

# Divorce and american culture

[Art & Culture](#)



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Culture surrounds us everywhere we go. It reflects the people of the times and when it changes, so do the very people it reflects. A general definition would say that culture, related to society, is a set of norms that govern behavior. Within this set of norms the people of a society do certain rituals and behaviors to fit in with the world around them. Different trends rule the times. Whether it be anti-war protests, to civil rights movements, to legalization of same sex civil unions and even divorce-the people of the times roll with many different ideas and tendencies.

The idea of marriage is an old and sacred one. In the Bible, a marriage is seen a holy sacrament between a man and woman that leads to the raising of a family. There is one man and one-woman involved- then with the addition of the holy spirit, the union is supposed to be ever lasting. “ Christian marriage is a sacrament (sacred act approved by God). As a result marriage was very difficult to end, and before the nineteenth century usually ended with death,” (Chan and Haplin, 2001). In the world today, marriage is interpreted in many different ways.

Very rarely is it seen as an everlasting contract that can withstand all tests. The revolutions of the 60s, 70s, up through today have severely changed the way people think of marriage. The drug culture has helped redefine the meaning of peace and love and of course, holy unions. People today do not get married out of the idea of love. If they do, it is most often between two young and naive children or young adults that believe that love can conquer all. “ People expect too much from specialized love marriages, and when the love goes so might the marriage.

Other cultures unite families through arranged marriages, and these social functions may make them more stable,” (Chan and Haplin, 2001). People have begun to take advantage of the system and get married because of benefits they can receive. For the military couple, extra cash is a big incentive as well as extra leave time. A lot of times the benefits outweigh the costs and people today go into marriages knowing that it will be just as easy to exit the marriage. For a marriage to end, there needs to be either a death or a cause for divorce.

Grounds for divorce include; a cheating spouse, an abusive partner, and mishandling of funds. Every so often though, there is no direct cause, but instead the couples just are not compatible. The constant fighting and disagreements make it difficult to raise a family and have a stable home. As society grows and culture changes, divorce still remains. In the early parts of the 20th century, divorce was a taboo idea that meant that you ultimately failed as a wife or husband. People viewed it as the easy way out and very rarely did they agree with it.

In the 1950s, divorce was only 5 per 1000 women, as opposed to the rate of 20 per every 1000 women in the early 21st century (Relationships, 2008). The times influenced people's decisions and instead of doing what might have been best for all the parties involved, couples stayed together so that they would not be viewed as such a failure to their friends, family and children. Culture put the message out to society that a divorce is an end all be all decision that means that you have failed. Of course, logically that is not true.

Occasionally things do not go according to plan and you have to change your idea of the future accordingly. The idea of being a failure comes from the society that surrounds the couple. As the times began to change, so did the overall idea of separation and divorce. The more married couples got divorced, the more casual the idea has become. When a couple divorces and they have children, the children see the process and although it might hurt them tremendously, it also makes them learn and see things. As they see the process, the idea becomes to seem “ normal” to them.

According to a recent journal article, “ growing-up in a divorced family can instill offspring with less unfavorable attitudes towards divorce (Greenberg and Nay 1982, Amato 1988, Trent and South 1989, Axinn and Thornton 1996, Kapinus 2004 as cited by Hiller and Recoules 2011). Sometimes the children involved begin to think that this is a normal thing that happens and makes it easier to do themselves. This could explain the rising divorce rates today. On the other hand, often times when a child witnesses the struggles of divorce, they are sometimes more reluctant to get a divorce themselves (Hiller and Recoules, 2011).

The inevitable hurt and suffering from witnessing countless hours of parental figures fighting, getting sometimes physical, and the mental and emotional strains that the fighting causes sends some children into a downwards spiral. Their whole attitude on love in general is questioned. And from first hand experience, the sanctity of marriage itself is questioned. An idea that some children used to find so uplifting and amazing, now seems bleak and not worth it. If the two people I love the most in the whole world cannot seem to

get along, and cannot make it work, then what are the chances that my marriage will fail?

What is the point in even trying? Is love just another silly Disney ideation that really cannot exist in our world today? “ American society may have erased the stigma that once accompanied divorce, but it can no longer ignore divorce's massive effects” (Fagan and Rector, 2000). Married couples do not always understand that their fighting and arguments are a lot bigger than just the two of them. It reaches out and branches down to all the people they know. Subsequent relationships between children and their partners become affected.

Sometimes girls go crazy and give up on the concept of love and become promiscuous at a young age. They eventually fall into a routine and thanks to the invention of birth control, have no qualms and avoid the pregnancy scare that might have once deterred them otherwise. Boys may become rude and hostile towards their partners and begin to treat their ladies badly in response to how they see their fathers treat their mothers. Coworkers, neighbors, children, friends, everyone is affected. Some articles claim that the divorce rates among young adults today are lower than that of the past.

This might be true, but this does not take into account the idea of young relationships failing. Couples that never got married, but might have had children at a young age with no intention of getting married and consequently leading to a single parent and broken home anyways. There was no sacrament done, but the damage still is the same. Repeatedly it is seen that parents will reluctantly “ stay together” for the kids. This is a great

idea on paper. It would seem that if the parents were to stay together, that the children would not suffer from the emotional and psychological damage done to a child because of a divorce.

What is often overlooked is the fact that if parents stay together, and clearly are not compatible and cannot communicate like adults and actually raise the children, then the child will most likely suffer just as much or even more so than the child with divorced parents. Often times negative traits are learned from the parents during times of arguments that will debilitate the growth of the child. Negative traits would include, harsh tempers, awful communications skill development, and negative views of either parent based on the idea that parents will most likely isolate the children and try to get each on “ their side. The strain of choosing between the two parents puts many over the edge. Children will sometimes develop different drinking or substance abuse problems in order to deal with the problems that they are facing at home leading to failing or dropping out of school, unwanted pregnancies, and even dangerous automobile accidents. “” Don't stay together just for the sake of the children. “ ” If divorce is better for you, it will be better for your kids. “ (Spohn, n. d. ) As the times are continually changing, so do the basic ideas that fuel society as a whole.

Divorce rates will rise and fall with the times depending on society and culture. It is a trend that cannot be predicted and cannot be ignored. The overall effect of divorce is an everlasting one and before any decision is made about either marriage or divorce, all the options and pros and cons should always be weighed. Reference: Hughes, R. (2008, August 20). What is the current divorce rate in the United States? Has the divorce rate changed <https://assignbuster.com/divorce-and-american-culture/>

much over the past 5 to 10 years?. MissouriFamilies. org Home. Retrieved July 20, 2011, from <http://missourifamilies.org/quick/divorceqa/divorceqa3.htm> Fagan, P. , ; Rector, R. (n. d. ). World and I Magazine - The Effects of Divorce in America. Online Magazine: The World ; I Online Magazine. Retrieved July 20, 2011, from <http://www.worldandi.com/specialreport/divorce/divorce.html> Sociology of Divorce (GCSE). (n. d. ). The Adrian Worsfold Website. Retrieved July 20, 2011, from <http://www.change.freeuk.com/learning/sothink/divorcesimpler.html> Spohn, W. C. (n. d. ). The American Myth of Divorce. Santa Clara University - Welcome. Retrieved July 16, 2011, from <http://www.scu.edu/ethics/publications/iie/v9n2/divorce.html>