Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Mixed Race 3.0

Ulli K. Ryder, Ph.D · Wednesday, February 18th, 2015

By Ulli K. Ryder and Marcia Alesan Dawkins

We are scholars who have been thinking with a “mixed mind-set” for quite a while. We are also multiracial. For us, being multiracial is a discursive, dialectical method of identity formation concerning mixed race individuals’ and interracial families’ experiences, perspectives, and concerns. As scholars, we research multiracial identities from many different angles, primarily looking at everyday practices such as identity formation and “passing,” but also thinking about how multiracial identities connect to technology, business, politics, activism, and culture.

As a result, this book is about multiracial identities and the risks and rewards they offer. Each chapter dissects this controversial term—multiracial—and the risks and rewards it represents in a unique way. The macro level studies included argue that the historical production of race as a technology of management was used on a large scale to rank and order society, allocate resources and, in the process advantage and disadvantage certain groups. On the other hand, the personal meditations included demonstrate how mixed race operates as an identity and technology of power. By using and redefining racial categories in new ways, these contributions show us how to mobilize race in public and private.

We share three versions of what we have learned by thinking and talking about race as technology. Act 1 we call “Mixed Race 1.0: A Monologue.” Or, how did multiracial identities emerge in the United States? And what challenges did they face? Act 2 is “Mixed Race 2.0: A Dialogue.” Or, what are some core differences between how multiracials think about themselves and how society has thought about them? And what opportunities have been presented globally? Act 3 is “Mixed Race 3.0: A Megalogue.” Or, how are multiracial identities changing society, impacting the globe, and—more generally—where in the world is all of this going as information and communication technology play more of a role?

We suggest that the versions of multiracialism we have presented are worth the time it will take for politicians, pundits, marketers, educators, engineers and lawmakers to consider. If current trends continue (and there is every reason to believe they will), multiracials will increase in numbers over the coming generations. Marketing professionals, politicians, lawmakers, engineers and educators will therefore have to contend with a growing demographic that is changing the way race and identity shape our social and political landscapes.

As we are now only beginning to see, questions about who multiracials are and what multiracialism means and questions about relationships to the past and to the future ahead of us all

need to be asked and answered anew. Specific ways of talking and thinking about multiracials may come and go, but the underlying questions about our experiences are here to stay. We will not turn the clock back on these. Cheerios commercials and YouTube debates may end up being fads from Mixed Race 3.0, but the risks and rewards of multiracialism in the digital age will continue to develop as we go forward.

Ulli K. Ryder and Marcia Alesan Dawkins are the editors of Mixed Race 3.0; buy it here.

This entry was posted on Wednesday, February 18th, 2015 at 6:10 pm and is filed under Discourse, Lifestyle
You can follow any responses to this entry through the Comments (RSS) feed. You can leave a response, or trackback from your own site.