

Multiraciality Reigns Supreme?: Mixed-Race Japanese Americans and the Cherry Blossom Queen Pageant

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The notes of the koto echo through the hall and I am mesmerized by the vision on stage. Beautiful Japanese women dressed in kimono who seem to glide across the stage as if it were ice, their arms outstretched as if to begin a hug so that their ornate sleeves flap slightly in the breeze. But then I squint to get a closer look, and I suddenly can hear the synthesized drum beat accompanying the plaintive sounds of the koto and can see that not all of the faces look completely Japanese. . . .

Since 1968, a northern California pageant has chosen a queen to reign over the Cherry Blossom Festival held each April in San Francisco's Japantown. The queen has come to symbolize northern California's Japanese American community in many ways. However, in the past five years half of the candidates, and two of the queens, have not been racially 100 percent Japanese. The increased participation of mixed-race Japanese Americans has an effect on both the mixed-race and the mono-racial participants in the Queen Pageant as well as the community at large. This article examines how mixed-race Japanese American women define themselves in what has traditionally been a monoracial setting. In the context of the pageant, what does it mean to be Japanese American? How is that defined and how is that definition changing due to the increased participation of mixed-race Japanese Americans?

In addition, this article extends racial identity theory by developing a processual model of how race comes to be imbued with meaning and how that meaning changes over time. Thus, this article not only

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examines how a certain community is dealing with a demographic shift and redrawing its borders, but also provides a theory showing how individuals become agentic and change the meaning of race.¹

According to Omi and Winant, 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." This theory defines race as

"an unstable and decentered complex of social meanings constantly being transformed by political struggle" and that this contestation takes place, "at the level of personal relationships (indeed it arises within individuals whose very *identities and racial beliefs are necessarily contradictory*); it exists in objective relationships such as work or political activity; and it occurs in cultural representation."²

But how do racial formations come about and how do they change over time? In this instance, how does Japanese-ness change? There seem to be four levels at which race is socially constructed—I call these the four levels of racial formation. For the first level, I borrow from ethnomethodology the idea that race, like gender, is something that one "does."³ 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 did not theorize explicitly about race, but his theory of the self as the "ability to take oneself as an object" and thinking as "the internalized conversation of the individual with himself via significant symbols and gestures" lays the groundwork for thinking about race as an identity within an individual.⁴ 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 individuals can be self-reflexive about what race they identify themselves to be, but that they cannot choose without restriction. For example, mixed-race people could identify themselves as such (i.e., both white and black), but the current racial frameworks constrain 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.

The second level of racial formation focuses more explicitly on the presentation of "self" in interaction with other individuals. Erving Goffman put forth the idea that the self is not a possession of the actor, but the product of the dramatic interaction between the actor and the audience. Racial identity in this sense becomes situational, and impressions need to be managed from differently from context to con-

text."⁵ Lyman writes, "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."⁶ Thus, a mixed-race Japanese American can think she is Japanese racially and can use this to strategize to get what she wants, but this will be limited if others do not "legitimate" or "authenticate" her identity. In this sense, mixed-race people are never fully authenticated because they don't see themselves as fitting into the existing racial order, nor are they recognized as such by others. They may then use "markers" or "cues" such as language, behavior, or dress as a way to convince people of their racial/ethnic authenticity.

The third level of racial formation is that race is interactively created not only by individuals but also by groups. Race in this sense is "done" collectively. Blumer and Duster argue that racial groups create images of their own group and others via complex interaction and communication amongst the group's members. They interpret their "runs of experiences" which leads to a formation of "judgements and images" of their own group and others."⁷ Here the very presence of mixed-race people, who actively identify as mixed, and their interactions with monoracials, redefine through interaction what it means to be Japanese American not only individually, but collectively.

There is a fourth level of racial formation which is only alluded to in this article. This level asserts that racial/ethnic groups are "relational" and "hierarchical." Race as "relational" means that there are racial categories that are mutually exclusive, i.e., you can belong to one and only one of the categories, "that are positioned, and therefore, gain meaning, in relation to each other."⁸ This means that the experiences of people in the different racial groups are "not just different, but connected in systematic ways."⁹ In addition, power is not equally distributed amongst these racial groups and, therefore, they are arranged hierarchically.

The process of redefining race is happening then at three levels. First, mixed-race people must manage the clash between their own perceptions of themselves and the perceptions others have of them. Second, this clash leads mixed-race people to "compensate" in order to gain authentication by others. Finally, their continued assertion of their right to be part of a group forces the wider community to collectively redefine what it means to be a member of that group.

Background History of the Cherry Blossom Festival and Pageant

I examined this renegotiation of racial meanings with three complementary methods: archival research, ethnographic research done from

1995 to 1996 and in-depth interviews conducted in the same time period with candidates, committee members, and past participants of the Cherry Blossom Queen Pageant.

The Queen Pageant began along with the Cherry Blossom Festival in 1968. As redevelopment in Nihonmachi (Japantown) finished, and the Japan Center (shopping center), and peace plaza (pagoda and plaza) were completed, the festival was created to bring people into Japantown. The original organizers saw this as a way to increase business as well as a way to share Japanese culture, not only with other Japanese Americans but the larger society as well. It was decided that a queen should be chosen to reign over the parade/festivities as well to make visits to other cities representing the Japanese American community of northern California. The queen became a focal center of the festival. She drew raffle tickets, walked through Japantown in kimono, and greeted important visitors from Japan. Los Angeles had long had the Nisei Week Queen to represent them since the beginning of Nisei Week in 1935, and San Francisco's Cherry Blossom Festival planners thought it a good idea to have their queen as a symbol of this community.

From the start then, the Cherry Blossom Festival had a dual purpose. It was a chance for Japanese Americans to come together, celebrate and learn about their culture. At the same time it was a way to include non-Japanese people and enable them to learn about Japanese culture and spend money in Japantown.

Even with this dual purpose in mind, today the participation of non-Japanese in the Cherry Blossom Festival is much lower than in other ethnic festivals in San Francisco, such as the Chinese New Year parade. Likewise, the sponsorship and organizing of the Cherry Blossom Festival remains mostly Japanese. Because of this fact, the Cherry Blossom Festival is touted by some as being the "most ethnically pure" festival in San Francisco.

Like much of the Cherry Blossom Festival, the Queen Pageant is 99.9 percent volunteer work. No one is paid for their labor and all of the committee members and candidates contribute many hours during the pageant season. The "candidates" come forward voluntarily, preferably sponsored by a Japanese American organization or business, or they are matched with willing sponsors.¹⁰ Recently, both the recruitment of the candidates and the sponsors have proven difficult. Perhaps economic recession combined with the rise of feminism have made it more difficult. Women who wish to be candidates fill out the application, and are interviewed by the committee to make sure that they meet all of the criteria. None of the multiethnic women that I spoke with had been asked to "prove" their Japanese American-ness, but some

committee members indicated that it is common practice in other cities for the candidates to be required to submit their birth certificate as proof (it must indicate father's and mother's race).¹¹ In the Cherry Blossom Queen Pageant, the rules also indicate that you must: be between the ages of eighteen to twenty-five, be single and have not been previously married or have had any children, be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, have lived in northern California for at least one year, have graduated from high school by June 1995, and be actively involved in a community organization. Most candidates who apply are eligible and they are easily approved by the committee in the initial interview.

The candidates have a busy schedule which includes weekly rehearsals starting in February and running through the middle of April. They are judged on talent, kimono, speech, interview with judges, evening gown and a spontaneous question and answer sessions. In many ways, the pageant emphasizes the candidates' ability to speak in public and respond spontaneously to questions. The most heavily weighted part of the judging is the interview and the question and answer section. The talent and evening gown competitions are worth much less of the total score.

From its beginning, the pageant has also had racialized rules about who can and who cannot participate. They have always had a rule that states that one must, "have at least one natural parent of 100 percent Japanese ancestry."

By looking at the implications of this blood quantum rule, I am using the Queen Pageant to examine demographic changes in the Japanese American community. With an aging population, low immigration, and high outmarriage rate, mixed-race Japanese Americans are affecting what it means to be Japanese American.¹² They are, by their very presence, forcing a dialogue about broadening the definition of what it means to be Japanese American. The Queen Pageant is a particularly good case for looking at this process because its explicit goal is to select a symbolic representative of the Japanese American community. As an ambassador of goodwill, the queen travels to Los Angeles, Seattle, Hawaii and Brazil to represent Japanese Americans in northern California. Therefore, the issue of what a Japanese American woman should be is in the minds of everyone involved in the pageant. This contrasts with the Japanese American community center, basketball leagues and churches where there is a strong presence of mixed-race Japanese Americans, and yet there is no such open dialogue about who is Japanese American and why. While the pageant may not be any more important than any other arena for defining Japanese American-ness, it is a particularly good space to study the process as it provides a "magnified moment" of the creation of racial meanings.¹³

The presence of multiracial participants in the pageant prompts a discussion of the relationship between blood and culture. Throughout the pageant there is a heightened awareness of "Japanese-ness," and people are uncharacteristically willing to talk about someone not "acting" Japanese or not "having Japanese values." All of the participants discussed how the community is changing and the extent to which each candidate is considered Japanese. Many mixed-race candidates felt they might be questioned about how "Japanese" they really were. In addition, due to the high structural assimilation of Japanese Americans into mainstream society—i.e., living in white suburban neighborhoods, having professional jobs etc., many monoracial Japanese Americans involved in the pageant also expressed the desire to learn more about their culture since they felt they didn't know much about it and didn't "feel very Japanese."

The Cherry Blossom Queen Pageant provided an arena in which the terms of "Japanese American-ness" were being made and remade again in almost every situation. There were, of course, many conflicting and uncertain definitions about who should be queen and how "Japanesese" she should really be. This debate about the criteria (both "real" and "assumed") for judging and the characteristics of the queen allowed me to tap into the ideas about what it means today to be Japanese American.

Interviews

The first thing that is readily apparent in talking with the mixed-race participants is their feeling of "splitness." They feel that their inside (how they feel culturally) and their outside (how they appear to others) do not match. Both matter a great deal in the context of the pageant. The queen must "look Japanese," i.e., have black, shiny straight hair, a round face and almond shaped eyes, in order to be recognized by others as "Japanese" and able to represent the community. In addition, she must be culturally Japanese in order to know when to speak up, when to be quiet, when to give *omigae* (gifts), and how to walk in a kimono. It was the combination of "looking" Japanese and being culturally Japanese that made many of the mixed-race women feel insecure about their Japanese-ness.

Anne Marie Janoski, a half-white, half-Japanese candidate who got involved when a friend whose father works for one of the banks supporting the pageant encouraged her to do so, said,

I was always afraid that especially in the pageant that people would say that I am part Japanese and part white. Maybe she wouldn't be such a good representative.

She thinks that because she does not "look" Japanese, and others do not see her that way, that the judges and others would not think she was a good candidate. This seems especially important in the context of the pageant because the candidates are indeed gazed upon by others and recognized by them to represent the community. Likewise, Melissa Hagio, a half-white, half-Japanese candidate who learned about the pageant through her participation in a Japanese American church, said,

They really want it to be Japanese culture because that is what it is, . . . by reducing the amount of Japanese in the candidates, it kind of . . . it may take away from that.

Interactions with other people led Melissa to understand that most people think that culture is derived from race. She has internalized that idea and knows that people think that if one is half-Japanese, one is also less Japanese culturally as well. Mariko Camargo, a half-Columbian, half-Japanese candidate who came to the pageant through her participation in a Japanese American youth group, thought that others would think,

If you don't look Japanese how can you be a Japanese queen or a Japanese princess? Then you just become like . . . the cherry blossom loses its meaning, that it is associated with the Japanese springtime. It doesn't mean Japanese American anymore. . .

Clearly, from other people, both Japanese American and non-Japanese American, these girls are getting the message that culture is derived from race and that because they are not "full" Japanese they are expected to be less Japanese culturally and less likely to win the pageant, i.e., be chosen to represent the community. This perception of being "less" Japanese carries with it the tone of being less authentically Japanese, a washed out version of the real thing. They, to some extent, understand this and think of themselves as not likely to be chosen as the queen. They are convinced that they are perceived by others as less Japanese culturally even though they may be quite culturally Japanese.

The mixed-race candidates' perception of the race/culture relationship is that they are culturally very Japanese and should be seen that way, regardless of their racial appearance, by others. Other people's perceptions of the race/culture relationship is that to be culturally Japanese you must be racially Japanese as well. It is at this point where the two perceptions clash and create a dissonance for the mixed-race candidates. They try to manage this dissonance in different ways. Tammy Chen, a half-Chinese, half-Japanese, candidate defines Japanese American-ness this way,

You can tell if someone is Japanese American or not, not by how they look, but by the values they have. . .hard work, discipline, duties. . .it is a lot about saving face and doing the same for others. Tonya (a monoracial candidate) tries to intimidate people which I don't think is very Japanese at all.

It is clear from Tammy's example that she is breaking the link between race and culture. She does away with the importance of race altogether and asserts that, in fact, one can be culturally very Japanese and only be racially or ethnically half. Mariko goes further to say,

. . .Full-blooded Japanese should run rather than half-Japanese people. . .it is true, but half of the full girls wouldn't know anything about Japanese culture. I mean Sarah (a monoracial girl) has been doing cultural school but she doesn't really know that much. Completely white people who were raised in Japan and speak Japanese perfectly. . .I think they should get to run because they know more about what Japanese is. . .they feel it in their hearts.

Japanese-ness for Mariko, like Tammy, is not based on race. It does not matter how one looks, but instead how much one understands the culture, how one behaves, or what manners one has which give rise to how one feels inside culturally. For Mariko, language is a big determinant of a person's Japanese-ness. She feels that language is culture and that if one speaks Japanese, then one understands Japanese culture. Being mixed-race allows these candidates to see the places where race and culture conflict. They are acutely aware of the difference between what other people perceive their culture to be via their race and what they consider to be their true cultural background. They assert that culture and language are the true ways to tell if someone is Japanese, not race.

It is at the point where their culture and their racial appearance clash that the mixed-race candidates "feel" different or out of place. They meet these tensions in many social situations. Their not "looking" Japanese somehow comes to jeopardize their Japanese-ness. Melissa put it this way:

They were kind of struck by the fact in Japan that I was so tall. I think they thought I was less Japanese because I was so tall. It did detract from the fact that I was Japanese a little bit because I was so tall. Later, I was doing some modeling pictures and the photographer was saying you need to get some pictures that look less Japanese. You need to bring out your white side and I was like, "Ooooh! I look all exotic." I thought that was a neat thing.

By not looking very Japanese, Melissa feels that others think that she is not very Japanese culturally. She is glad then when the photographer says that she looks Japanese, thus implying that she is indeed Japanese. He validates that part of her identity, and she is happy that he authenticates that part of her identity.

The mixed-race women in this context respond to this idea that they are less Japanese in creative ways. They use many things to accentuate their Japanese-ness and present themselves as Japanese, such as language and names. Mariko compensates for her looks in the following way:

For me it is more important because I don't really look Japanese that I have to make up for it. Because I don't look (Japanese), I have to make up for it in ways that are visible or audible to people, so that the Japanese part of me goes out. For Chris, Irene, and Risa (monoracial candidates), they look Japanese so I think a lot of people really trust that if you look like something, then you will know more about it necessarily.

In this instance, Mariko knows that others do not see her as Japanese and perceives that as a deficiency, so that she must make up for it in this setting. She sets out to prove her Japanese-ness, her true self, in outward ways so that other people will see her Japanese-ness. She knows that most people will impose the idea that race equals culture upon her and she wants to exhibit her "true self," i.e., being Japanese, to them.

The perceptions of others, then, constrain the extent to which these mixed-race girls are able to see themselves as Japanese. They try to show their Japanese-ness in noticeable ways such as using Japanese names or speaking in Japanese. Anne Marie explains when and why she uses her Japanese middle name.

I don't usually use my middle name, only when I am trying to tell them what nationality I am. I will use my middle name then. Otherwise, like at the pageant, they would be like, Anne Marie Janoski. . . what is she doing here?

She uses her Japanese name to signal to others that while she may not look Japanese, she is Japanese culturally. She, like Melissa, is claiming herself as Japanese because culturally she indeed feels Japanese. Tammy Chen, who has a Chinese last name had this to say,

People would say to me, "What is your last name? Are you Japanese?" I would say, "I'm half. My mother is Japanese and my father is Chinese." I think maybe the people of the (Japanese American) commu-

nity take offense to that, that they have a representative that is not. . .that doesn't have a Japanese last name.

So even though Tammy is full Asian racially, she still is questioned about her Japanese-ness because she has a Chinese last name. Other people who question her about her name can't "see" the Japanese part of her identity, so she has to reassure them that she is in fact Japanese.

Another way that the candidates try to emphasize their Japanese-ness is by speaking Japanese on stage during the speech section of the pageant. Melissa was going to speak Japanese on stage and changed her mind while in the middle of her speech. Here is what she said about that decision:

I was going to speak in Japanese, but I cut the whole thing. I freaked. I wanted to because I didn't feel that I could convey the fact that I was. . .that I knew a lot about my culture, knew a lot about Japanese in general through my accomplishments, so I kind of wanted to show that and I thought that starting out in Japanese would be a good way to start.

Here Melissa thinks that language is proof of Japanese-ness and, therefore, using language is a way for her to convey to those around her that she is Japanese culturally. In this case, Melissa, who does not speak Japanese, had written out the words phonetically so she could pronounce them correctly. She is straining to use language in order to exhibit her Japanese-ness. Anne Marie did not attempt to do her speech in Japanese, but explained why others might do so.

They speak in Japanese to be considered more Japanese. There again you know it is always that you want to present yourself as more Japanese because the judges go for that. If you want to represent the Japanese American community, of course it helps to be more Japanese. They might do it even if they can't speak Japanese because they would want to be more. . .pretending they are Japanese that they can speak easily.

Being Japanese and being seen as Japanese by other people, in particular the judges, is perceived as important in the context of the pageant. People then work to present themselves as "more Japanese" because they think it will help their chances.

Ironically, one of the committee members told me:

It is not something that we as the committee put to the judges and say, "Well, you must judge them on their Japanese American-ness." It is something that is always there and not there. . .I don't know how it comes out."

So while Japanese American-ness is not explicitly being judged, is not written down as one of the criteria for the queen, clearly both committee members and candidates believe that it is important. This same committee member recognized that the mixed-race women may actually be "more Japanese" than the monoracial women because they have to "exhibit" their Japanese-ness. He speculates that:

They (the mixed-race candidates) are probably more Japanese than the pure Japanese are. . .when I say more Japanese I think of mannerisms, I think of the way people think, approach things in their thinking, maybe things like being involved in (Japanese) dancing, and the language.

He clearly separates race from culture here and claims that one can be very Japanese culturally and yet be half-Japanese. This separation of race from culture may be particularly true in the context of the pageant because it is a self-selected population that chooses to participate in it. Therefore, the women who participate may already feel that they are qualified in some way to represent the community. This is not to imply that all multiracial people in the Japanese American community are "more Japanese" than monoracial people, only that in this selective instance the mixed-race women that do come forward feel comfortable enough with their Japanese-ness to feel they can represent the community. They may actually know more about Japanese culture from being questioned by others.

What effect are the mixed-race women having on the monoracial candidates? The presence of the mixed-race women makes the race/culture nexus more complex for the monoracial women because some of the mixed-race girls are culturally very Japanese and some monoracial women are not very culturally Japanese, thus inverting the relationship of race and culture. Some of the monoracial women respond to this by trying to use the fact that they are 100 percent Japanese as an asset that they have over the mixed-race candidates. Tammy, a multiethnic candidate, recants a story about a monoracial candidate in her court.

She took offense. It bothered her that she and Naoko were the only ones that were full and that the others of us, by our names or how we looked, were half. She felt that we are not as much of a part of the community which is totally ridiculous.

Here Tammy recognizes that her monoracial colleague sees her full-bloodedness as superior and a better indicator of involvement in the community, but Tammy rejects this as not true. She goes on to re-

assert her own involvement in activities as proof of her commitment to the Japanese American community. The monoracial candidate in this instance though is trying to assert the importance of being full-blooded; this, for her, makes her Japanese. Tammy did not see her this way. She said,

She is not Japanese American culturally. . .her duties and responsibilities, her sense of them are different. If she had been raised like a Japanese American, like the way I was, then she would have been there and understood the responsibility.

Similarly, Melissa put it this way:

These full-Japanese girls, they toted their Japanese-ness as being exclusive, as being different and better, I didn't think that was right.

Melissa also recognizes that being full-Japanese can be toted as better.

Other monoracial candidates, like Evelyn Shigeno, did not assert a blood superiority argument, but instead conceded that even though she was monoracial, she was not that culturally Japanese. She said,

They are half and they can speak (Japanese). I am full and I can't even speak (Japanese). I wish I could. . .I feel bad about it.

The presence of the mixed-race women is a litmus test for the monoracial women to see how Japanese they really are, and it makes them conscious of the race/culture nexus. They respond to this in different ways, either asserting racial superiority or by recognizing the need to do more cultural work.

Although all of the candidates, both monoracial and multiracial, sometimes speak Japanese in order to increase how Japanese they are perceived by others to be, the nature of that use of language is different. Clearly, the mixed-race women have internalized via interactions with others the fact that they are perceived as "less Japanese" because of their racial make-up and phenotype. The monoracial women do not have this same experience, so it becomes a matter of choice whether to speak Japanese or not. They are never questioned about how Japanese they are because they are full-Japanese and, as Mariko said, people trust that if you are full-Japanese then you know something of the culture. These women are authenticated as Japanese and do not have to think about convincing others in their presentation of self. This is unlike the mixed-race women who are constantly questioned and reminded that they are not full-Japanese.

The impact that these women are having on the collective definition of what it means to be Japanese is apparent. The candidates,

committee members and the community at large realize that increasingly there are mixed-race Japanese Americans participating in community organizations. Melissa says,

I don't think Carrie (a multiracial candidate) looks very Japanese at all, but she knows a lot about her culture. She has obviously studied it. She learned the language and she is very Japanese by my context. . .there is no Japanese community where there is all (full) Japanese. . .so you can't be focussed on how much they look or how much they are Japanese or not.

She recognizes that the community is changing and that the definition of who is Japanese American must change with it. All of the interviewees agreed that the rules of the Queen Pageant will have to reflect that and that someday the rules will have to be changed to allow people who are 25 percent Japanese to be eligible.

Theoretical Implications

The Cherry Blossom Queen Pageant provides data that can provide a theoretical contribution to race theory. It shows us that racial/ethnic identity is flexible, but that it is not a choice which is unconstrained. The data also illustrate that in the Japanese American community, the blood quantum rule is in flux. Everyone I interviewed agreed that someday they would have to change the rule to accommodate people who are 25 percent Japanese. In addition, there was disagreement by people about who was 50 percent Japanese. Some thought that if both of parents were half-Japanese then a person could run in the pageant, while others thought that one parent must be 100 percent Japanese to participate. Clearly there is much renegotiation of racial meanings, and because of its symbolic nature the pageant is alive with "action" oriented around this debate.

It seems that most of the people in this context realize that race is socially constructed. The mixed-race women in particular know that even though race is socially constructed via collective action and interaction, that action is constrained because they must still act with racial frameworks in mind. The four levels of racial formation help to explain how race is made, contested and remade in the Japanese American community, and how race in general comes to be imbued with meaning to determine who is and who is not a "member" of a racial/ethnic community. In the context of the Queen Pageant, there is a construction of this particular racial identity going on, particularly at the first three levels.

The first level is when the mixed-race candidate sees herself as Japanese, but is denied that identification by other people's percep-

tions of her. One example of this process can be seen in the pageant when the mixed-race candidates express that other people think that the queen should be 100 percent Japanese and that full-bloodedness is related to knowledge of culture. They have internalized the racial idea from others that culture derives its meaning from race, and this gives rise to their need to prove their Japanese-ness. Even though they feel inside that they are Japanese, they know that others do not see them that way. Identity is created inside the mixed-race candidates. They have internalized from their interactions with others the idea that they are half-Japanese and therefore, half-culturally Japanese as well.

Within themselves they know down deep that race does not actually equal culture, that they really are quite Japanese, but that idea is not authenticated by others around them. There is dissonance between the inside racial reality and the internalized other. This dissonance arises from the internalization of a racial reality where there is no room for the reflection of mixed-race people. These mixed-race Japanese candidates are seen as "thinking" in a Meadian sense—they are using the existing "racial frameworks" to form a racial identity. The feeling of dissonance is created when the outside ideas of the race/culture nexus clash with the inside ideas. The mixed-race faces do not reveal their true inner (cultural) selves.

At the second level of racial formation, this clash of perceptions plays itself out in terms of mixed-race candidates "compensating" for a perceived shortcoming of Japanese-ness. Even though the mixed-race candidates see themselves as Japanese, they are not authenticated by others. They are then in a position of challenging the impressions of others by using Japanese names or speaking in Japanese to convince others of their cultural authenticity. They perceive themselves to be in a position where they must compensate for their deficiency in Japanese-ness. In this sense, race is created not only within individuals, but also through interactions with others. The onus, however, is on the mixed-race candidates to "convince" others of their "true" Japanese self.

On the third level, Japanese American-ness is negotiated collectively. For example, in the pageant, the candidates, committee members and community participants create the definition of Japanese-ness every year when they choose a queen who is the symbol of the community. She becomes the personification of Japanese American-ness for this community, which is why there is so much emphasis placed on how Japanese she is racially and culturally. This image also is internalized by the candidates as the "generalized other." In this sense, the process I am describing is circular and dependent upon the earlier stages.

Although this is one small slice of a very complex process, it does shed some light on the process by which racial meanings are created and recreated by individuals within social collectivities. This change in identity is initially individual, but when individuals create a collective pressure to redefine a community, they become agents of racial change. This change is not just redefining Japanese American-ness. It also reveals the dynamic nature of racial concepts and the constant process of formation and reformation.

Notes

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1. There are significant contributions in social movement literature which discuss how collective identities are created, maintained and changed. These studies tend to focus on how actors coalesce around a certain identity, cause, or issue and take collective action that is oriented to change. See Enrique Larana, Hank Johnston, and Joseph R. Gusfield, *New Social Movements: From Ideology to Identity* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994). This same type of theory has rarely been applied to the "traditional" studies of race, which take race as a variable, but rarely look at how race is imbued with meaning. See William Julius Wilson, *The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978); and Robert Blauner, *Racial Oppression in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972).
2. Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States from the 1960s to the 1980s* (New York: Routledge, 1986), 68-69.
3. Harold Garfinkel, *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1967); and West and Zimmerman, "Doing Gender" in *The Social Construction of Gender*, Judith Lorber and Susan Farrell, eds. (Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, 1991), 13-37.
4. George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), 47.
5. Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Anchor Books, 1959); Lyman and Douglass, "Ethnicity: Strategies of Collective and Individual Impression Management," *Social Research* 40:2 (1973): 344-365; Jonathan Y. Okamura, "Situational Ethnicity," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 4:4 (1981): 458.

6. Lyman and Douglass, 349.
7. Blumer and Duster, "Theories of Race and Social Action" in *Sociological Theory: Race and Colonialism* (Poole, United Kingdom: UNESCO, 1980), 211-238.
8. Michele Barrett, "The Concept of Difference" in *Feminist Review* 26 (July): 29-41, as quoted in Evelyn Nakano Glenn, "From Servitude to Service Work: Historical Continuities in the Racial Division of Paid Reproductive Labor," *Signs* 18:1 (1992): 1-43.
9. Glenn, 1992.
10. Notice the language here. The committee members specifically do not call the girls participating in the pageant "contestants" to try to do away with the image that this is strictly a beauty contest and therefore competitive. They refer to them as "candidates" for this reason.
11. I refer to the girls as multiethnic because while some are multiracial—i.e., half-Japanese and half-Caucasian—some are multiethnic—i.e., half-Japanese and half-Chinese. I use the term "mixed race" to refer to the former, and "multiethnic" to refer to the latter.
12. There were a number of popular magazines that published such information such as *Time* (Fall 1993), 14-15; and *USA Today* (December 11, 1992), A7. For more scholarly work, see Larry Shinagawa, "Intermarriage and Inequality: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis of the Marriage Patterns of Asian Americans" Ph.D. dissertation, UC Berkeley, 1994; and O'Hare and Felt, *Asian Americans: America's Fastest Growing Minority Group* (Washington, D.C.: Population Reference Bureau Inc., 1991).
13. I thank Professor Arlie Hochschild for introducing the term "magnified moment" to me and discussing the importance of this concept in my work.