



## Changing Face, Changing Race

The Remaking of Race in  
the Japanese American and  
African American Communities

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Growing up in Chicago, I can't remember a time when I did not know that I was part Japanese American. My mother taught us about internment; we played with our "Japanese" dolls; and we ate our hot dogs and bologna cooked in *shoyu* (soy sauce). Although our hot dogs, like our home, were not "normal," to my sister Debbie and me, they were.

When I first came to California to attend graduate school and began teaching in the Asian American Studies department, this notion of myself as Japanese American was seriously challenged for the first time. Many of my students wanted to know my qualifications to teach Asian American studies. "You don't look Japanese so how would you know about racism?" they would say. Clearly I was not Japanese American enough.

From Chicago to California, the social context changed and with it my acceptance as a member of the Japanese American

community. Other *hapas* (a Hawaiian term that has come to refer to mixed-race Asian Americans) in California invited me to attend a Hapa Issues Forum meeting, and I did, but with reservations. What I found was that this once individual and anecdotal experience was made collective within the Hapa Issues Forum organization. No longer was being hapa an individual challenge, but one that was shared collectively—multiraciality was and is moving from being an individual isolated experience to one that is increasingly collectively organized, not only with Japanese American hapas, but also in coalition with multiracial people of many different heritages. This chapter was born out of one such group, the Multiracial Alternatives Project, which sparked an intellectual dialogue about the mixed race-experience in comparative perspective. &

Rebecca Chiyoko King

When I was in high school, my older sister, Ellen, was very active in the black campus community at Brown University. In her senior year, she was elected president of the Organization of United African Peoples, the black student union. I remember celebrating the news with Ellen and my mother in the kitchen one afternoon. Mom congratulated Ellen with a big hug and kiss and offered this (with a wry smile), "Just don't tell anyone you're only one quarter black." At this we all burst into laughter—laughter that expressed as much relief as it did humor. Mom had spoken the "secret," pointing out an irony that we had all been thinking but did not immediately articulate—that a woman who was of only partial African descent could be a leader in the community. But why was this ironic? We were all aware of a long history of mulatto leadership and participation in the African American community. But we were also aware that in our times, being multiracial in the African American political community was a reality to be tolerated and not something to be celebrated or even talked about, except in the limited context of slavery and rape. We understood that to articulate an identity as multiracial left us vulnerable to accusations of divided allegiances and threatened our belonging in a community that we regarded as our psychological home. We also knew that although people may be tolerant of a biracial leader, being only one-fourth black might be less tolerable.

Perhaps even more ironic for my sister and I was that our mother's comment forced us to acknowledge for the first time that although we identified ourselves as black, or if pushed further, biracial, our heritage was more complex than that. Yet we did not have a frame of reference for articulating multiraciality with that level of specificity.

As an adult, I still call the black community my "home," but if I am to participate in the community, it must be a place where I can bring my mother into that community's conversation, where I can voice my experience in its totality. I have become interested in the ways other mixed-race African Americans are attempting to do likewise. ♪

Kimberly McClain DaCosta

According to Omi and Winant (1986), racial formation is, "the process by which social, economic, and political forces determine the content and importance of racial categories, and by which they are in turn shaped by racial meanings" (p. 68). This chapter analyzes the mixed-race experience in comparative perspective by extending Omi and Winant's theory of racial formation and applying it to case studies of the participation of mixed-race people, both individually and collectively, in the African American and Japanese American communities.

#### FOUR FACES OF RACE

Most people realize that race is socially constructed, which means that although they know that race is not "real" in a biological sense, they cannot just refuse to use race as an analytical category, cannot simply individually change what they want race to mean, nor can they ignore that race has very real consequences.

But what exactly does it mean to say that race is a "socially constructed" concept? There seem to be four levels at which race is socially constructed; we call these the four "faces" of racial formation. For the first face of race, we borrow from the sociology of gender. Like gender, race is something that one "does" (West & Zimmerman, 1991). It is something that you actively practice in your everyday life. But "doing race" happens on two distinct levels, within individuals and between individuals. George Herbert Mead (1934) did not theorize explicitly

about race, but his theory of the *self* as the "ability to take oneself as an object" (p. 47) and *thinking* as "the internalized conversation of the individual with himself via significant symbols and gestures" (p. 47) lays the groundwork for thinking about race as an identity within an individual. Although this identity process happens within individuals, it remains social in nature because it is the internalization of the dispositions of the "generalized *other*" (society) that creates the ability to take oneself as an object. For race theory, this means that people can be self-reflexive about what race they identify themselves to be, but that they cannot choose without restrictions and awareness of them. For example, mixed-race Japanese Americans could identify themselves as such, but the current racial framework constrains this identification. Most mixed race people know this and think of themselves in social life not as they are but as the current racial frameworks will allow them to be.

One example of this process can be seen in the language used to describe "mixed" people. By using the term mixed, multiracial people are using the discursive resources that are available to them within the existing definition of race. This term may seem contradictory because it seems to reify racial categories in the process of desiring to deconstruct them. However, if mixed-race people are seen as "thinking" in a Meadian sense, they are using the racial frameworks that exist to take themselves as objects and form a racial identity. In this way, their racial "selves" are constructed.

The second face of race as a social construct focuses more explicitly on presentation of the racial self in interaction with other individuals. Erving Goffman put forth the idea that the self is not a possession of the actor, but rather the product of the dramatic interaction between the actor and the audience (see Goffman, 1959; Lyman & Douglass, 1973). Racial identity in this sense becomes "impression management." Lyman and Douglass wrote: "From the ethnic actor's perspective, ethnicity is both a mental state and a potential ploy in any encounter, but it will be neither if it cannot be invoked or activated" (p. 349). Thus mixed-race African Americans can think they are black racially and can use this to strategize to get what they want, but this identity may be limited if others do not "legitimate" or "authenticate" their racial identity. In this sense, racially mixed people are never fully authenticated because they do not see themselves as fitting into the existing racial order nor are they recognized as such by others. The classic example of this is the mixed-

race encounter. This is the social situation where someone asks a mixed-race person, "What are you?" What they are really asking is what racial category do you see yourself in and how does that fit with what I see you as. In this sense, race is created not only within individuals but also between individuals in interaction with one another (Williams, Chapter 12, this volume).

The third face of race as a social construct is that race is interactively created not only by individuals but also by groups. Race in this sense is "done" collectively. Blumer and Duster (1980) argued that racial groups create images of their own group and others via complex interaction and communication among the group's members. The groups interpret their "runs of experiences," which leads to a formation of "judgments and images" of their own group and others (p. 222). For example, Asian Americans have come together as a racial group and have formed definitions of what it means to be "Asian American," as well as what it means not to be Asian American. In this sense, they are drawing the "color line" and creating boundaries between racial groups. This is why erasing and redrawing color lines is so difficult, because on both sides of the line, people have a vested interest in keeping the lines right where they are.

This brings up the fourth face of race as a social construct. These racial groups are relational and hierarchical. Race as relational means that there are racial categories that are mutually exclusive; that is, people can belong to one and only one category. These categories are positioned in systematic connection with one another and thus only have meaning in relation to each other (Barrett, 1987, as described in Glenn, 1992). In addition, power is not equally distributed among these racial groups; they are arranged hierarchically. For example, Shinagawa and Pang (1988) argued that intermarriage can be "hiergamy" in that people of color can become socially mobile by "marrying up and out" (p. 112). If Japanese Americans marry whites (and more so if the male is white), they are not only marrying out of their racial group but also marrying "up" into a "white" racial group. The assumption made here is that there is a racial hierarchy with people of color at the bottom and whites on top.

These four faces of race as a social construct enable racial formation to take place as a process. This chapter uses existing theories to frame a new theoretical technique. It takes Omi and Winant's (1986) racial forma-

tion theory but adds to it a symbolic interactionist twist that tries to keep in mind how social structures can and do constrain social action. But how then does this play out in reality?

### HAPA ISSUES FORUM: RACE IN ACTION

Our starting point to understand this complex social process is the Hapa Issues Forum (HIF). This is a student/community group of multiracial Japanese Americans that was formed to address the changing demographics of the Japanese American community, primarily the high out-marriage rate and the presence of many multiracial children (Shinagawa, 1994). The actions of HIF and the reactions of the larger Japanese American community are a microcosm of the process of redefining race.

The "traditional" Japanese American community has responded to their changing demographics in three ways. Some have been quick to sound the alarm that these trends are a threat to the Japanese American community, declaring, "the Japanese American community . . . thriving today 'will be no more in 2050' in the face of rising intermarriage" (quoted in Hirabayashi, 1993, p. B-15). Others feel that this is not a cause for alarm, but instead the natural path for Japanese Americans who have "made it" and are socially mobile in today's society. Others have taken a more dynamic stance regarding the change and have assembled panels and workshops to "discuss" what this means for the Japanese American community (Honda, 1993).

In turn, hapas who wish to define themselves in relation to the Japanese American community also have three responses to changing demographics. In the first response, some simply do not see themselves as Japanese American at all. These people are not represented in HIF because they do not see the need for the group and do not participate. The second response is to branch off and try to have a mixed-race community, that is, to join with other "mixed" people. This has not happened explicitly with the HIF. For example, forum members support the movement to put a mixed-race category on the U.S. Census (Fernández, Chapter 2, this volume) and on public school entrance forms (Graham, Chapter 3, this volume), but they do not take this as

one of the organization's primary goals. The third is the HIF response, which is to try to join/transform the Japanese American community as it exists today to make it more inclusive.

But how is the HIF attempting to redefine Japanese America? Members are actively challenging and reconstructing race via the four faces of race. First, members of HIF "live" their political agenda every day. Underlying participation in the organization is a common bond of wanting to "resist" and "redo" racial categories. In this sense, there is a high level of agreement among members that they have experienced the "dissemblance" in having to "choose" one race or the other, on college entrance forms and so on. They actively identify themselves as hapa in their everyday life. Via an internal process, members have taken the existing racial frameworks and internalized them to such an extent that they realize they are standing between racial categories as they exist now but that they have the "right" to individually assert their identities as mixed people.

With the second face, forum members try to encourage people who interact with them one on one to see them as they are: hapa. One of the co-founders put it this way:

I am applying to law school and I checked "other" and I walked my application over . . . and handed it in and the guy at the desk asks, "Why'd you check *other*?" and I said, "Well, you know I am not this and I am not that." He said, "it's not going to help you any and they are just going to lump you into this big mass." So . . . I just put Japanese and a little asterisk and put hapa.

In this instance, he "thought" (had an internalized conversation with himself and took into consideration what he wanted to express using existing racial categories) and put *other*. He then has an interaction with another individual who urges him to put something else (not *other*) because it has no legitimacy. He then strategizes that he can get what he wants (admission to law school) by putting Japanese American, but even so, he wants to assert his own identity and writes in hapa-Japanese American and Caucasian; his "true self identity" is presented. *The issue is not that mixed-race people are trying to "get something," but instead that there is flexibility within impression management.*

With the third face, HIF is a unique organization and the first of its kind by and for mixed-race Japanese Americans. It is collectively involved in



creating an image of hapas primarily in relation to the traditional Japanese American community. In this sense, HIF is unlike other mixed-race groups (e.g., Multicultural Interracial Student Coalition or MISC, on the University of California, Berkeley, campus) in that it forms its identity as a group in direct relation to the Japanese American community.

Therefore, members recognize the fourth face of race as a social construct too. The HIF pamphlet reads,

We seek to insure that upon arrival at the Twenty-First century, hapas will play a pivotal role in a revitalized Japanese American community. . . . [We want the Japanese American community to] focus on the future by accepting the reality that hapas are becoming a significant part of the community and to insure that representation and recognition is forthcoming. (Unpublished material)

Also, there is this statement from the newsletter, in an article entitled, "Race and Ethnicity: Hapas and the Japanese American Community": "The Japanese American community must learn to acknowledge that hapas are part of the community, and hapa definitions of identity and experiences of race form an integral part of the Japanese American experience."

HIF makes it explicitly clear that the organization believes it has a right to represent hapas in relation to the Japanese American community. The forum argues, using its increasing numbers as a criterion for being heard, that this is a way to "save" the Japanese American community from "extinction." HIF markets its members as "new blood" to invigorate the existing Japanese American community and argues that they will ensure that the historical experiences, culture, and traditions of Japanese Americans get passed on to future generations.

What is HIF actually doing, then, to redefine what it means to be Japanese American? First, the organization exists; it developed as individuals came together around commonalities in their experiences with the existing racial order, the traditional Japanese American community, and the larger society. Members are actively working to increase understanding about hapas, both within the traditional Japanese American community and society at large via the newsletter *What's Hapa'ning?* as well as meetings and participation in Japanese American "things," such as the Cherry Blossom Festival. In addition, HIF had a conference in March 1994 entitled, "What Does the Future Hold for Japanese Americans?" The purpose of this conference was to bring people from the



Japanese American and larger communities to the UC Berkeley campus to "open a meaningful and lasting dialogue about the role hapas will play in the Japanese American community" (from HIF program).

It is clear that HIF sees itself primarily in relation to the Japanese American community, but members are also acutely aware that they can "change" the contours of that community. They speak of changing the "rules" within the traditional Japanese American community, such as "having so many players with Japanese last names" on a team in the Japanese American youth basketball league and/or stipulating that the Cherry Blossom Queen must be "so much" Japanese.

In all of the preceding examples, it is clear that HIF seeks to challenge the existing definition of Japanese American, but more than that, members are openly contesting not only racial boundaries but also the meaning of race itself. They stand in defiance of racial frameworks now embedded in state and other social institutions. They take the census and refuse to check a box or fill in their parts; just leaving the ethnic question blank asserts their "right" to identify and be identified as hapa (many do not like the *other* option because they feel it means "nothing"). In this sense, HIF is changing not only what makes one a member of the Japanese American community, but also changing the nature of membership as well. In other words, in this new definition of community, it is perfectly legitimate for them to have multiple allegiances to multiple communities. The changing face of Japanese America is a double process. The actual physical face of the average Japanese American will be mixed, and the face of the community that is Japanese America will also change. HIF is an important agent in the change of racial meanings within the Japanese American community. Members have used individual experiences to form a group identity that collectively puts pressure on the existing racial frameworks to change.

But why does HIF have the power to be heard? First of all, the Japanese American community traditionally has been one of the largest within the Asian American community. At present, with low immigration (4,000 a year in the 1980s), high out-marriage (as high as 50% by some counts), and low birthrates, Japanese Americans are declining in numbers under present criteria for defining "Japaneseness" (O'Hare & Felt, 1991). Therefore, part of the power of HIF comes from a community that is willing to listen to its mixed-race members. In other words, some

traditional Japanese Americans welcome the participation of hapas as a way to increase their numbers and political pull. Second, the size of the Japanese American population as a whole is small compared to the general population, so instead of seeing its population die out, many want to see hapas incorporated and the definition of Japanese American expanded so that the label will continue to exist in a larger social context. This means that hapas are not being rejected by the community, because the community cannot afford it. If HIF is successful, the Japanese American community may have to change its face to "save face."

### THE AFRICAN AMERICAN EXAMPLE

It is impossible to understand the contemporary role of mixed-race African Americans in the black community without first understanding the history of racial mixture within that community. Unlike the Japanese American community, the African American community has long included multiracial individuals. Since the first African men and women were brought to this continent, they have mixed with both Native Americans and whites (Wilson, 1992). From the colonial period to the Civil War, although some interracial unions involved free individuals, the majority of interracial contact occurred within the context of slavery. The relationship of the children of these unions, known as mulattoes, to the black community varied by region. In the upper South, mulattoes tended to be of parents who were both servants and were not considered as occupying a social position higher than that of blacks. In the lower South, mulattoes tended to be the children of wealthy planters, and many of them were given their freedom, along with access to education and other social goods. They developed into an elite class, tending to associate with and marry each other or whites. They are described as being the forerunners of the black elite (Degler, 1971; Williamson, 1984). Some mulattoes were born to free individuals, thus, they were also free and able to set up mulatto communities outside of the African American community. The majority of mulattoes, however, were born to slaves and given the legal status of slave. Under such a system, mixed-race people shared the same legal, if not social, status of the majority of blacks (Williamson, 1984).

The slave system provided the institutional apparatus to keep the races socially separate—not only blacks from whites, but mixed-race people from whites—in an effort to maintain white control over resources (Davis, 1991). The abolition of slavery dismantled that apparatus, but in its place came legal standards, such as the one-drop rule, that served the same purpose. The one-drop rule, a legal standard that designated people with any black ancestry as black, effectively blocked access to the white category, while taking away a mixed-race or mulatto category. The legacy of the one-drop rule is that most people who today identify as African American have some non-African ancestry. Jack D. Forbes estimates that 99% of the African American population has some degree of mixture (quoted in Wilson, 1992). In effect, to be African American means being racially mixed.

The high degree of racial mixture within the African American population makes it necessary to distinguish between two understandings of the term *mixed-race African American*. The first understanding refers to being of mixed racial ancestry, however remote to the individual. One can be of mixed racial ancestry and have parents who identified and were identified as African American, as is the case with most African Americans. The second understanding refers to being “immediately” mixed, that is, of an African American parent and a nonblack parent. Individuals of the former category are, by their own definition if not in popular understanding, African American. Their multiracial ancestry is not a unique experience within the African American community.

For our purposes, the term *mixed-race African American* refers to the second understanding. The experience of today’s immediately mixed African Americans differs in important ways from that of African Americans of multiracial heritage. The majority of today’s immediately mixed African Americans have been born in the post Civil Rights Era, part of a biracial baby boom beginning in the late 1960s, in a social and political climate characterized by relatively more tolerance for cultural diversity than in previous generations. This is the first generation of mixed-race African Americans to grow up in a nation where it was legal in all 50 states to marry interracially. As such, many mixed-race people have been raised in intact families, with access to and personal knowledge of all sides of their cultural heritage. For those who were not raised in intact families, often the nonblack parent has raised the children, and

as such, these mixed-race people may feel little connection to the black community.

Although the biracial baby boom emerged in the context of an integrationist cultural attitude, at the same time a counter-ideology of black cultural nationalism put forth new standards of what it meant to be black and new criteria for authenticity. Black cultural nationalism, dedicated to finding unity in shared blackness, simultaneously subordinated difference within the community and, as a result, silenced expression of issues such as sexism and multiraciality. Immediately mixed African Americans, by virtue of having access to other cultural groups, were stereotyped as sell-outs (Cleaver, 1968/1992; Haley, 1964; Spickard, 1989). Claims of an authentic "blackness," in which one's African lineage predominated over all others, reinforced the logic of the one-drop rule: in order to maintain membership in the black community, one must identify as black *only*. According to such logic, which persists today, claiming a mixed identity is saying that one does not want to be black. In effect, the African American community has appropriated the one-drop rule; although it may have once served as a source of strength to form a community by emphasizing unity in shared blackness, this may become a tool of oppression for today's immediately mixed.

The unique demographic, political, and social experience of immediately mixed African Americans has direct implications for how they interact with the African American community to change the face of race. Because so many immediately mixed African Americans have access to all their communities, their experience runs counter to old ways of thinking about what it means to be African American. It is no longer possible to assume affiliation with the black community simply because one appears to be of African ancestry. Similarly, appearance is not as reliable an indicator of social standing as once believed. Immediately mixed individuals are not necessarily of the black elite; therefore light skin is a less strong predictor of class privilege. The legal and social climate from which the one-drop rule arose has changed considerably, thus calling into question its usefulness for negotiating race today.

The relatively tolerant history of multiraciality within the African American community makes the focus of efforts of mixed-race African Americans to dialogue with the African American community somewhat ill-defined. The absence of a group designed to dialogue primarily

with the African American community is telling of the nature of the debate. HIF seeks inclusion in the Japanese American community and was organized specifically to dialogue with that community. Mixed-race African Americans do not need the rhetoric of inclusion and thus have not organized to dialogue directly with the African American community.

For some mixed-race African Americans, inclusion has been forced upon them or is conditional upon acceptance of a black-only identity or a prioritizing of identities. As such, groups of mixed-race African Americans have coalesced around the need to convey members' experiences as both/all (i.e., black *and* white) rather than either/or (black *or* white). It is only in this historical period that talk about claiming multiple racial identities is even an option. Although this is not the first historical period in which the ascription of an identity as African American has been challenged (passing, triracial isolates), mixed-race African Americans are challenging what such an identity means in unique ways. *The task for mixed-race African Americans in redefining race is to broaden prevailing notions of what it means to be African American, so that identifying with one's nonblack heritage does not preclude identification with one's black heritage.* The task is not to be recognized as a separate and distinct group, but to be recognized as both/all, with access to all sides of one's heritage. This is quite different from the efforts of "triracial isolates"—mixed-race European, African, and Native people—who seek to be recognized as culturally distinct kin groups or tribes (Blu, 1980; Greenbaum, 1991). They do not want to be a part of the African American community; mixed-race African Americans do. As such, mixed-race African Americans assert a multiracial identity, not to reflect internalized racism but to strive for a sense of wholeness.

Another contributing factor to the lack of direct dialogue between mixed-race African Americans and the African American community is that the community itself is diffused geographically. The Japanese American community is geographically concentrated on the West Coast, thus making it easy to locate and target participants for dialogue. The African American community is dispersed, and, more important perhaps, feels no demographic imperative to seek out mixed-race African Americans to participate in its political community or to act as culture bearers for the next generation. (According to the U.S. Census, 7.3% of all African American marriages in 1992 were interracial.) That lack of

urgency may affect the ability of mixed-race African Americans to be heard.

The different histories of the Japanese American and African American communities shape the nature of group participation of hapas and mixed-race African Americans. Hapas, rejected by the Japanese American community, form groups focused on getting that community to include them. Mixed-race African Americans, included in the common understandings of blackness but with an accompanying silencing of other parts of their heritage, form groups focused on validating that experience. Mixed-race African Americans who are involved in mixed-race group activity tend to be involved in "umbrella" groups, that is, groups whose membership encompasses people of a variety of different heritages, such as UC Berkeley's MISC or Harvard's Prism. By definition, these groups are not focused on dialogue with only one group (i.e., the African American or Japanese American community). Because there has been little room to articulate an identity as mixed within the African American community, mixed-race African Americans have coalesced outside that community in coalition with other multiracial people in order to create a space in which to affirm their experiences. The racial eclecticism of these groups makes their goals more amorphous. Groups such as MISC provide social support for their members and describe the "mixed" experience to the general community, rather than to a particular racial/ethnic community. Although groups exclusively for mixed-race African Americans may exist, they are the exception rather than the rule. As such, the analysis of the re-creation of race in the African American community is not as neat as the Japanese American example. Rather than being able to focus on one group (like HIF, specifically formed for the purposes of engaging the wider Japanese American community), we must focus on mixed-race African Americans involved in a variety of mixed-race groups.

**Mixed-Race African Americans:  
Doing the Four Faces of Race**

On the first face of race, mixed-race African Americans who were interviewed were well aware of the existing racial framework. When asked their "race," each offered a response that used the categories of



the existing racial framework in novel ways. When asked his racial/ethnic identity, a member of MISC at UC Berkeley said,

Given [my involvement in] a mixed-race group, as of now I'm mixed. I don't go much further than that. . . . I could say I'm half-black and half-white but that, I believe, is misleading because it's black but it's not black American, [which is] what people think of.

Suzanne, of European and African descent, described herself as "multiethnic":

Now I'm also starting to say African American and European American because people don't understand "multiethnic." They want to know color, they want to know why I look the way I look.

Turning to the second face of race, Tarik, like the *hapas* in HIF, claims a multiracial identity. His household was picked by a company gathering television and radio ratings data. When the representative asked his race, he answered "mixed." Unsure of what that meant, the representative called back for clarification. Although Tarik refused to choose a racial classification, he did tell her he was Haitian and Iranian and proceeded to educate her on what being mixed-race meant.

This instance reflects a dialectic between an identification by others and Tarik's self-identification. Aware that his identification as mixed-race is confusing, Tarik specified his ethnic ancestry in terms with which the representative was more familiar, all the while maintaining a self-identification as multiracial. Although Tarik realized that because he revealed his Haitian ancestry, the representative will probably list him as black, by presenting and actively seeking to educate on mixedness, he was able to challenge the prevailing notion of race as a mutually exclusive proposition.

On the third face of race, the focus of HIF is to gain entry into the Japanese American community, and the goal of MISC is to offer a place for mixed-race people to meet, share experiences, and educate the wider society. Even though the groups may have different goals, their members, through their interactions with each other, discover and create a shared sense of "we" (a mixed-race group identity). A member of MISC argued that there is a mixed-race identity and likened it to the collective identity of other groups of color:



[W]hat connection can I have with someone who's half-Asian? It's the same connection I feel that blacks have. Because blacks, depending on where you live, are very different in their upbringing. A Los Angeles African American and an Alabama one and a New York [one], I mean they have a connection but is their culture really the same? Are they eating the same stuff? I would argue no. But people talk about a "black culture." I think people could talk about a "mixed-race" culture. Because a lot of what black culture is has to do with being black, has to do with other people's perceptions of you and how you have to deal with them and how you have to fight that off. Well, that's the same thing I see for mixed-race people. Our connection if anything is having to deal with people's intolerance and having to deal with questions and stares and weird experiences. Just like for a black American.

Gary, a member of HIF, agreed:

I think [a mixed-race group identity] exists already. I mean people have only just now become aware of it. I mean like you [a person of African American and Irish ancestry] and I can talk about similar experiences and we're from different cultural backgrounds.

Gary believes there is something unique to the experience of being mixed-race that is common among mixed-race people regardless of heritage, yet he wonders whether this is more characteristic of "activists" as opposed to those who are not.

I think that especially people who are real active in it, I mean there's this bond beyond just [being mixed-race]. I mean, yeah, we're both mixed-race and stuff, but even more than that, we're both active in working on it. So in that respect it's easy in that there already is that mixed-race culture I guess among activists.

For Gary, group activity involving multiracial issues creates and strengthens a consciousness of a mixed-race collective identity that is not dependent on shared ethnic ancestry. Such a notion underscores the idea that identities are socially constructed.

On the fourth face of race, in addition to being involved in umbrella groups with amorphous goals, mixed-race African Americans are in dialogue with the African American community. The educational efforts of groups such as MISC serve as both a forum for multiracial people and a dialogue with monoracial groups. A central objective of those

efforts is to gain recognition for an identity as both/all rather than either/or. The assertion of such an identity at once recognizes and challenges the relational nature of American racial categories through its rejection of mutually exclusive membership rules—rules that have been especially salient in the African American community.

Suzanne is involved in a group focused on getting a multiracial classification on state and federal forms. Multiracial classification represents a very tangible challenge to the racial binary that ignores multiraciality in the African American community. Although Suzanne is sensitive to the perceived threat that a multiracial classification poses to the African American community—and well-aware of the hierarchical nature of racial categorizations—she believes binary thinking must be challenged:

I think most of us are very willing to talk about it in our own voices, to the point of tears, to say now look, I am not trying to do this to take advantage of something. [I understand that] the one-drop rule has operated as a source of strength in the African American community. What needs to be talked about now is how the one-drop rule may be oppressive. We have to understand that opening up borders does not mean that people will be fleeing some sort of identity in order to hold onto another one. There are many of us [who] want to work in all of our communities, but we also need to understand how those minority group identities and the philosophies behind them may be very oppressive.

## CONCLUSION

The four faces of race theory puts forth a new paradigm within the existing theoretical literature on race, allowing for a more dynamic model of racial formation. The above examples illustrate how multiracial people operate within existing paradigms while at the same time create new possibilities for moving beyond current understandings of race. We have attempted to show how meanings of race are socially created through interaction between and within individuals and groups.

To say that race is relational is to say that race gets its meaning in relation to other groups. It is the interaction of racial groups (in this case, mixed-race and monoracial) that negotiates those racial meanings and, in turn, affects all other faces of race. This is a potentially radical change

in the conceptualization of race and its meaning, not only for multiracial groups, but for the monoracial groups with which they interact: Japanese American, African American, and European American. In redefining race, the task for hapas and mixed-race African Americans is to broaden prevailing notions of Japaneseness and blackness, such that identifying with one side of one's heritage does not preclude identifying with the other. The task is not to be recognized as a separate and distinct group, but to be recognized as both/all, with access to all sides of one's heritage.

Although this case study has studied one small slice of a very complex process, it does shed some theoretical light on how race is remade not only individually, but collectively as well. We have explored this process in two communities—one in which multiraciality has only recently but quite rapidly become an issue, the other in which multiraciality has been a constant reality. Despite these differences, the social actions of hapas and mixed-race African Americans are oriented in similar ways: toward a monoracially defined community with an emphasis on expanding notions of the requirements for membership in that community. We argue that the basis for this similarity is the comparable positions of marginality that hapas and mixed-race African Americans occupy within the current racial framework. By being neither black, Japanese, nor white but in-between, multiracial people experience the social constructedness of race in a way that allows them to see the possibilities of shifting from being "between" to being "all."