2, 1919, the *New York Times* claimed that at least sixty-two French brides had returned to their old homes after obtaining divorces from their husbands because they could not adapt to the American way of life and speculated that the number was probably greater. Similarly in a 1947 letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the French Ambassador Henri Bonnet claimed that various French consulates had received about 50 requests for repatriation from “disillusioned” French brides and estimated that 100 more requests were expected by the end of the year.⁴⁴⁸ While the exact numbers of divorce over the course of both periods are hard to ascertain, Kaiser also

⁴⁴⁶ “French War Brides Happy in America.”

⁴⁴⁷ “French Envoys of Cupid in America.”

⁴⁴⁸ Letter from Henri Bonnet to Leon Blum, January 8, 1947, 3. Quoted in Kaiser, *French War Brides in America*, xxxi.

notes that about half of her World-War-II interviewees had later divorced. However, by the time that she conducted most of her interviews in the 1990s, the American divorce rate had already risen to about one in two marriages, leaving her rate of divorce among French war brides about the same as the American national average.⁴⁴⁹ Further, as sociologist Thomas Monahan shows, most marriages contracted during and after periods of war—when more traditional structures are in disarray and what were perceived as moral standards had temporarily broken down—often show greater susceptibility to divorce.⁴⁵⁰

What is most interesting, however, is the ways in which the notion of undoubtedly foreseeable divorce and disappointment were used to further national criticisms of wartime transnational marriages. For example, in response to the increasing number of Franco-American marriages during World War I, Dixon claimed confidently in the *Atlanta Constitution* that “mixed marriages, unions between girls of other nationalities and American boys, do not, as a rule, bring happiness. The countries are too widely separated in customs, in tradition.”⁴⁵¹ This critique creates an interesting paradox as the same notions of *difference* that had attracted many participants to the “other” in the first place were being used by national audiences to condemn their relationships to “inevitable failure.” This notion

⁴⁴⁹ U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, “Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the 1990’s” (U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington D.C., 1992), 1. According to Jean-Paul Sardon, “L’évolution Du Divorce En France,” *Population* 51, no. 3 (1996): 726 the rate of divorce in France around the same time that Kaiser conducted her interviews was 1 in every 2.8 marriages. In 1946, the divorce rate in France had been 1 in every 4.5 marriages.

⁴⁵⁰ Thomas P. Monahan, “The Changing Probability of Divorce,” *American Sociology Review* 5, no. 4 (August 1940): 545.

⁴⁵¹ Dixon, “It’s Love’s Blue Monday for the Doughboy Now Who Took Himself a War Bride.”

that national differences in customs could not bring happiness in transnational marriages, as well as the continued use of the image of “the girl back home” demonstrates that national critiques stemmed less from the views of French women as over-sexed, undesirable immigrants, and more from prevailing notions that *ideal marriages* were culturally homogenous, *national marriages*. In the broader temporal comparison of this work, this represents an interesting shift. While elite transnational marriage participants faced criticism from American audiences because their marriages into European aristocracy were viewed as contrary to the national prerogative of American republicanism, they were never critiqued for being too culturally different to “succeed.” By contrast, in the case of twentieth-century wartime marriages, notions of culture were even further linked with national identity and nationalism.

Conclusion

The practice of marriage has been defined here as a social mechanism through which connections are made. Because those connections ultimately superseded any borders that they crossed, the concept of *transnational marriage* allows historians to move even further beyond national frameworks of history writing by encouraging the researcher to reconsider the permeability of national borders as it relates to coupling and family formation practices. While I do not claim that the transnational marriages between France and the United States examined here were entirely unique, nor do I claim that they were representative of all instances of transnational marriages, I do maintain that examining courtships and marriages that spanned national borders further illuminates the interconnectedness of societies at their most intimate cultural intersections. Further, by carving out these moments in the past and examining them through transnational, cultural, and emotional lenses, a fruitful historical perspective to more recent discussions about the nature of transnational cultures and the definitions of marriage is provided.

In this work, I have examined two different patterns of Franco-American marriage that emerged in two very different historical contexts: the first, when wealthy American heiresses married French aristocrats during the second half of the nineteenth century—a period marked by relatively free transatlantic circulation and mobility—and the second, when borders were far more solidified—during the world wars when American soldiers entered into matrimonial contracts with French

women. While these two marriage patterns differed in many important ways, several over-arching and important themes for comparison have emerged in this study. They are highlighted and summarized here:

Social Class

One of the most obvious themes for comparison within an examination of these different marriage patterns is social class. In the nineteenth century, transnational marriages between France and the United States largely occurred between elite, wealthy Americans and those that they perceived to be their socio-economic, elite equivalent—titled European aristocrats. Sharing the same social networks and positions, these elite transnational-marriage participants often spoke the same languages, shared common values, read similar literature, and participated in similar cultural rituals. However, while their marriages continued well into the twentieth century, the coming of World War I effectively ended their domination of the transnational space that existed between France and the United States and allowed for a geographic mobility of the working, rural, and middle classes who engaged in the conflict. By bringing an entire new group of people into the sphere of transnationality, World War I and its consequences changed not only the power relations between France and the United States but also the dimensions of broader cultural encounters and social spaces that existed between the two.

Unlike their nineteenth-century counterparts, wartime-marriage participants were no longer members of an socially and economically homogenized, transnational social network that effortlessly carved out an existence and moved freely beyond national boundaries but were instead American soldiers and local

French women who were largely restricted not only by the conflict around them but also by national boundaries that were tangibly manifested in their everyday lives through military and state regulations. Because wartime-marriage participants were more likely to self-describe through national frameworks, notions of perceived difference were even further heightened and cross-cultural encounter during wartime was very dissimilar from that out of which nineteenth-century elite marriages emerged. This social shift, at this critical moment, highlights an important tension between nineteenth-century global cosmopolitanism and twentieth-century nationalism. However, even though wartime-marriage participants were not cosmopolitan elites, the transnational encounters in which they engaged came to represent an important new element of transnational entanglements that was not defined by class limitations.

Marriage Motivation

The most notable of the themes for comparison in this study is the question of strategic marriage motivation. By locating and identifying transnational spaces that produced marriages, and analyzing the cultural and emotional dimensions of those spaces, I challenged underlying assumptions in existing historiographical explanations that those who crossed national borders to couple or to marry did so purely for socio-economic reasons. I argued that in each case, these socio-economic explanations have not only left us with an incomplete and limited picture of transnational marriages in the past but have also failed to account for broader changes in emotional standards over time. Such rationalizations also fail to fully escape the analytical cage of the nation-state by explaining the occurrence of

marriage from the perspective of one society or the other in a way that was only beneficial to one of the two marriage participants. Instead, by focusing on cross-cultural encounter, I have repositioned the space of inquiry to the transnational and transcultural social spaces between the two societies in which marriage and courtship took place.

In the first part, I more specifically conclude that rather than the result of strategic socio-economic calculations on the part of American women and their families in an attempt to gain social honor and prestige in places such as fashionable New York, these marriages were instead, the result of social interaction within elite transnational social networks and spaces that existed between the United States and Europe, among those with largely unrestricted transatlantic mobility and who chiefly identified with others of similar economic and social status rather than national origin. These marriage participants, therefore, retained the practice of marrying within their social echelons—only these echelons were not limited by national boundaries. At the same time, as elite Americans and French aristocrats encountered one another in these elite social spaces *emotional* processes of cultural othering still occurred. However, it occurred in a way that isolated positive characteristics and produced emotions of mutual fascination and longing for association with the perceived “other.” This meant that nuanced notions of perceived cultural difference within elite transnational social circles were one of the primary driving forces of transnational elite marriages.

Likewise, in the second part, by again applying analytical categories of transnational space, culture, and emotion to the changing contexts of the twentieth century, I argued that rather than simply a solution to the devastating demographic

dilemma faced by French women following the military deaths of French men, Franco-American marriages in the context of war were also largely driven by important cultural and emotional elements within wartime cross-cultural encounter. Here, the process of cultural othering between French and American societies was ongoing throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and it is important to consider temporality of cultural infatuation and the ways in which cultural imagery created emotional responses. The forms that othering took differed in very important ways. In the context of war, rather than the elite, high cultural forms of the nineteenth century, cultural fascination with the French (or what was perceived as French culture) became laced with notions of romance, sex, and pleasure— notions, which were subsequently transcribed onto the French women and their perceived difference. In this way, soldiers created for themselves an emotional but contradictory construct of war as both a devastating conflict and an opportunity for romantic encounter, in which the lines between masculinity, pleasure, sex, romance, longing, love, and even marriage often became difficult to distinguish. For French women, the emotion-provoking othering process took a slightly different form as the combination of the euphoria of liberation along with what was perceived as the striking, curious, and almost celebrity-like magnetism of the American soldier in uniform led young French women to actively engage them in their courting customs.

In the end, I conclude that even though marriage participants from each of the two patterns conceived of the national and cultural boundaries that separated them in very different ways, attraction to notions of difference largely remained the driving force of marriage and coupling processes in both contexts. By participating in a transnational marriage, participants bound themselves not only to their spouse

but also to the culture of that spouse. Motivations for transnational marriage were, therefore, still strategic but were largely based on preconceived notions of what participants believed the other culture to be. In this way, at the intersection of cross-cultural encounter and transnational coupling in both contexts stood a profoundly emotional experience, and because that experience was so intertwined with cross-cultural interaction, the marriages that emerged from these spaces can be, in many respects, characterized as even more (rather than less) emotional than their national counterparts. This is notable because even during two different phases of the culmination of the national project, transnational-marriage participants, driven by this attraction to difference as well as cultural infatuation, preferred to marry across national lines rather than within them. This provokes important questions regarding Benedict Anderson's concept of the nation as an imagined community. Embedded within this notion of an imagined community conceived as a "deep, horizontal comradeship," Anderson presents the idea of a strong emotional bond.⁴⁵² However, in these two patterns of transnational marriage—one of them rooted in the context of hypernationalism—the strong emotional bond stretches well outside of that national polity.

Transnational Spaces of Encounter and Courtship

In this work, I have located and identified two important transnational spaces in which encounter and courtship largely occurred, and I argued that examining the cross-cultural and emotional dimensions of these spaces provides new categories of analysis that allow for the further examination of not only the occurrence of

⁴⁵² Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 7.

transnational marriages as a subject of inquiry but also of the broader cross-cultural encounters between two entangled societies.

In the first part, I have shown how elite social events of transnational high Society, such as the costume balls and dinners held at the Tulleries and the American legation, came to serve as both a stage for Franco-American cross-cultural encounters and a cultural mechanism for elite coupling. Here, I drew on descriptions of these elite social events found in the French and American press, travel literature, personal papers, and guest lists in order to not only map these spaces and the social networks that occupied them, but also to analyze the cultural rituals that characterized them. Because by the nineteenth century, overtly arranged marriages were no longer viewed as socially appropriate, exclusive guest lists to such events, as well as strict cultural codes of formal introductions and dancing, were used to regulate and control social interaction, courtship rituals, and notions of pleasure.

In the second part, I identified dances hosted by the American Red Cross, as an important social space of transnationality that produced marriages during wartime. As their oral accounts have shown, many local women attended Red Cross dances not only for entertainment but also for an opportunity to socially and romantically engage the othered American soldier. In this way, these dances also came to serve as a quasi- transnational-marriage market. Here, I conclude that even though many wartime courtships and marriages were viewed as undertaken in haste, they were not undertaken without ritual. As in the spaces of elite nineteenth-century ballrooms, the construct of dancing became an important cultural device for transnational coupling and courting rituals. Its mediated cultural cues provided a translinguistic means of communication in courting practices as participants

attributed meaning to personal proximity and physical contact. Their personal accounts of these interactions also demonstrate how actors came to understand the mediated emotions of others in ways that transcended linguistic boundaries, as well as how marriage participants developed intuitive skills that they used to evaluate potential emotional connections with their partners.

Spaces of transnational marriage provide an important avenue for future research. In an effort to expand the definition of marriage to include preceding courtship and coupling practices, this work has largely focused on the spaces leading up to marriage as well as questions of marriage motivation; however, the resulting transnational spaces and communities that were produced *by* these marriages also provokes interesting methodological questions. While the topic of transnational families as a subject of inquiry in both transnational and migration studies has continued to progress over the last decades, the concept has often been characterized by couples and families *separated* by national borders and stretched across long distances by migration processes.⁴⁵³ Yet, when marriages, such as those examined here, transcend national boundaries, each resulted in the creation of its own third, transnational space within the intimate space of the family or familial household. While this intimate familial space can be characterized as a negotiated space, it is not necessarily one that can be reduced to its component parts. Therefore, further spatial analysis into the post-marriage households of transnational-marriage participants' families provide great analytical value for further research. Potential questions in a historical analysis might include the following: What are the cultural

⁴⁵³ Christiane Harzig, Dirk Hoerder, and Donna R. Gabaccia, *What Is Migration History?* (Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity, 2009), 124–26; I Levin, “Living Apart Together: A New Family Form,” *Current Sociology* 52 (2004): 223–40.

and emotional dimensions of these post-marriage, transnational-familial spaces? How did practices of childrearing differ in these spaces compared to national ones?⁴⁵⁴ How did practices of childrearing take place in consideration of the variable dimensions of language, education, social practices, symbols, and rituals? Could Barbara H. Rosenwein's concept of "emotional communities" be further applied and broadened to include transnational families and the transcultural dimensions within them? Finally, the resulting post-marriage social networks are also intriguing, and the extent to which marriages produce new transnational communities rather than just emerge from them can also be potentially fruitful.

Language and Emotions

Linked to the shift in social class of transnational-marriage participants is the question of language difference within transnational coupling processes and spaces of transnationality. Unlike members of elite transnational high Society, who had been raised with private language tutors and in well-traveled families with far-reaching transnational social connections, wartime-marriage participants struggled to communicate with those with whom they coupled. For the historian, these language barriers highlight important emotional and cultural elements of transnational spaces in the twentieth century. Here, I conclude that, when cultural encounter that produced marriage went beyond a shared language, it came to serve as clear marker of difference. In this way, language (and language difference) became an important element in cultural othering. While in other national/migration

⁴⁵⁴ Gabrielle Varro, *La femme transplantée: une étude du mariage franco-américain en France et le bilinguisme des enfants* (Presses Univ. Septentrion, 1984) addresses this question in a sociological examination of Franco-American families during the 1980s.

histories, linguistic variations clearly marked “the outsider,” in this case, they were perceived in positive ways that even facilitated cross-cultural coupling. Similar to an emotional reaction to music, there was an emotional reaction to the unfamiliar sounds of the other’s language. Further, the assumption of historians of emotions is that culture and language create the dimensions in which emotions are understood. However, in the forming of translinguistic intimate relationships, emotions superseded language. This raises important methodological questions about the theory of emotions history, the ways in which emotions history is intertwined with cultural history, and the role of language in emotional constructions. The emotional processes linked to language and sound (or representations of language and sound), therefore, present a potentially fruitful avenue for future research. This work has also only begun to explore some of these larger methodological questions regarding the theories of emotions and their applicability and usefulness to transnational perspectives of history writing, and the relationship between culture and emotions in transnational spaces requires further exploration.

Conceptions of National Borders

How transnational spaces of encounter and courtship existed alongside or in opposition to national spaces also requires further consideration, especially if they are to be contextualized within the broader tension between nineteenth-century Atlantic cosmopolitanism and twentieth-century nationalism. By situating Franco-American marriage practices within the context of the global shift from nineteenth-century nation-making to early- and mid-twentieth-century hypernationalism, I have shown how social spaces of both transnational entanglements and of cross-cultural

negotiation were created and subsequently transformed during different stages of the national project in the Atlantic world. While this is largely a cultural study, questions of both state regulation and national imagining remain important. However, in order to write a history of marriage from the space in between the two societies, I have focused largely on the extent to which transnational-marriage participants actually saw themselves as crossing these borders.

In the first part, the unrestricted movement of members of the elite between different urban centers such as New York, London, and Paris along with the assumption of common socio-economic belonging between elite Americans and elite Europeans, meant that for nineteenth-century, Franco-American, titled-marriage participants, their marital unions often emerged out of spaces that were not entirely defined by national boundaries. While national borders existed, the ways in which they were tangibly manifested rarely impacted the everyday lives of this elite transnational leisure class. Their privileged position meant that they rarely passed through passport checkpoints or immigration inspections, and until 1907, there were no laws in the United States that prevented or discouraged wealthy women from taking extended, and sometimes life-long, residencies in places such as Paris. I, therefore, conclude that the coupling process that accompanied their transnational existence was facilitated by their ability to contract such unions across national borders relatively easily.

In the second part, the lived experiences of transnational-marriage participants in relation to national borders were profoundly different. During wartime, and during a period marked by hypernationalism, national borders tangibly manifested for marriage participants in the form of military regulation, as soldiers

were often obliged to request permission from their officers to marry or take leave in order to marry. Many were also required to undergo pre-marriage waiting periods and interviews before such permission was granted to them. French laws regulating marriage also proved to provide hurdles for many couples as they struggled to assemble required documents. These manifestations of national boundaries and couples' varied ability to navigate them largely determined the likelihood that a marriage would occur in the haste of wartime, and many courtships did not progress to matrimonial contractualization. However, while the degree to which marriage participants perceived of the borders they crossed differed, the human tendency to connect and couple in both cases, nonetheless largely superseded the borders that had been constructed between them.

The different degrees to which couples saw themselves as crossing borders in each of these historical contexts provoke interesting questions about the working definition of transnational marriage as a historical concept, and methodological frameworks need to be further considered. One of the analytical dangers in examining transnational marriage between two individuals is the tendency to replace a national framework with a bi-national one. Is the concept of transnational marriage applicable in both cases of marriage examined here or are they best described as cross-border or bi-national marriages? In the first part, elite, titled the marriages between France and the United States emerged out of social spaces and networks that were characterized by a transnational fluidity that went beyond the United States and France. Linked by the urban centers of Paris, London, and New York, elite transnational Society was comprised of wealthy Americans, royalty, nobility, and aristocracy, as well as diplomatic elite from all over Europe. But in the context

of hyper-nationalism of wartime marriages in twentieth century, to what extent is it possible to move past the bi-national frame? This is largely a question of scale and the extent to which categories of transnationality are rigidly created by the researcher. Here, I conclude that Yang and Lu's definition of transnational marriages, as those that emerge out of existing transnational spaces and networks, can be successfully applied to the wartime context, even though wartime-marriage participants typically had no transnational ties prior to the courtship or marriage because where they met and courted one another can indeed be described as transnational spaces. Further, in each case, the resulting coupling process produced borderless relationships between individuals in a transnational frame—rather than in a bi-national frame, which suggests cooperation or connections across, but at the same time, *within* the bounds of national borders. Because these ties were created in a space that was neither in one culture nor the other, the bi-national frame is not necessarily pertinent because the two cultures were rarely in opposition to one another during those coupling processes. Finally, the extent to which their marriages *transcended* tangibly manifested borders was even more substantial than those in the nineteenth century. In this way wartime marriages might even be consider more transnational than their nineteenth-century counterparts.

National Critiques

Because the making of a nation-state occurs in a simultaneous, dual process—through both state regulation and through the imagining of the national community, the ways in which transnational spaces existed alongside or in opposition to national spaces must also be contextualized in the degree to which national onlookers

considered these marriages to cross national borders and critiqued them as such. In both cases examined here, national critiques further solidified conceptions of the borders and continued to shaped broader social definitions of marriage as a practice as part of that process.

First, regarding the definition of marriage as a practice, a comparison of national criticisms reveals important elements of continuity regarding the emotional evolution of the practice of marriage over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth century. In both cases, marriages were criticized for being financially motivated. In the first case, American heiresses were criticized as being “title hunters,” and in the second, French women were viewed “dangerous and money-seeking.” In each case, this critique was largely an attempt to render the union as illegitimate or at least, less legitimate than the alternative, and it created an important dichotomy when describing marriage as a practice—either one married for love or one married for money and status. This reveals important elements of contemporary emotional standards in both the nineteenth and twentieth century because the underlying assumption of such a critique rests on the notion that normative cultural ideal was, therefore, an emotional one, rather than an economic one.

However, in the context of the national project, the differences in these two cases highlight an important development with regards to the role of marriage and the making of national cohesion and belonging. In the first part, for example, national critiques largely stemmed from American, rather than French, public discourse, and primarily rested on the juxtaposition of American republican ideals with European monarchy and aristocracy. For those criticizing the marriages, the problem was not so much that American women married French men, but simply

that these French men were members of a titled nobility. Such unions were, therefore, contradictory to the American national project distinguished by its “classless society.” In the second part, in the context of the twentieth-century wartime marriages, public reaction was even far more rooted in national identity and nationalism, as critics largely drew on images of “the girl back home” abandoned by the American soldier who took a French wife and on the notions that national differences in cultures and customs meant that most wartime, transnational unions were destined to fail. Here, unlike in the first part, *ideal* marriages were, therefore, perceived of as culturally homogenous, *national* marriages, and national apparatuses used this notion of an ideal marriage as a way to reconstruct and redefine the nation and national belonging in the twentieth century.

Transnational Marriage into the Twentieth Century

While this work has already placed transnational-marriage patterns within the broader global shift from nineteenth-century nation-making to twentieth-century hypernationalism, the following question also seems pertinent: How would the role of coupling and marriage in and out of the framework of the national project change if applied to broader shifts of transnational interconnectedness as global currents continued to change during the second half of the twentieth century? What other transnational-marriage patterns could provide a window into that analysis? In what ways did conceptions of the borders shift in the context of not only political, economic, and diplomatic integration, but also in the context of information and communication advancements?

Another notable marriage pattern that provides an interesting avenue for

continued research during this later period is that of university students on international exchange programs between France and the United States. Here, students created their own transnational social networks in university spaces, and complex extensions of those networks likely also provided the stage for transnational marriages. In this way, international education came to serve as another form of global class formation, and created a different kind of elite class in various ways. Yet, at the same time, even though these later twentieth-century university social spaces took on a very different form than they had during the period of wartime hypernationalism, they continued to exist in opposition to national spaces as students still faced similar national immigration and administrative hurdles in contracting marriages comparable to those during wartime.

Finally, cultural othering as an emotional process and shifting cultural relations between France and the United States during the second half of the twentieth century also provoke interesting questions regarding the temporality of cultural infatuation examined here and the ways in which cultural imagery continued to create emotional responses. Throughout both the nineteenth and twentieth century, there were many sites in which this infatuation was manifested. In the nineteenth century it was in society papers, travel literature, elite costume balls, and social events. During the twentieth century these sites that perpetuated cultural stereotypes shifted to music, film, and advertisements. Yet, what is interesting is that the processes of sexual and romanticized othering shifted from French women and was transcribed onto French men, as notions of the “French lover” permeated the American imagination. One 1961 newspaper article in the *Chicago Tribune*, for example, explained that the “Paris of song and story” had intrigued “American

women in search of romance” for years and asks if “French Men [were really] THAT Perfect.”⁴⁵⁵ In what ways is this fluidity of gendered national stereotypes best contextualized within the broader setting of changing emotional standards as they relate to marriage and courtship practices and rituals into the second half of the twentieth century? I hypothesize that the overarching argument would likely remain that same: That the story of these marriages, which transcend national, cultural, and linguistic boundaries, is most certainly a *love story*; however, it is not necessarily a love story limited to the connections between individuals, but also one characterized by a cultural love affair between French and American societies.

⁴⁵⁵ “Are French Men THAT Perfect?,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 15, 1961.

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