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Moving beyond the black-white binary that has long framed racial discourse in the United States, the contributors to this collection examine how the experiences of Latinos and Asians intersect in the formation of the U.S. nation-state. They analyze the political and social processes that have racialized Latinos and Asians while highlighting the productive ways that these communities challenge and transform the identities imposed on them. Each essay addresses the sociopolitical predicaments of both Latinos and Asians, bringing their experiences to light in relation to one another.

Several contributors illuminate ways that Latinos and Asians were historically racialized: by U.S. occupiers of Puerto Rico and the Philippines at the end of the nineteenth century, by public health discourses and practices in early-twentieth-century Los Angeles, by anthropologists collecting physical data_height, weight, head measurements_from Chinese Americans to show how the American environment affected "foreign" body types in the 1930s, and by Los Angeles public officials seeking to explain the alleged criminal propensities of Mexican American youth during the 1940s. Other contributors focus on the coalitions and tensions between Latinos and Asians in the context of the fight to integrate public schools and debates over political redistricting. One addresses masculinity, race, and U.S. imperialism in the literary works of Junot Díaz and Chang-rae Lee. Another looks at the passions, identifications, and charges of betrayal aroused by the sensationalized cases of Elián González, the young Cuban boy rescued off the shore of Florida, and Wen Ho Lee, the Los Alamos physicist accused of spying on the United States. Throughout this volume contributors interrogate many of the assumptions that underlie American and ethnic studies even as they signal the need for a research agenda that expands the purview of both fields.