

## INTRODUCTION

---

*Heather M. Dalmage*

“Almighty God created the races White, Black, Yellow, Malay, and Red, and he placed them on separate continents. The fact that he separated the races shows that he did not intend them to mix.”<sup>1</sup> With these words Judge Bazile sentenced Mildred and Richard Loving, an interracial couple from Virginia, to one year in prison in 1950. The crime—marrying across race lines. His ruling reflects the history of racial formation in the United States. Calling upon a mixture of religious and scientific mythology, the judge used his power on behalf of the state to strengthen racial categories and white supremacy. After living in exile in Washington, D.C., for nearly seventeen years, the Lovings finally had their case heard before the Supreme Court. Buttressed by the strength of the civil rights movement in 1967, more than 240 years since the first codified antimiscegenation law,<sup>2</sup> the United States Supreme Court declared intermarriage legal in every state.<sup>3</sup> Given the legal green light, multiracial families began to form, leading to what Maria Root has called the “biracial babyboom.”<sup>4</sup> Of course, intermixing has occurred throughout history, but this would mark the first time that U.S. law would honor each partner as racially equal in the marriage contract. The Loving decision created the legal, if not the social, space for the growth of multiracial family organizations and other forms of multiracial expression, which eventually became collectively known as the Multiracial Movement.

Cynthia Nakashima defines the Multiracial Movement broadly as “the emergence of community organizations, campus groups, magazines and newsletters, academic research and writing, university courses, creative expression, and political activism—all created and done by mixed-race individuals and members of interracial families, with the purpose of voicing their own experiences, opinions, issues and interests.”<sup>5</sup> Because multiracial people, and often their families, are visible indicators that the color line has been breached they “will very likely be forced to participate in the dialogue at some level.”<sup>6</sup> Thus, the movement extends beyond those who are active in multiracial organizations and overt politics. It includes all members of multiracial families; even those who want to opt out of racial discussions. For instance, when identifying themselves and others they may claim to be color-blind (culture matters not race), they may claim membership in a single racial community (my dad may be white, but I’m black and that’s that), they may advocate for recognition of a multiracial identity (I have the right to identify how I choose). In each of these examples a particular racial ideology and racial politics is being forwarded. This anthology will focus on the political issues and interests conveyed through the broadly defined Multiracial Movement by exploring the origins, discourse, and social justice outcomes. The goal of this anthology is to both better understand racial thinking that may ultimately reproduce the hegemonic racial discourse and to posit a counterhegemonic “multiracial politics grounded in historical and material realities.”<sup>7</sup>

#### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MOVEMENT

While the Multiracial Movement has its origins in the civil rights movement, many of the six dozen or so multiracial family organizations that currently exist across the United States were developing socially, ideologically, and politically during the conservative Reagan years. By the 1990s, conservative politicians became a force behind the Multiracial Movement.<sup>8</sup> Four other factors intersected to create the current momentum of the Multiracial Movement: the increased academic and popular literature on the topic of multiracialism; the question of racial categories on Census 2000; the debates surrounding race and adoption; and the popularity of celebrities such as Tiger Woods and Mariah Cary.

Multiracial family organizations began to sprout up in the late 1970s as places where parents could gain support and learn how to guide their multiracial children in a racially divided and racist society. I-Pride (Interracial/Intercultural Pride), the “oldest existing multiracial group in the U.S.,” was founded in February 1979 in the San Francisco Bay area to address the issue of racial classification and identity of multiracial children.<sup>9</sup> For instance, I-Pride was particularly active in the school system and by the early 1980s,

its newsletters were reporting the victories of having an “interracial” category added by some schools. While I-Pride became politically involved early in the 1980s, most organizations were coming together for social support. A year after the founding of I-Pride, the Biracial Family Network (BFN) in Chicago was developed. One of the founders of BFN explained, “My son was really the reason I wanted to start an organization. I had heard about I-Pride in California so I wrote to them and they gave me tips on how to get the group started. In September 1980 there were six women, each was a mother of biracial children, and we’ve evolved since.”<sup>10</sup> From the early 1980s, then, communication was developing among multiracial family members and between multiracial organizations. The Association of MultiEthnic Americans (AMEA) was founded in 1988 as an umbrella organization for multiracial organizations across the country. A year later, AMEA president Carlos Fernandez forwarded a proposal to the chair of the Subcommittee on the Census and Population. In the cover letter Fernandez wrote:

We would propose that all federal forms, including the Census, add the category “multiethnic/interracial” and permit those who check this box to check all other boxes that apply. . . . We realize it is probably too late to add a new category to the 1990 census form. However, it is not too late to amend the rules governing the tallying of race/ethnicity on the 1990 census form to allow individuals the opportunity to designate more than one ethnic/racial category to accurately reflect the fullness of their heritage.<sup>11</sup>

The BFN in Chicago was a primary affiliate to AMEA, and thus became decidedly political. Like other multiracial family organizations across the country, what had began as a group of mothers meeting to discuss the narrowness of racial categories, community, kinship, and racism was now becoming an organization with a political agenda that would challenge the discussion of race in the United States.<sup>12</sup>

The development of multiracial organizations in the 1980s was occurring in a political climate overwhelmingly defined by the backlash against and retreat from group rights legislation, and programs and a movement toward racial color blindness. Omi and Winant point out that under Reagan history was rewritten “to suggest that discrimination against racial minorities had been drastically curbed.”<sup>13</sup> Local, state, and federal agencies driven by neoconservative agendas were actively questioning the relevance of race-based policies.<sup>14</sup> Conservatives both within and outside the Multiracial Movement seized the opportunity to posit race as a human construction void of material outcomes. The logic that followed was that race-based programs in an otherwise equal society are nothing short of reverse racism.

The advocacy of color blindness by conservatives in the Multiracial Movement extends to issues of adoption, affirmative action, and beyond, and is part of a larger societal movement away from group-based policies.

Throughout the 1990s, civil rights gains were being repealed with regularity. Not coincidentally, these years were also marked by an increasing public visibility and awareness of multiracialism. The reversal of civil rights gains and the visibility of multiracialism merged in 1997 when conservative Republican Newt Gingrich voiced his support for a multiracial category.<sup>15</sup> His support was embraced by many in the Multiracial Movement, for a few others it was a wake-up call.<sup>16</sup> Multiracial organizations have continued to link arms with conservative organizations such as Ward Connerly's American Civil Rights Institute, an organization dedicated to dismantling group-based protections. For instance, at the "Multiracial Leadership Round Table 2000 Census: A Discussion About Our Choices," Connerly was inducted into the 2000 Racial Harmony Hall of Fame. The award was created by the conservative multiracial organization, A Place For Us Ministry for Interracial Couples.<sup>17</sup> It was the support by Newt Gingrich, however, that proved to be a turning point for the most politically influential organization in the Multiracial Movement: AMEA began, at this time, to outwardly express concern about accepting support from and aligning itself with conservatives. Long-standing tensions within the movement erupted into a full-fledged cleavage.

Broadly speaking, each side is ultimately interested in the same outcome, that is, official recognition of multiracial people. However, the political means for reaching that end differ. On the one side are those who align themselves with conservatives and believe that the Multiracial Movement needs to focus on removing the concept of race either through the introduction of a multiracial category or by advocating for color-blind agendas; on the other side are those who align themselves with liberals and believe that multiracial people should be a "protected" group. Within each of these sides additional splits and tensions have arisen.<sup>18</sup>

As the movement continued to develop and transform in the 1990s it began to find voice in academic literature, popular literature, census debates, and pop culture icons. The introduction of discussions of multiracialism, hybridity, and racial mixing occurred amidst existing discussions of authenticity, community boundaries, identity politics, the social construction of race, and postmodern fragmentation. These discussions have prompted race theorists to more clearly delineate connections between community boundaries, identities, and politics.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, a number of autobiographies written by members of multiracial families have been widely read,<sup>20</sup> including James McBride's *The Color of Water*, which spent a number of weeks on the *New York Times* best-seller list. Collectively these books began a process of rearticulating traditional understandings of race both inside and outside the academy. Individuals have

been invited to think about race as a social construction, something created in the context of human interaction not human biology.

The question of racial classification further invited a rethinking of race and strengthened the Multiracial Movement. The struggle on behalf of “our children” has prompted many parents (mostly white) of multiracial children to challenge traditional categories.<sup>21</sup> In an attempt to count the U.S. population the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) created the 2000 Census Advisory Board which was charged with debating and ultimately informing the OMB about how it should approach questions of race on the census. For the first time in history the advisory board included a representative from the Multiracial Movement; then-president of AMEA Ramona Douglass. Tensions developed between the Multiracial Movement and other groups represented on the board. Traditional civil rights organizations such as the National Council of LaRaza, the NAACP, the Urban League, and the National Congress of American Indians were already struggling against conservative political ideologies and the reversal of civil rights gains when the 2000 census debates erupted. These organizations spoke out publicly and sharply against a multiracial category, and at times worked together against the addition of a multiracial category. Concern for the further erosion of civil rights gains was central to the opposition.

As the advisory board was embroiled in debates about the meaning of racial categorization, process of tabulation, and the possible addition of a multiracial category, Tiger Woods was tearing up the fairways and had just won his first Professional Golf Association (PGA) tournament. His claims to a multiracial, “Cablanasian” identity caught the attention of the nation. Although cleavages existed, the Multiracial Movement rode the wave of Tiger’s multiracial stardom to further strengthen its demands for a reconsidering of racial classification on the census.

Despite the political differences among the politically active individuals in the Multiracial Movement, signs appeared that a sense of community was developing among many members of multiracial families. These signs included the growth of local multiracial organizations, and the increasing number of books, magazines, newspaper articles, television specials, websites, conferences, and newsletters. Like all social movements that “create collective identity, collective subjectivity, by offering their adherents a different view of themselves and their world,” the Multiracial Movement began to shape and transform collective multiracial identities.<sup>22</sup> The task of *The Politics of Multiracialism* is to analyze what this transformation means within the current racial politics. The chapters that follow will collectively show that the outcome desired by both the conservative and liberal multiracial agendas is official multiracial recognition and that such an agenda is undermining struggles for liberation currently being waged against white supremacy and racial injustice.

## POTENTIAL AND PITFALLS: DISCOURSE OF THE MOVEMENT

The Multiracial Movement has expanded the way many individuals in the United States think about race. First, notions of race as biological and essential, which had been challenged through the civil rights movement, have been further disrupted through the ways in which members of multiracial families have framed their lived experiences. Second, the Multiracial Movement has expanded racial language, at times allowing for a more sophisticated understanding of race and racism. Primarily, a language is being created that is challenging notions of authenticity and the lines that divide racial communities, while acknowledging individual and racial differences in a positive light.<sup>23</sup> At the same time the movement can be credited with these advances in racial thinking, the movement is also being complicit with white supremacy as seen through claims to color blindness and by the acknowledgment of racial divisions without the acknowledgment of racial hierarchies.

For most of our history, the United States has created and functioned with an essentialist vision of race, a vision that paints race as historical, natural, static, biological, universal, and immutable. The civil rights movement forced a rethinking, a rearticulation of race.<sup>24</sup> For instance, when Martin Luther King Jr. pointed out that people should be judged by the content of their character and not the color of their skin, he was disrupting biological and essentialist notions of race. He was asserting a belief that racial essentialism is a surrender of human agency to the constraints imposed by racist categories. Unfortunately, disrupting essentialist notions of race, including myths of white purity and the one-drop rule does not create a more progressive and just society. In fact, the undoing of racial essentialism, and the acceptance of race as a social construction, has in many ways set the stage for a further entrenchment of white supremacy in the United States. As Howard Winant points out, “[I]t is now often *conservatives* who argue that race is an illusion.”<sup>25</sup> Conservatives have taken King’s words and ideas and have used them in a struggle to undo civil rights protections. If race is understood as an illusion, then the power and inequality embedded in the construction of race are ignored.

DuBois asserted that she or “he who ignores or seeks to override the race idea in human history ignores and overrides the central thought of all history.”<sup>26</sup> Race must be understood as constructed within a history of injustice and inequality that continues to shape lives. Positing race as a social construction without further analyzing the ways race is entrenched and embedded and, indeed, the very foundation of the society (social institutions and individual consciousness) is nothing short of dismissing the concept of race and by extension racism. Some individuals in the Multiracial Movement who claim to understand race as a social construction make the leap

to suggest that since it is a human creation, then humans can uncreate race and racism by ignoring race. For example, this idea can be heard loudly within the movement around the demand to remove race from adoption laws.<sup>27</sup> In short, the argument is: “If we collectively don’t ‘do’ race, then race won’t exist.” Such an understanding of race requires a bit of amnesia, a bit of social naiveté and a bit of unfounded optimism. Likewise, such an understanding of race dismisses white supremacy and the centrality of power to the construction of race.

The ignoring of the power relations inherent in the U.S. racial hierarchy is not new. In the early 1960s, for instance, whites were claiming that because many blacks chose to *separate* themselves from whites, whites should not be culpable for *segregation* in society. In 1963 Malcolm X responded to these claims by noting that racial separation and racial segregation are not the same. Separation is a choice, while segregation occurs in the context of inequality and imposition. In his statement, “It’s only segregated when it’s controlled by someone from the outside,” Malcolm X was making the power relations clear, segregation was about the use of power to maintain an unjust system.<sup>28</sup> A movement that ignores power relations will likely work in ways that reinforce white supremacy and undermine those struggling for liberation. For instance, AMEA makes claims that in a racist society civil rights legislation is necessary, yet within the same breath they demand recognition of multiracial people and families as a protected group. Consider a statement made in an open letter by Levonne Gaddy, the current president of AMEA:

The systematic and institutionalized discrimination against multiracial individuals, interracial couples, and multiracial families must continue to be challenged. With compassion and sensitivity for those who have fought civil rights battles before us, I will stand strong for multiracial people and insist on the same consideration that has been given to other groups before us.<sup>29</sup>

Within the Multiracial Movement many claim a liberal political location and point to the multiracial “us” as the victims of discrimination by the monoracial “them.” The inference is that multiracial people and families need protection from all “monoracial” groups, regardless of where the groups are situated in the U.S. racial hierarchy. As such, an agenda for a separate “protected” group will reproduce white supremacy in society by reifying yet another category without calling into question white supremacy.

Analyzing the context and discourse of the movement can help us to draw valuable lessons as we dream of social transformation and forge political alliances. By understanding the pitfalls of the movement individuals can

rethink the movement's political location in the U.S. racial landscape. The lessons provided through the Multiracial Movement can help to create a racial agenda able to push the boundaries of racial thinking within traditional racial communities and forward a more progressive struggle toward liberation in a white-dominated nation.

#### CHAPTER OVERVIEWS

Race is both deeply personal and strongly political. Each of the authors in this anthology has in-depth knowledge of the Multiracial Movement. Some have been actively involved in multiracial organizations, others have spent much time and energy researching and theorizing multiracialism, most come from multiracial families. These authors have carefully documented and theorized the pitfalls and lessons of the Multiracial Movement.

In part I, *The Context of the Multiracial Movement*, the authors make clear that the Multiracial Movement has its origins in historical battles over the meaning of race in society. The authors will show that while race is socially constructed, those in the movement must be mindful of the historical, political, economic, and social reasons race has been constructed to mean what it means. In this first section multiracialism is tied to three powerful and historical phenomena: the construction of family, white supremacy, and the civil rights movement.

In chapter 1, "All in the Family: The Familial Roots of Racial Divisions," Kimberly McClain DaCosta looks at the ways in which "family" has been invoked both historically and politically to maintain white supremacy and divisive racial categories. Kinship networks, regulated through laws and customs, have created a racialized society in which multiracial families have been called unnatural and unlawful. DaCosta points out that the civil rights movement created the political space necessary to successfully challenge anti-miscegenation laws, which ultimately allowed for the development of a Multiracial Movement. And yet, the movement itself is struggling to reify a multiracial category, an action that will undermine the very successes of the civil rights movement that laid the groundwork for the existence of a Multiracial Movement. DaCosta contends that the desire to create a multiracial category is about the desire to create acceptable kinship networks—something long denied to these families. DaCosta writes, "I argue there are two related historical processes of significance here: I dub them 'the racialization of the family' (the racial premises buried in our understandings of family, in which genetic/phenotypic sharing is coded to signify cultural sharing, intimacy, and caring) and 'the familization of race' (the ways in which members of the same racial group feel a kin-like connection and how that familial understanding is used politically). These two processes for the context in which 'multiracial'



becomes a distinctive social identity in the United States, and are the subtext of multiracial politics." While a multiracial category will not lead to greater social justice in society, the demand for such a category becomes clearer.

In chapter 2, "Defending the Creation of Whiteness: White Supremacy and the Threat of International Sexuality," Abby L. Ferber posits the central role white supremacist movements have played in the construction of the Multiracial Movement. In this chapter Ferber questions the logic of a Multiracial Movement that vies for a separate category rather than struggle against all manifestations of white supremacy. By analyzing the most overt forms of white supremacy—white supremacist organizations, Ferber is able to clearly delineate the way in which white supremacy is reinforced through the maintenance of the color line. Ferber notes that within white supremacist discourse interracial sexuality is the "ultimate abomination, because it is a transgression of the boundaries between what are constructed as distinct races. It is a particular threat to the construction of whiteness based on purity, and represents a threat to not only whiteness, but white males especially." Given the historical treatment of multiracial families and people in a white supremacist system, the Multiracial Movement should foremost be concerned with subverting white supremacy.

While Ferber analyzes explicit forms of white supremacy and DaCosta analyzes the historical construction of race and family, in chapter 3, "Racial Redistricting: Expanding the Boundaries of Whiteness," Charles A. Gallagher explores, through in-depth interviews and focus groups with white college students, the boundaries of racial acceptability in white familial relations. Gallagher argues that the Multiracial Movement must acknowledge the "racial redistricting" taking place in the United States in which the whiteness is expanding to include multiracial Asians and light-skinned Latinos. He writes, "[A]s whites and other nonblack groups inhabit common racial ground, the stigma once associated with interracial relationships between these groups is diminishing." The shifting boundaries of whiteness have "important implications" for the Multiracial Movement and, if not careful, the movement will exacerbate antiblack sentiment in the United States.

In chapter 4, "Linking the Civil Rights and Multiracial Movements," Kim M. Williams asserts that the Multiracial Movement is part of a "larger cycle of protest, one initiated by the civil rights movement." Based in her in-depth research in multiracial organizations across the country, Williams notes that the Multiracial Movement is not necessarily "changing" race in the United States, but rather continuing a trajectory laid out through civil rights struggles. Williams analyzes the characteristics, ideological framework, tactics, and goals of the Multiracial Movement. She argues that leaders of this movement have utilized the language and legacy of the civil rights movement: "By arguing that the recognition of multiracial people is the 'next logical step in civil

rights' ” they “have shrewdly drawn on the symbolism of the civil rights movement, and in the process cast themselves as more progressive than the so-called progressives (i.e., the civil rights lobby).” Ultimately, Williams maps the Multiracial Movement as a legacy of the civil rights movement.

The second section of the book, *Discourses of the Multiracial Movement*, is concerned with the libratory potential and limitations of the discourse of the Multiracial Movement. Each of the authors in this section will look at the discourse underlying the claims made by the Multiracial Movement, including academic writing, the use of media images, the expansion of multiracial advocacy on the Web, and racial discourses within multiracial families. Authors will specifically address ideas such as racial essentialism, the social construction of race, race as an illusion, racial categories, and color-blind language, which have shaped and defined the political location of the movement in a nonprogressive manner.

In chapter 5, “Beyond Pathology and Cheerleading: Insurgency, Dissolution, and Complicity in the Multiracial Idea,” Rainier Spencer suggests that in the realm of theory, the multiracial idea can provide a path toward the dismantling of racial essentialism. Unfortunately, when applied to our political structures, primarily through the struggle for a multiracial category on the census, the multiracial idea undermines oppressed racial groups in their struggle for liberation. Once the multiracial idea is applied to the creation of census categories and other practical applications, the multiracial idea loses its corrosive, subversive, and theoretical energy. The outcome is a complicity with the idea of race as a biological construct and the undermining of the struggles of oppressed racial groups. Spencer points out that “in addition to the problem of further cementing in place the idea of racial groups, a federal multiracial category could in no sense serve legitimately as the signifier of a group that has suffered historical, government-sanctioned oppression. Its very adoption would belittle those people whose tremendous sufferings were the rationale for the federal categories in the first place.” He suggests that rather than expending energy fighting for official recognition and the practical application of the multiracial idea, advocates should be fighting for the destruction of all racial categories and the pervasive racism grounded in the categories. Spencer concludes that while “there is a frustration among those who feel that current monoracial categories do not fit their self-identification needs, the manner in which that frustration is directed—the call for a federal multiracial category—is wrong-headed to say the least. It would be better to devote our energies toward challenging and dismantling the myth of white purity that is the parent of the multiracial myth. . . . As we await the next round of arguments over a federal multiracial category, we must maintain our goal of debunk-

ing the idea of biological race, while ensuring that we do not undermine civil rights compliance monitoring in the process.”

In chapter 6, “Deconstructing Tiger Woods: The Promise and Pitfalls of Multiracial Identity,” Kerry Ann Rockquemore highlights the myriad ways multiracial people identify. Through her analysis of celebrity multiracial people, she explores why and how the Multiracial Movement claims some multiracial celebrities, but not all. Central to her analysis is the Multiracial Movement’s glorification of Tiger Woods. Rockquemore argues that the attention given to Woods helps to explain what the Multiracial Movement envisions as the “authentic” multiracial identity. She writes, “[M]any movement activists assume that individuals who have parents of different races understand their racial identity exclusively as a border identity.” A border identity, is a “blending of all an individual’s racial backgrounds . . . and represents a break with the paradigmatic reliance on the one-drop rule to understand the multiracial experience.” Rockquemore suggests that activists in the Multiracial Movement have a narrow and limited understanding of the varying ways multiracial people identify.

Similar to Rockquemore’s concern that the movement is defining *multiracial* in narrow and confining ways, in chapter 7, “Multirace.com: Multiracial Cyberspace,” Erica Chito Childs explores the creation of boundaries in the multiracial community through a content analysis of two large multiracial activist websites. Through a content analysis of the websites and interviews with the editors of these sites, Childs suggests that far from creating an inclusive multiracial community, these websites actually shun those who do not accede to an acceptable vision of multiracialism. Further, these sites promote contradictory ideologies that include: color blindness, antiblack sentiment, and notions of authentic multiracialness. While the Multiracial Movement is advocating for a recognition of multiraciality in society, at the same time, the cyberspaces from which the discourse is being created and controlled reflects a very limited understanding of race that ultimately reproduces white supremacy.

In chapter 8, “‘I Prefer to Speak of Culture’: White Mothers of Interracial Children,” Terri A. Karis explores, through in-depth interviews, why many white mothers of multiracial children get trapped in color-blind ideologies. She notes that “despite their increasing racial awareness, white women often prefer the language of culture to race, and color-blind interpretations to those that take race into account, particularly when they are discussing family dynamics.” Karis explains that the women are facing several competing social constraints, including a patriarchal society in which women are the primary caretaker and a racist society where they are not seen as having an authentic voice when addressing race and racism with their children of color. If married, these women might defer race discussions and race education to their spouse of color. Other white women claim a desire to learn black history for *the sake*

*of the children*. Finally, in an attempt to counter negative racial stereotypes about interracial married white women, they downplay the significance of race in their family relations and struggle to maintain “middle-class respectability as ‘good (white) girls.’” Thus these women often attach their identity to their children, they begin to identify racially as mothers of multiracial children, rather than interracial married white women. Karis writes, “Focusing on one’s role as a mother may help to emphasize, and reinstate, a white woman’s respectability.” Moreover, such a shift removes the immediate pressure these women might experience to name their whiteness. Karis concludes that understanding the ways white women in multiracial families define themselves racially can help forge a space for individuals to move beyond narrow color-blind constructions of race. “As we become aware and name the ways in which race impacts our lives, even within our most intimate relationships, we extend the possibilities for conscious choices, authentic moments of connection, and strategies that move away from normative whiteness toward social justice.” Through this chapter Karis is helping to uncover the attraction many white women may feel to the conservative politics of the Multiracial Movement, particularly those calling on a color-blind agenda and the removal of race from legislation, programs, and policies.

The third section of the book, *Lessons from the Multiracial Movement*, provides several ideas about how those in the Multiracial Movement and other interested parties, can begin to examine and address multiracial politics in a more progressive and transformative manner. Each author in this section suggests that progressive politics must be first and foremost concerned with larger social relations that make the Multiracial Movement relevant. Couched in a history of group-based racial discrimination, a white supremacist society will not be challenged by moving the discourse to the level of the individual, that is, individual rights, racism as an individual pathology, claims to rugged individualism, or falling into the trap of postmodern fragmentation through which community building and solidarity are painted as impossibilities. In each of the following chapters, the authors explain their vision of a more progressive Multiracial Movement.

In chapter 9, “Model Minority? The Struggle for Identity among Multiracial Japanese Americans,” Rebecca Chiyoko King-O’Riain addresses the importance of understanding the specific historical context of group formation as a way to understand the confluences of a progressive Multiracial Movement. Her analysis points to a weakness in the Multiracial Movement, that is, the lack of attention to the experiences of multiracials beyond black and white. King-O’Riain addresses the specific factors (demography, immigration, historical construction of race in Japan, and gender dynamics) that have made it possible and desirable for multiracial Japanese Americans to work from *within* the Japanese American community.

In chapter 10, “Transracial Adoption: Refocusing Upstream,” Barbara Katz Rothman addresses a major concern of many multiracial families: transracial adoption. Most multiracial family organizations have at some point advocated the removal of race considerations in the process of adoption. Rothman suggests that by focusing on color-blind adoptions, the Multiracial Movement has lost sight of the fact that transracial adoption is itself an outcome of larger institutional inequalities and injustices that have pushed so many children of color into the child welfare system. Rothman writes:

Transracial adoption is a Band-Aid solution where far more radical solutions are immediately needed. . . . Adoption is the result of some very bad things going on upstream, policies that push women into having babies that they cannot raise. . . . A lot of adoption is about poverty: a lack of access to contraception and abortion; a lack of access to the resources to raise children. And a lot of what poverty is about in America is racism.

Through her personal experiences of adopting and raising Victoria, an African American child, Rothman addresses the complexity of race on a personal level and the injustices of race (as it intersects with gender) on the societal level. She concludes by stating, “Transracial adoption—as a problem, or as a solution, as an issue that troubles us—does not resolve at an individual level. Victoria and I are at the bottom of a long strange funnel. . . . The solutions will not be found down here at the bottom where we are all doing the best we can. No, if you want to understand, help, or prevent transracial adoption you’re going to have to refocus upstream.” Focusing on individuals and individual families, she argues, will not create a more just world. Individuals concerned with social justice must understand larger social relations of inequality and injustice that continue to shape individual lives, and thus must “refocus upstream.”

In chapter 11, “Protecting Racial Comfort: Protecting White Privilege,” Heather Dalmage explores the construction of racial identities of whites who belong to multiracial family organizations. Based on in-depth interviews with seventeen white members of multiracial families she argues that the desire and demand for racial comfort largely explains why whites are disproportionately represented in multiracial family organizations. Drawing on arguments of color blindness, meritocracy, and individualism, many of these whites use their interracial relationship to cling to white privilege. Others who may belong to multiracial organizations struggle to create antiracist identities. These individuals may belong to the organizations, but rarely attend meetings and events, instead spending their time and energy working alongside people of color. Ultimately, Dalmage argues that understanding the

desire for racial comfort by whites can help us understand and challenge the less progressive ideologies found in the Multiracial Movement.

Finally, in chapter 12, "Ideology of the Multiracial Movement: Dismantling the Color Line and Disguising White Supremacy?" Eileen T. Walsh addresses the need for the Multiracial Movement to account for race, gender, and class as "mutually constructed and supported hierarchies." She argues that these constructs will not be undone through a color-blind agenda. "Disappearing race from the vocabularies and consciousness of academics, policy makers, and the citizenry prior to dismantling the structures of inequality that persist not only puts the cart before the horse, it also serves to render white privilege invisible—a most dangerous proposition with a long legacy." Ultimately, Walsh suggests that social justice must be central to the goals of the Multiracial Movement or the movement will work on behalf of white supremacy.

#### NOTES

1. Quoted in D. Hollis, "A Legacy of Loving," in *New People* (1991): 2, 9–12.

2. For a discussion of the history of antimiscegenation laws see J. A. Rogers, *Sex and Race, Volume II* (St. Petersburg, FL: Helga Rogers, 1942), 155. Rogers quotes The Henning Statues of Virginia: "September 17, 1630. Hugh Davis to be soundly whipped before an assembly of Negroes and others for abusing himself to the dishonor of God and the shame of Christians by defiling his body in lying with a Negro." Note that no mention is made of what happened to the woman in this instance. Moreover, drawing on religious ideology, as Judge Bazile did in 1950, the courts were used to uphold white supremacy through the myth of "white purity."

3. W. E. B. DuBois, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1899/1996).

4. Maria P. P. Root, "Within, Between, and Beyond Race," in *Racially Mixed People in America*, ed. Maria P. P. Root (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1992), 3.

5. Cynthia Nakashima, "Voices from the Movement: Approaches to Multiraciality," in *The Multiracial Experience*, ed. Maria P. P. Root (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1996), 80.

6. *Ibid.*, 82.

7. Michael Eric Dyson, "Keynote Address," *Color Lines in the 21st Century Conference* (Chicago: Roosevelt University, 1998).

8. See Heather Dalmage, *Tripping On the Color Line: Black-White Multiracial Families in a Racially Divided World* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000); Kim Williams, *Boxed In: The U.S. Multiracial Movement* (Cornell University: unpublished dissertation, 2001).

9. Some discrepancy exists about the exact origination date of this organization. The 1987 mission statement flyer of I-Pride states the date as February 1979. The Association of MultiEthnic Americans (AMEA) homepage states the date

as 1978. In either case, as AMEA notes, it is the oldest multiracial organization in the country.

10. Based on personal interview conducted by Heather Dalmage on July 19, 1996.

11. See AMEA Home Page at <http://www.ameasite.org/>.

12. See Kimberly McClain DaCosta, "All in the Family: The Familial Roots of Racial Divisions," in this volume for an elaboration of the historical and political interaction between definitions of community, kinship, and race. See also, Naomi Zack, *Race and Mixed Race* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994).

13. Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation in the U.S.: 1960–1990* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

14. For a broader discussion see Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation*.

15. Kim Williams, *Boxed In: The U.S. Multiracial Movement* (Cornell University, unpublished dissertation, 2001).

16. See Dalmage, *Triping on the Color Line*.

17. Thanks to Kim Williams for drawing my attention to this meeting/award ceremony.

18. Williams, *Boxed In*.

19. Michael Omi and Howard Winant raised the issue of multiracialism for discussion within a broader racial theoretical framework in *Racial Formation in the U.S.* Other explorations followed, see for instance, Angela Davis, "Discussion," in *Black Popular Culture*, ed. Gina Dent (Seattle: Bay Press, 1992); Rhonda M. Williams, "Living at the Crossroads: Explorations in Race, Nationality, Sexuality, and Gender," in *The House that Race Built*, ed. Wahneema Lubiano (New York: Vintage, 1998); Michael Eric Dyson, "Essentialism and the Complexities of Racial Identity," in *Multiculturalism: A Critical Reader*, ed. David Theo Goldberg (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994).

20. See for instance, Maureen Reddy *Crossing the Color Line: Race, Parenting, and Culture* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994); Lise Funderburg, *Black, White, Other: Biracial Americans Talk About Race* (New York: Morrow House, 1994); Jane Lazarre, *Beyond the Whiteness of Whiteness: Memoir of a White Mother of Black Sons* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996); Claudine Chiawei O'Hearn, *Half + Half: Writers on Growing Up Biracial + Bicultural* (New York: Pantheon, 1998); James McBride, *The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1996).

21. Williams, *Boxed In*.

22. Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation*, 88.

23. See for instance Maria P. P. Root's broadly cited, "Bill of Rights for Multiracial People," which first appeared in *The Multiracial Experience*, 7.

24. Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation*.

25. Howard Winant, "The Theoretical Status of the Concept of Race," in *Theories of Race and Racism: A Reader*, ed. Les Back and John Solomos (New York: Routledge, 2000), 181.

26. W. E. B. DuBois. "Conservation of Races," in *Theories of Race and Racism*, 80.

27. See for instance, Randall Kennedy, "Orphans of Separatism: The Painful Politics of Transracial Adoption," *American Prospect* 17 (Spring 1994): 38–45; and

Peter Hayes, "Transracial Adoption Politics and Ideology," *Child Welfare League of America* 72, 3 (1994): 304–308.

28. Quoted in Gary Peller, "Race-Consciousness," in *Critical Race Theory*, eds. Kimberle Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, and Kendall Thomas (New York: New Press, 1995), 128.

29. Levonne Gaddy, an open letter released to "AMEA Affiliate members and newsletters," March 11, 2000.