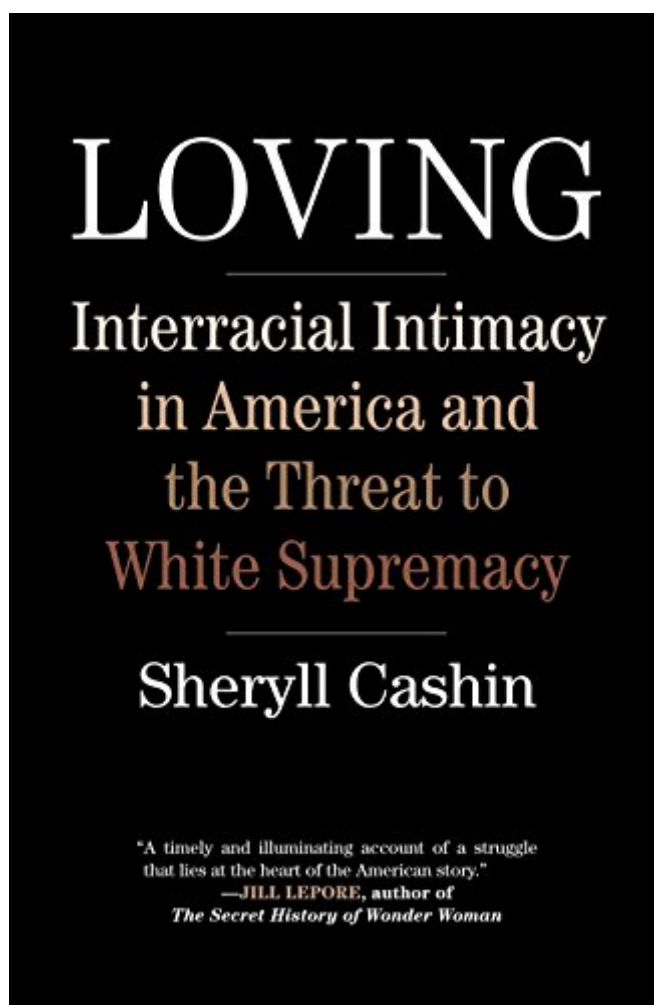


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Loving: Interracial Intimacy In America And The Threat To White Supremacy



Synopsis

How interracial love and marriage changed history, and may soon alter the landscape of American politics. Loving beyond boundaries is a radical act that is changing America. When Mildred and Richard Loving wed in 1958, they were ripped from their shared bed and taken to court. Their crime: miscegenation, punished by exile from their home state of Virginia. The resulting landmark decision of *Loving v. Virginia* ended bans on interracial marriage and remains a signature case—the first to use the words “white supremacy” to describe such racism. Drawing from the earliest chapters in US history, legal scholar Sheryll Cashin reveals the enduring legacy of America’s original sin, tracing how we transformed from a country without an entrenched construction of race to a nation where one drop of nonwhite blood merited exclusion from full citizenship. In vivid detail, she illustrates how the idea of whiteness was created by the planter class of yesterday and is reinforced by today’s power-hungry dog-whistlers to divide struggling whites and people of color, ensuring plutocracy and undermining the common good. Cashin argues that over the course of the last four centuries there have been “ardent integrators” and that those people are today contributing to the emergence of a class of “culturally dexterous” Americans. In the fifty years since the Lovings won their case, approval for interracial marriage rose from 4 percent to 87 percent. Cashin speculates that rising rates of interracial intimacy—including cross-racial adoption, romance, and friendship—combined with immigration, demographic, and generational change, will create an ascendant coalition of culturally dexterous whites and people of color. Loving is both a history of white supremacy and a hopeful treatise on the future of race relations in America, challenging the notion that trickle-down progressive politics is our only hope for a more inclusive society. Accessible and sharp, Cashin reanimates the possibility of a future where interracial understanding serves as a catalyst of a social revolution ending not in artificial color blindness but in a culture where acceptance and difference are celebrated.

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Customer Reviews

The compelling voice of *The Agitator's Daughter* is back full force in *Loving*. In her new book, Sheryll Cashin delves into the history of laws barring inter-racial marriage and intimacy in the colonies and the states, as well as the enforcement of these laws across state lines. She shares how these laws and practices were part and parcel of the White Supremacy regimes of Slavery, Jim Crow, and Caste Discrimination that divided America for so long and so deeply. Ironically, as with the first written law of the Hammurabi Code, the laws barring certain behaviors here inter-racial loving between partners of different color, as with similar laws and customs barring such intimate relations between partners of different national origins, religions, ethnicities and cultures and the same gender have long been violated by many. Whether openly in marriage or covertly in intimacy, such loving over time has always defied caste, despite all the bans, prohibitions, penalties and myths that seek to maintain all such single-race, culture, nationality, religion and other Supremacy regimes. Indeed, my recently published historical novel *The Belle of Two Arbors, 1913-1953*, explores several such relationships: the title character's love with an Ojibwe leader so intent on rebuilding his band he won't marry an outsider, but together their families join to help build their separate businesses and to conserve the fresh waters, forests, and land of their peninsula jutting into the Great Lake; two gay men, one a poet colleague and the other a business partner, who find needed shelter, support and empathy from the title character; and her brother, who loves and marries a woman who passes for white and then support one another when she comes out to support

Thurgood Marshall and the NAACP before the novel ends. For Cashin, such human stories are among the hundreds she describes in her book that give texture to her analysis of all the laws, court cases, commentaries and policies. They also provide the prime examples of what she dubs “cultural dexterity,” as people who care deeply for one another learn to cross forbidden lines to work together and to love one another. For Cashin, this trait has continued to grow in succeeding generations over our long history. Finally, in 1967 a unanimous Supreme Court joined Chief Justice Warren’s opinion overturning Virginia’s anti-miscegenation laws and penalties that restricted the freedom of Richard Loving and Mildred Jeter to marry and to live as man and wife: “Under our Constitution, the freedom to marry, or not marry, a person of another race resides with the individual and cannot be infringed by the State.” There is patently no legitimate overriding purpose independent of invidious racial discrimination which justifies this classification. The fact that Virginia prohibits only interracial marriages involving white persons demonstrates that the racial classifications must stand on their own justification, as measures designed to maintain White Supremacy.

Cashin’s thorough and varied analyses are bolstered by her wicked sense of irony and one-line zingers that bring the reader up short, whether with a knowing grin (“hmmm, how delicious a phrasing!”) or with a new sense of understanding (yes, an “Aha!” moment). Yet in *Loving’s* subtitle, Cashin offers a much more radical look into the future: *Interracial Intimacy in America and the Threat to White Supremacy*. For the *Agitator’s* Daughter isn’t done agitating: Cashin argues that that the disaffected angry whites and nativists who pushed Trump over the top in the 2016 Presidential Electoral College will in the next generation be over-taken by the growing tide of more culturally dexterous integrators and their acceptance by a growing majority. Yet U. S. history never offers a straight line to progress, freedom or tolerance. The *Agitator’s* Daughter knows this better than anyone: her memoir of four generations covers not only the rise of Emancipation, the Civil War Amendments and Reconstruction following the Union’s victory in the Civil War but also their fall and the rise of Jim Crow and Segregation as the new means of caste discrimination thereafter, all the way through the end of World War II; the rise of the Second Reconstruction with Martin Luther King, passive resistance, the Warren Court, and the Civil Rights Acts of the 1960s and their fall in the next generation to Nixon’s Southern Strategy and to the retrenchment of the Burger and Rehnquist Courts. Whatever one may make of Clinton’s New Economy, Wall’s Compassionate Conservatism, and

Obama's One America, Trump's America First appears much more hostile to Cashin's hope of more inter-racial intimacy and cultural dexterity expanding opportunity for all Americans. For better or worse, if past history is prologue, the jury on racial, ethnic, religious, and cultural divides in the U.S. remains up for grabs. On the other hand, perhaps intimacy and cultural dexterity offer as much hope for a brighter future for healing these continuing divides as any public policy, political movement or partisan proposal. Don't ever count the Agitator's Daughter out.

This is an excellent review of the history of the development of the prohibition of interracial relations from the colonial period in Virginia to the present. Then it reviews how the attitudes of the new generation, post civil rights and segregation, are abandoning the false beliefs proffered by the past leaders. It is hopeful in its conclusion that things are changing for the better between the racial construct to become one America of equal treatment and opportunity based upon talent and drive.

"It is stupid, how trapped this great country is, by the architecture of division," says Sheryll Cashin in *Loving*. There appears to be no bottom to the depredations of American abuse of nonwhite non-Christians. Her book traces them from the naïve acceptance by natives of British "pilgrims" to the absurd cases where mixed race marriage was against the law, and into the future, when this nightmare might finally dissipate. Until fifty years ago, it was illegal for whites to marry women of other races in 41 states. The states had to define what exactly white was, and what all the other colors were. For many southern states, a single drop of nonwhite blood in the veins was enough. And they kept records on every individual to prove it. Some states outlawed sex between races. It was only in 1967 that the Supreme Court called it what it really was "White Supremacy" and declared it illegal. It was the *Loving* case, where a couple by that name had to fight their way out of being exiled and banned from their home state of Virginia for 25 years. For the crime of marriage. As outrageous as it might sound today, America was resplendent with such laws: -Maryland law required a free woman marrying a slave to become a slave herself, along with their future children. And the owners were fined for good measure. -Virginia law prohibited sex between the free and slaves, except for owners, who could fornicate at will. 20% of illegitimate children were mixed race. -Ministers could be fined 10,000 pounds of tobacco for performing a mixed race marriage. Cashin writes in a clear, direct style, massaging and rationalizing nothing. The unvarnished facts are offensive enough on their own. She is refreshingly candid without being

vindictive. The book moves swiftly and effectively, revolting without overwhelming. Where it's her opinion, she says so. Where it's her own experience, she says so. Where it's blatant stupidity, she says so. It is a swift, direct lesson in the depths, studded with stats and historical facts often in the form of absurd, racist laws beyond dispute. Racism is institutional in the USA. And it is ingrained in individuals today, even without their intent, as Cashin demonstrates. Cashin's grinding recital of moral failures comes out remarkably positive. Today, 3.3% of marriages in Virginia are black/white. It leads the nation. As more and more mixed race couples appear in television series and in commercials, as more and more university dorms force students to work and live with each other, mixed race families are becoming unremarkable. Online dating is melting the barriers. By 2050, 20% of Americans will be multiracial. Cashin hopes they become a major force for normalcy, much as same sex marriage has become acceptable of late. It is a surprisingly hopeful ending to a 350 year disaster. David Wineberg

A very touching, heart warming story

From historic interracial marriages and/or liaisons, to modern day cross group adoptions and intimate friendships, Sheryll educates us about the significance of these types of relationships. She advocates for "cultural dexterity," the ability to understand and appreciate other ethnicities, not "color blindness" which causes damage. I was fascinated by her insights! In this day and time, we should all read this book!!

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