Making a Non-white America: Californians Coloring outside Ethnic Lines, 1925–1955. By Allison Varzally. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008. Pp. 318. $60.00 (cloth); $24.95 (paper).

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Making a Non-white America is a fascinating account of how ethnic and racial minorities intersected and interacted in California's demographically diverse neighborhoods in the mid-20th century. Allison Varzally's main argument is that many members of these nonwhite groups discovered commonalities and crossed boundaries as a result of, first, shared subjugation to white racism and, second, shared location in predominantly nonwhite neighborhoods that were characterized by great internal diversity.

The book begins with an overview of the demographic and economic context of midcentury California, one shaped by a regime of discrimination that limited the socioeconomic and geographic mobility of all minority groups, albeit in different ways and to different degrees. Because of these limits, nonwhites were concentrated in diverse urban and rural neighborhoods where they came into frequent contact with each other and, over time, developed strong bonds around a sense of shared misfortune. The book then shifts to an analysis of how minority youths interacted and blended cultural forms within these remarkable neighborhoods before World War II. Varzally expertly shows how many minority youths challenged their parents' as well as the larger society's preference for ethnic isolation, developing friendships, working relationships, romances, and even families with each other. Critical here is Varzally's detailed attention to the multiple axes that structured these youths' interactions, particularly gender, generation, nativity, and relative distance from legal whiteness.

The third section of the book moves to an analysis of how minority Californians increasingly developed cross-cultural ties and a sense of interconnectedness during and after World War II. Within California, Varzally traces the common bonds that many formed as they became subjects of "dramatic acts of discrimination" (p. 7), particularly the Zoot Suit Riots and Japanese internment. Outside California, she shows how they developed a stronger sense of shared subjugation as nonwhites—for example, as interned Japanese Americans came into contact with Native Americans in the Southwest, or as Mexican, Asian, and African-American soldiers came into contact with African-Americans in the Jim Crow South and indigenous populations in Asia. Varzally shows how these experiences reinforced common understandings that minorities had developed in diverse California neighborhoods before the war, providing them with new models for challenging their place within California society. In the final chapter, Varzally traces how nonwhite Californians drew upon these war-

time experiences as well as their longer history of "largely informal and apolitical" (p. 8) cultural intermingling to come together and challenge discrimination in more organized and formally political ways.

Readers will appreciate three major contributions of this book. The first is that Varzally highlights the minorities' agency in fashioning their relationships with each other, countering the dominant tendency among historians and social scientists to emphasize whites' power over minority group relations. To be sure, Varzally acknowledges the whites' ultimate power to structure the spaces and conditions under which nonwhite Californians interacted, yet she also demonstrates how minorities' own efforts fundamentally shaped their interactions and responses to white discrimination. The second contribution is that Varzally emphasizes how minority groups desired to "get along" in diverse communities, providing an important antidote to scholarship and public opinion that emphasizes conflict over cooperation in the relations of nonwhites who are situated within white power structures. The third contribution is that Varzally offers a bottom-up approach to the development of panethnic identities, affiliations, and politics, countering depictions of minority coalition-building efforts as solely elite-driven, top-down projects. In midcentury California, nonwhite coalition projects emerged slowly, but Varzally argues they had deep roots in the everyday practices of integrated living in highly diverse minority communities (chap. 6).

From the perspective of 21st-century America, a few questions remain unanswered in, or perhaps are inspired by, the content of this book. One stems from the fact that Varzally illustrates significant relations between and boundary stretching among all nonwhite groups, but never fully answers whether the boundaries might have been more elastic for some groups (say, Jewish or Mexican Americans) than others (say, African-Americans). Given that scholars are now engaged in a lively debate about whether nonblackness may be as important as nonwhiteness in determining location along the color line, including in California, I wonder how this played out in the middle of last century? For instance, while there are many examples of Asian, Jewish, and Mexican Americans developing romances and coalitions with African-Americans in the book, there are also examples of them distancing themselves from African-Americans more strongly than from other nonwhite groups, as well of them intermarrying more frequently with whites and other nonwhite groups than with African-Americans. Indeed, Varzally notes that Jewish and Asian Americans were ultimately able to move out into California suburbs in the 1950s and 1960s due to greater acceptance by whites, leaving African-Americans and Mexican Americans behind in increasingly poor and homogeneous inner-city neighborhoods. There are even a few notable examples of nonblack minorities coming to learn how poorly African-Americans were treated, such as when one interned Japanese American came to consider nonblack minorities as "being a color 'in-between'" who could act as "a wedge for the darker minority [African–Americans]," help-

ing to open "the eyes and heart" of the nation to "the more complex Negro problem" (p. 128).

Thus, while shared experiences of white discrimination no doubt produced common understandings among all nonwhites during this time period, it sometimes remains unclear as to how white discrimination, as well as minority groups' own stereotypes, structured fundamentally different positions among minority groups even along the nonwhite side of the color line. While I greatly admire Varzally's effort to highlight relations between minority groups over those between minority groups and whites, I still see a need to contextualize the frequency, type, and scope of these relations, as well as those between each minority group and whites, to achieve a more complete comparative sociological understanding of how different groups were situated along the color line in the mid-20th century. Perhaps doing so will help to situate the cross-cultural minority relations that Varzally so vividly portrays, yet sometimes also cites as "atypical," in a larger picture. Nevertheless, this book clearly makes an important contribution to that picture.

Making Multiracials: State, Family, and Market in the Redrawing of the Color Line. By Kimberly McClain DaCosta. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2007. Pp. xiii+259. $21.95 (paper).

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Multiracial issues have received significant attention from scholars studying race and ethnic relations, family studies, and social movements, with research ranging from the lives and experiences of multiracial individuals and families to explorations of identity in the multiracial movement. Kimberly McClain DaCosta adds an important piece to this puzzle with *Making Multiracials*, an intriguing account of how mixed-race people collectively formed an idea of a multiracial identity and community. DaCosta's work takes on these complex issues; as she critically argues, "Rather than assume that 'multiracials' exist as such (or that they do not), I ask why 'mixed' persons are now activating these particular ancestries in this way and why they have become salient bases of public and private identification" (p. 6). *Making Multiracials* looks critically at the cultural, institutional, and political factors that have contributed to the making of a multiracial category and fits in with the innovative body of research on multiracialism.

Based on multiple methods, the book paints a multiracial mosaic from in-depth interviews with 62 participants in groups formed for intermarried couples, their families, and multiracial adults, in addition to fieldwork conducted at related events such as mixed-race conferences, college campuses, and public hearings on census classification. The author clearly