In December 1996, several months after Tiger Woods left Stanford University to become a professional golfer, a *Sports Illustrated* story entitled "The Chosen One" quoted Tiger's father, Earl, claiming that his son was "qualified through his ethnicity" to "do more than any other man in history to change the course of humanity." Tiger's mother, Kultida, agreed, asserting that, because Tiger had "Thai, African, Chinese, American Indian and European blood," he could "hold everyone together. He is the Universal Child." The story's author concluded that, "when we swallow Tiger Woods, the yellow-black-red-white man, we swallow ... hope in the American experiment, in the pell-mell jumbling of genes. We swallow the belief that the face of the future is not necessarily a bitter or bewildered face; that it might even, one day, be something like Tiger Woods' face." Building on the interest in Tiger Woods, stories about mixed-race children and intermarriage proliferated. In January 2000, both *Newsweek* and *Time* opened the millennium with cover art speculating on the multi-racial faces of America's future.

The celebration of Tiger Woods' mixed descent and his widespread popularity would seem to support David Hollinger's argument that the history of the United States has been a successful (albeit episodic) history of "amalgamation" overcoming group differences. With Woods as a prominent example, we might even be "crazy enough to believe" the idea that eventually "racism can be ended by wholesale intermarriage," as Hollinger hints in his concluding paragraph. However, I would argue that focusing on
"intermarriage" and "race-mixing" should bring us to a different conclusion about U.S. history, and Woods might serve as a useful prism for separating out some other important aspects of the encounter of the United States with Asia and the Pacific.

"Americans have mixed in certain ways and not others," Hollinger asserts, "and they have talked about it in certain ways and not others."\(^4\) This statement is the most generative idea in his essay, both in terms of what it implies about his own overall argument and also how it relates to what is a different way of understanding the phenomena he describes. Mixing is an interesting concept. It suggests a process of transformation, a taking of two previously unlike things and making something new out of them. But what are the "things" to be mixed? To describe the process of mixing is at the same time to define the entities that existed before the mixing. Hollinger argues that there are things called ethnoracial "communities of descent" that have "amalgamated" in "episodic" fashion throughout U.S. history. But what are these "communities of descent"?\(^5\)

The limitations of Hollinger's analysis are quickly apparent when we consider just one of his "communities" of descent: Asian Americans. We must be careful not to read back into historical time definitions of racial or ethnic belonging without explaining the work that went into their formation and stability. There may be myriad reasons for the historical rise of a sense of identity as "Asian American" during the 1970s—being lumped together by a census category, a common reaction to "anti-Oriental" racism, the desire to create political coalitions with shared causes, a sense of commonality born of sharing similar migration experiences in the United States. There is no evidence, however, that at any time historically people have considered themselves "Asian American" because of a pan-Asian sense of shared descent, even if identities such as "Chinese" or "Japanese" might have been imagined categories of shared descent.

Strangely enough, Hollinger's focus on mixing and boundary crossing assumes the stability of the "socially constructed" racial categories that we as historians should be critically examining. Racial mixtures are one of many cases that only seem to threaten the boundaries of classificatory systems. A racially "mixed" individual and the sexual boundary crossing that produced such an individual do not in themselves challenge the existence of the boundaries between categories. Indeed, they can serve to highlight the conceptual stability of the categories being mixed, even as they purport to challenge the effectiveness of boundaries in maintaining a sense of difference. People cross national borders constantly, for instance—their crossings do not lessen a sense of national difference, they in fact produce and exacerbate it.

There is an odd juxtaposition between novelty and banality in American discourses about race, including Hollinger's essay. Hollinger opens with a story highlighting the "shock" of editors who "balked" at Hannah Arendt's essay. This signature moment in 1958 serves to introduce us to the transgressive quality throughout U.S. history of talking about sex and marriage between races. Hollinger implies that the silence about this subject and the silencing that...
not so subtly enforced it has been deafening, and that we need to listen to the sounds of Americans who have been amalgamating in the dark. However, there has been constant talking about race and race-mixing throughout U.S. history, a discursive effluence that in fact is effusive. Such an outpouring of talk (accompanied by the nervous titter of naughtiness) is in itself revealing.

The conclusions that Hollinger draws from his evidence of interracial and interethnic sex have a long and rather mundane history in social-scientific literature, and the basic parameters of his argument are the legacy of a long obsession among many "progressive" thinkers with the social potential of sexual transgression. Arendt was neither as out of step with existing intellectual discourse on intermarriage as Hollinger suggests, nor was the idea that anti-miscegenation laws were a problem so radical. If anything, there was a fluorescence of fascination among social scientists in the twentieth century with the question of sexual unions across racial and ethnic lines. A graduate student researcher working for me at UCLA, Anthony Yuen, produced a bibliography of almost 700 articles and books (produced in the period from the 1850s to the 1960s) on the topic of interracial sex and mixed marriages—hardly a silence on the matter. Indeed, analogous to the way that Michel Foucault described the history of modern sexuality as inextricably bound to its creation and expansion as a subject of discourse, we could ask a different question than Hollinger's about using the "lens" of interracial sexuality: Why do American intellectuals and social commentators find interracial sex so fascinating, so alluring, so in need of being talked about as if it has never been talked about before?

My answer would be that a political emphasis on the transgressive potential of sexual relations between the races (such as that of Hannah Arendt) was a historically specific reaction to the particular practices of white supremacy in the United States. If there have been episodes or periods when the boundaries of racial division were transformed by new patterns of sexual union, they were associated with the reorganization of white supremacy and the ways that it produced racial hierarchy. Each of the historical moments that Hollinger describes as episodes of "amalgamation" was conditioned by the practices of white supremacy that existed at that moment, and, like a new model of car that looks different but is still a version of last year's model, the ongoing processes that incorporate migrants to the United States have changed, but the recurring theme of white supremacy has remained a part of the overall design. Whether this year's model is "better" than last year's, of course, depends on the criteria used. Certainly, if efficiency in "amalgamating" people of diverse origins into a sense of national unity is a standard, white supremacy has been wildly successful at many points in U.S. history, but that measure of progress might not be something we should celebrate. Neither should we overly celebrate the safety features added each year that protect us from the inherent dangers of driving a car that is built around white supremacy.

What I would propose as a framework for understanding the "episodes" that Hollinger describes is based also on a history of migration, but one attuned to the specifics of historical period and region and the ways that racial formations differed in time and place. Rather than describing these episodes of "amalgamation" as adding up to an episodic drumbeat of progress in overcoming the divided origins of American settlers and enslaved laborers, I see them as moments of recognition, points in history that historians have an easier
time seeing as indications of an existing or shifting racial order. This is one thing on which I would agree with Hollinger, that the intensity of reactions to sexual transgression provide a revealing window on U.S. history.

In a variation on Frederick Jackson Turner's description of "sections" in U.S. history, I would sketch a history of migration and "amalgamation" that would emphasize the very different processes of racialization that occurred in the Atlantic Northeast, the Atlantic Southeast, the Pacific Southwest, and the Pacific West. The vast amounts of wonderful scholarship on racialization associated with the Atlantic slave trade in the American South and Caribbean are much better known and, as a field, more developed than for the other sections or regions, which has had both good and bad effects. An understanding of U.S. history through the lens of black-white racialization has transformed what had long been the curiously self-serving national history of European settler-colonialism that dominated U.S. history writing. It has also changed the way that we think of the role of white supremacy in the transformation of the European-origin migrant streams that came through northeastern ports such as Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. However, the dominance of the black-white racial binary as an analytical framework has served much less well in framing and understanding the Pacific regions.

Hollinger seizes on the key insights of scholarship on race and race-mixing in what Turner called the South and the East, basically an Atlantic-centered world of migration. The policing of black-white racial boundaries in the South involved anti-miscegenation laws that in practice prevented marriage and most sexual contact between white women and non-white men. There was no lack of sexual contact between white men and non-white women, so not all sexual acts across racial lines were equally transgressive of the racial order.  

The history of this racial order and the challenges it created in terms of maintenance and opposition have dominated much of the writing of U.S. history in terms of race, not only in the South but also in thinking about other regions. In terms of transgressive sexual acts, if there has been a particular fascination among social thinkers for mixtures and marriages between blacks and whites, it was shaped in opposition to these specific regimes of racialized laws and practices.

The whiteness studies that have proliferated recently have been particularly astute in defining the effects of this black-white binary on the alchemy of whiteness in the Atlantic Northeast. The transformation of the Irish in the nineteenth century charted by David Roediger and Alexander Saxton, through the whitening of Jews, Slavs, Italians, and other Southern and Eastern Europeans in the twentieth century that Matthew Frye Jacobson described, have linked well with insights on the development of the black-white binary in the Southeast, at the same time providing a rich reappraisal of European migration. I would only add the observation that, in terms of the lens of intermarriage, the fascination of social scientists and "progressive" observers in the mid-twentieth century with black-white mixing was connected to their interest in the cross-denominational mixing of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews in the Northeast, and
that the seeming success of the latter promised the potential for the former (what Nathan Glazer later called the "ethnic analogy" for predicting the overcoming of obstacles for "racial" groups). Hollinger's use of the term "ethnoracial" is a genetic descendent of this Northeast-centered intellectual tradition of thinking about ethnicity and race.

The incredible expansion in the definitions of American belonging during the twentieth century, an intensification and a widening of processes of inclusion into a shared sense of American citizenry, was the continuation of a trend that had seen German and Irish migrants incorporated into American civil society during the nineteenth century. In other words, it was primarily the extension of the process of European migration across the Atlantic to the New World, and it was a process that had operated quite well through two centuries with the racial dichotomy of black versus white, at times thriving because of the demonization of blacks and the privileges of white supremacy. The overcoming of vicious anti-Catholicism and antisemitism has often been used as a sign of hope for the inclusive possibilities in U.S. history, and there have been historical alliances in particular between those suffering from anti-black and antisemitic practices. However, the expansion of whiteness that occurred over the middle half of the twentieth century was not antithetical to the maintenance and even the growth of the privileges of being white.

In the Pacific region, white supremacy has operated in very different ways than in the Atlantic. Native Americans have been crucial, as have inhabitants formerly of the Spanish empire in the Southwest. In a manner analogous to the dominance of the transatlantic for understanding the Northeast and Southeast, however, we cannot understand race and race-mixing in the West without centering it on the Pacific. Before labor shortages during World War II brought large numbers of African-American and Mexican migrants to California and the Pacific coast, the primary racial binary had been between "Oriental" and white. For a century, labor conflict defined the politics of racial division between Asian and white, helping amalgamate European migrants to the West into a common whiteness just as anti-black animus had done on the East coast; but if we consider not just issues of labor migration but also of the outward expansion of the U.S. military into the Pacific, racialization and the transgressions of sexual contact take on a very different hue than in the Atlantic United States.

We might return quickly to Tiger as an example of what was unique about "race-mixing" in American encounters with Asia and the Pacific Islands. Woods is the product of his Green Beret father's tours of duty in the Vietnam War (Earl Woods met his wife Kultida while based in Thailand) and a century of military conflicts between the United States and Asian enemies. From the violent pacification of Filipinos resisting the annexation of the Philippines following the Spanish-American War of 1898, through the savage fighting of the Pacific campaign against the Japanese, through the human wave assaults of the Chinese and North Koreans during the Korean War, through the dehumanization of "gooks" and "Charlie" that marked the Vietnam conflict, the United States has been fighting enemies in Asia.

The face of the enemy has also looked remarkably like the laborers brought across the Pacific in large numbers. The kingdom of Hawai'i, overthrown in an armed coup supported by the United States and annexed in 1898, is perhaps the
best symbol of a regional history dominated both by warfare and by the racial hierarchies of labor. The site of the development of plantation labor systems that brought wave after wave of laborers from southern China, Japan, Korea, and the Philippines, as well as from Portugal and Puerto Rico, Hawai'i was also the base for numerous military campaigns in the Pacific (most notoriously the site of Pearl Harbor, the target of the Japanese attempt to curtail American naval power). It is also the place with the highest rates of "racial mixing" as it is usually defined, long heralded by missionaries and social scientists alike as a racial laboratory that would presage the future of the United States and the world (the phrase hapa haole first arose there, from which the common contemporary term for half Asian, half white—hapa—is derived).  

It is hard to overemphasize the importance in U.S. history, and in particular that of the Pacific region, of the fact that the last century has been a series of military confrontations in Asia. Even the current set of anti-terrorist forays into Central Asia is arguably a new turn in this long road—the dangerous Orient defined by the Orientalist discourses of European history described so well by Edward Said rather than the East Asian or Southeast Asian enemies usual for the United States. What legacy has this had on ideas about people in Asia and in annexed Pacific Islands such as Guam, Samoa, and Hawai‘i, as well as on Asian-American and Pacific Islander migrants and their descendents in the United States? How has this long military history of conflict, demonization, and sexualization affected the racialization of "Orientals" and "Polynesians" in ways that were unique and even novel in comparison to understandings of African Americans or Native Americans or other racialized peoples?  

While anti-miscegenation laws arose in the West Coast states to prevent the marriage of male Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino laborers with white women, they did nothing to deter white men from having sex with and at times marrying "Oriental" women. And in the context of the widespread sexual contact between American military personnel and the sex workers who have serviced them throughout this century of wars in Asia and the Pacific, it would be absurd to think that sexual contact has indicated the forms of social progress that Hollinger is assuming that individual intimacy symbolizes. From war brides and their children who returned with GIs from Asian wars, as well as those who were left behind, what were once labeled "Eurasian" or "Amerasian" children have been a long-term feature of American encounters with Asia.  

Recently, the hope invested in Asian-white unions has largely been a dividend of the idea that recent Asian immigrants in the United States are a "model minority" and have somehow succeeded in overcoming the obstacles of race. Hollinger's focus on the success of "Asians" in out-marrying and somehow integrating with whites and overcoming their historical segregation is a telling reflection of the blinders produced by a black-white, continental vision of inter-marriage and race-mixing as transgressive overcoming. He has ignored not only patterns of gender (marriages between Asian women and white men are more common than between Asian men and white women) but also the whole history of the U.S. military in Asia, a history of sexual interrelations and "race-mixing" that has more connections with the imperial encounters between European colonizers and "natives" than the hopes for sexual intimacy born of the Civil Rights era.  

Finally, in terms of the Southwest, a region defined by its intersection
between expanding chattel slavery, the encounters between Native indios and Spanish in Mexico, and the Pacific world described above, we find a region and history least explicable using Hollinger’s framework. Since many recent migrants from Latin, Central, or South America embody the complex global admixtures of Native American, European, African, and Asian ancestry that have also marked North American history, attempts to encapsulate such migrants into a single category as "Latinos" have reflected the same difficulties that all such categorizations incur. Yet processes of racialization have nonetheless marked many of the peoples of Latin America, and for those who have been either incorporated through territorial expansion into the United States or who have migrated here, there has already been a long history. The racialization of Spanish-speaking peoples in the areas that would become Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California, as Hollinger notes, has always been complicated, and it continues to be. Within the vast spectrum of more recent Spanish-speaking migrants to the United States (as well as those who continue to speak forms of their indigenous, native speech), some have found it possible to pass as white, whereas for others linguistic differences or similarities will be less salient than an identification of them as being non-white. What has been the most powerful dividing line, however, has been the Manichean divisions between citizen and alien, colonizer and colonized, a feature of the Pacific region in general that has afflicted Asians and Pacific Islanders, as well as Hispanic migrants in the territories encompassed by an expanding United States. In this regard, "amalgamation" has not been a neutral term, and sexual intimacy has been marked by inequities of power and violence.

Intermarriage can provide a number of perspectives on U.S. history. Using the lens of marriage alliance, for instance, is quite revealing of the ways that territorial acquisition and conquest operated on the borderlands of the expanding United States, not only in the Spanish Southwest but also in the fur trade frontier of the West and the early plantation settlement of Hawai'i. Here, strategic marriages could expand family power and provide access to property and other forms of inheritance. Hollinger asserts too much when he argues, however, that somehow the issue of racial mixture and intermarriage has provided a uniquely hopeful perspective on both United States and world history. At one point, Hollinger speculates that one of the "lessons of American history" is that "even a nation carrying a heavy load of racism can incorporate individuals ... on terms of considerable intimacy." If racial intermarriage seems like such an accomplishment, perhaps it is because the practices of white supremacy in the United States have built it as such a high hurdle.

I wish that Hollinger had concluded his essay with his penultimate paragraph rather than his final one. It is here before the end that he says best what we gain from using the lens of "race-mixing" to look at U.S. history. Given how profoundly U.S. history has been shaped by the contours of racial division, such a perspective can reveal the terrain of those boundaries that so tragically separated people. However, even though Hollinger argued for the importance of distinguishing between the "empirically warranted narrative of
amalgamation" for U.S. history and the "extravagance of the amalgamation fantasy," he ended up in his final paragraph blurring the two. Following the line from Bulworth he quotes, perhaps a "free-spirited" program of "procreative racial deconstruction" might be something Americans should consider, but the truth is, as enjoyable as it might end up being, it will not save us all from a long history of racial hierarchy.

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Notes


2. Time, January 1, 2000; and Newsweek, January 1, 2000.


2. It seems that Hollinger's larger aim in his essay is to shift the focus of historical inquiry away from racialization and toward the overcoming of racial division; in effect, his analytical strategy is that, rather than giving the history of racialization (and the recent scholarship on it that he purports to review) a primacy in U.S. history, he instead addresses it by claiming that U.S. history is primarily about the mixing of racialized groups and the attenuation of the divisions and hierarchies that racialization produced.
I am indebted to George Lipsitz for this image of ideologies that perpetuate social injustice and racism.

As Cheryl Harris, and Hollinger in following Harris, Barbara Fields, and others, points out, an array of legal practices protected the property rights of white slaveholders by defining all children of sexual relations between white men and black women as black, denying the possibility that rights to property could be inherited in a matrilineal fashion and making blackness a legal property passed through the mother. Cheryl Harris, "Whiteness as Property," Harvard Law Review 106 (June 1993): 1790–91.

This points to an important conflation in Hollinger's essay, that between mixture and marriage. What is not clear is whether he means by "mixture" the bodily mixture of two people in the act of sexual reproduction that results in a "mixed" child, or simply that his proposed "communities of descent" are mixing through marriage in some way that is particularly significant. Is mixture through working at the same place, or going to school together, or going to the movies, in other words mixing socially with the possibility of sex, somehow less significant than the mixture marked by state-sanctioned marriage? His initial focus on anti-miscegenation laws and the political power of states to issue marriage licenses devolves into a far-ranging discussion on marriage rates, the consequences of sexual reproduction on racial classifications based on descent, the problem of Affirmative Action that extends beyond African Americans, and the mythic potential for "amalgamation" in U.S. society.


The conception of "ethnicity" arose not just with W. Lloyd Warner's first use of the term "ethnic" in the 1940s, it was a product of the vast expansion and transformation of whiteness that amalgamated the masses of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe that had previously been cut off in 1924. "Ethnicity" as a way to define differences was the product of a newly ascendant anthropological definition of culture that divorced it from biological definitions of race that centered on the physical body; however, the popular and social-scientific usage of the term also rested on the incorporation of European migrants into American citizenry, helped by widespread service in World War II and by postwar suburbanization and the economic and educational mobility provided by federal government subsidies such as the GI Bill. See George Lipsitz, The Possessive Investment in Whiteness (Philadelphia, 1998); Matthew Frye Jacobson, Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race (Cambridge, Mass., 1998); Thomas Sugrue, The Origins of the Urban Crisis (Princeton, N.J., 1998); David Roediger, The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class (London, 1991); Alexander Saxton, The Rise and Fall of the White Republic (London, 1990); and my argument in "Ethnicity and Race," in Encyclopedia of American Cultural and Intellectual History, Mary Kupiec Cayton and Peter W. Williams, eds. (New York, 2001), 3: 109–20.


For instance, Romanzo Adams, The Peoples of Hawaii (Honolulu, 1933); and Adams, Interracial Marriage in Hawaii (New York, 1937); for arguments about how the rise of a "local" culture and a mythology of a new mixed-race Hawai'i helped reinforce native disenfranchisement, see Jonathan Okamura, "Aloha Kanaka Me Ke Aloha 'Aina: Local Culture and Society in Hawaii," Amerasia 7, no. 2 (1980): 119–37; and John Rosa, "Local Story: The

At first, such intermixings were understood in ways similar to the way mulatto and mixed black-white children were understood. Products of transgression, halfway between two segregated worlds, their existence was both fascinating and abhorrent for many observers in both Asia and the United States. Depending on the circumstances of their birth and upbringing, such children were cast as brokers between societies, at other times living on the margins unwanted. Missionaries and sociologists in the 1910s and 1920s saw the marriages between Japanese and whites as optimistic indicators, hoping in the future of America in ways that presage Hollinger's essay. For an interesting perspective on Asian Americans and the Pacific region, see Gary Okihiro, Common Ground: Reimagining American History (Princeton, N.J., 2001); as well as Okihiro, Columbia Guide to Asian American History (New York, 2001). See the formative essay collection, Paul Spickard, Joanne L. Rondilla, and Debbie Hippolite Wright, eds., Pacific Diaspora: Island Peoples in the United States and Across the Pacific (Honolulu, 2002).


For instance, Paul Spickard observes of Japanese Americans, the most likely of Asian Americans to outmarry historically: "At least until the 1970s, the bulk of Japanese American outmarriages were by women, not men." Spickard, Mixed Blood: Intermarriage and Ethnic Identity in Twentieth-Century America (Madison, Wis., 1989), 49. See Spickard, chap. 5, for a discussion of the phenomenon of American men and Asian war brides; also Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Issei, Nisei, War Bride (Philadelphia, 1986). Between 1952, when the McCarran-Walter Act allowed American servicemen to bring Japanese and Korean wives back to the United States, and 1965, when changes in immigration laws allowed Asian wives to come in through normal immigration channels rather than as a special "war bride" privilege for servicemen, over 40,000 Asian brides, averaging between 2,000 and 5,000 a year, came into the United States. A significant minority of these women (likely between one-fourth and one-third) married Japanese-American, Chinese-American, or African-American servicemen, but a majority married white servicemen. Bok-Lim C. Kim, "Asian Wives of U.S. Servicemen: Women in Shadows," Amerasia Journal 4 (1977). In a period when the migration to the United States of Asians in general was severely curtailed, this represents a significant skewing of the gender ratio of intermarriage. Indeed, the migration of Japanese, Korean, Filipina, and Vietnamese brides of U.S. servicemen was one of the largest sources of Asian migration to the United States in the period between World War II and the end of the Vietnam War. Sucheng Chan, Asian Americans: An Interpretive History (Boston, 1991), 140. Because the U.S. armed forces have continued to be predominantly male, this pattern of Asian wives and white American servicemen has continued. In addition, since 1965, the rise of Asian "mail-order brides" as a phenomenon has continued to skew white-Asian marriages toward a norm of white male/Asian female. Yen L. Espiritu, Asian American Women and Men: Labor, Laws and Love (Thousand Oaks, Calif., 1997).


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