

Lecture 3

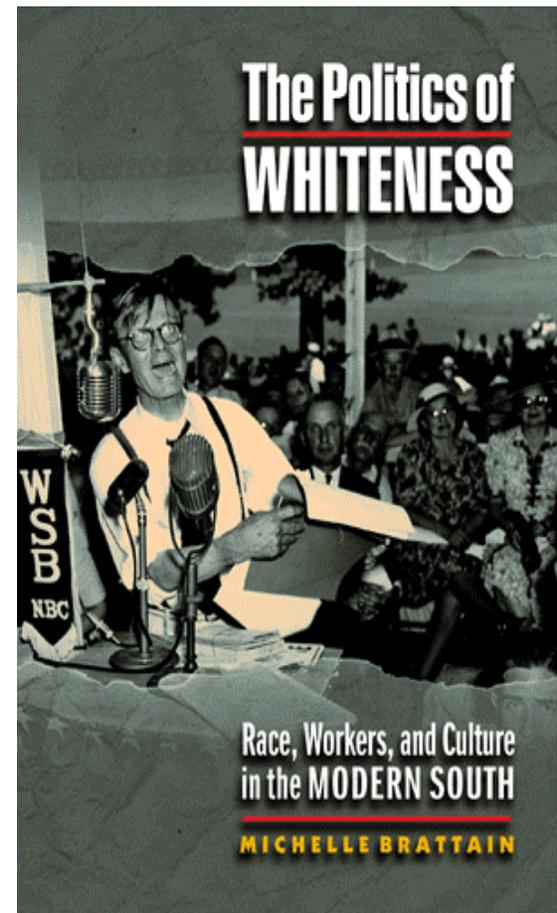
Ethnicity and Race Contrasted

Question

- Are races ethnic groups?
- Sometimes yes, sometimes no
- Races may be, but are not necessarily ethnic groups

Part I: Differences Between Race and Ethnicity

- Most societies treat race and ethnicity differently.
- In the US, “Whiteness” is a racial category set apart from Non-white, and offers more **privileges** for whites.
- Race is a way to organize (and stratify) society based on ideology within its culture.



Essentialism

- The tendency to discursively **reduce** a whole group of people to a number of **essential** characteristics (often negative) which are then taken to explain that groups behaviour, values, attitudes, cultural practices and material circumstances.

Whiteness

- Audrey Thompson writes how whiteness is thought of as "natural,“; it is understood in essentialized terms -- either as a personal attribute or as a scientific category.
- Conceived of as legal or cultural property, whiteness can be seen to provide material and symbolic privilege to whites, those passing as white, and sometimes honorary whites.

Whiteness and Privilege

- Examples of material privilege would include better access to higher education or a choice of safe neighborhoods in which to live; symbolic white privilege includes conceptions of beauty or intelligence that not only are tied to whiteness but that implicitly exclude blackness or brownness.

Being White and US History

- Black, Asian, Latino, Native Americans, Jews and Irish (and others) have been perceived as **non-Whites** at one time or another in the United States.
- These groups have struggled to alter this perception to avoid paying the costs of being in this “subordinate” position.

The 'Uncle Tom' and Black Americans

- Humiliatingly subservient.
- Loyal but stupid.
- Childlike, unthinking and fearful.
- The 'good servant'
- In some African American communities "Uncle Tom" is a slur used to disparage a Black person who is humiliatigly subservient or deferential to White people.



Colonialism and Whiteness

- Justification of domination
- Binary construction between whiteness and blackness
 - Civilised – savage
 - Christian – heathen ('white man's burden')
 - Entrepreneurial – lazy
 - Adult – childlike
 - Moral and controlled - oversexed



'The White Man's Burden'



The first step towards lightening
The White Man's Burden
is through teaching the virtues of cleanliness.
Pears' Soap

is a potent factor in brightening the dark corners of the earth as civilization advances, while amongst the cultured of all nations it holds the highest place—it is the ideal toilet soap.

- First appeared in *McClure's Magazine* (1899).
- Text reads 'Pears soap is a potent factor in brightening the dark corners of the earth as civilisation advances while among the cultured of all nations it holds the highest place...'

Lumping Ethnic Diversity into Racial Categories

- **Latino:** Cubans, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Chileans
- **Asian:** Vietnamese, Cambodian, Chinese, Japanese.
- **Native American:** Numerous “tribes” such as Hopi, Navaho, Apache and Seminoles.

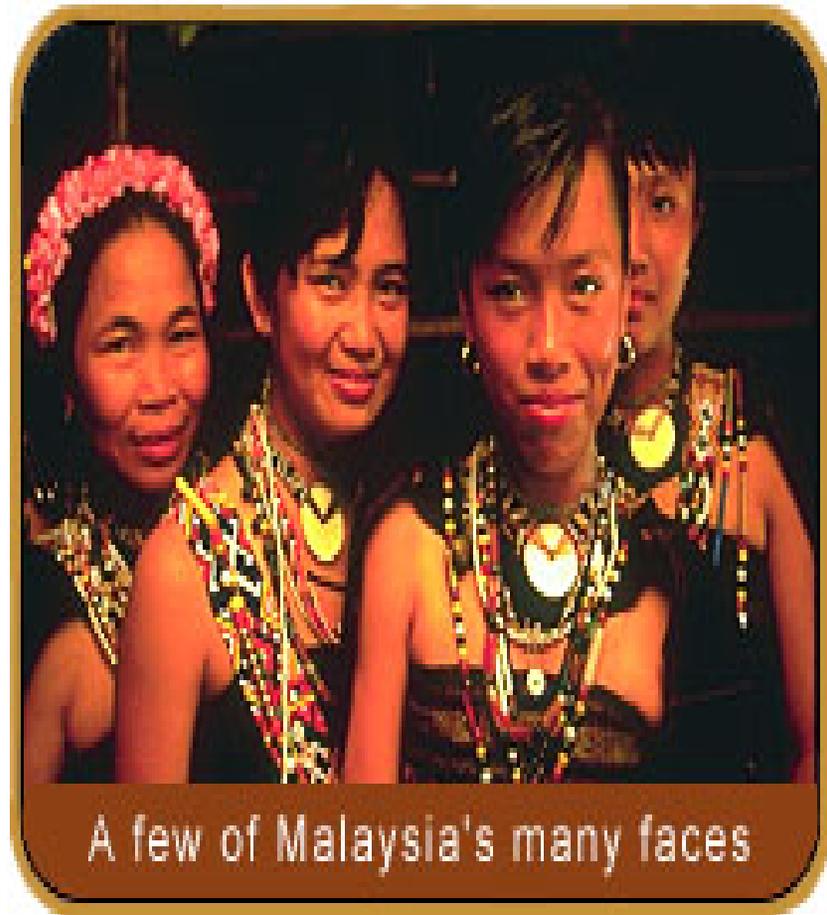
Ethnic diversity gets essentialized into bounded racial categories

Crossing the Racial Divide

- It is easier for a Puerto Rican to move into the category of Latino, but much more difficult to cease to become a Latino
- “Us” vs. “Them” has stressed diversity among Whites, yet homogeneity among Non-whites.

Four Distinct Meanings and Uses of Race

- “From a labour point of view, there are practically three races, the Malays, the Chinese, and the Tamils. By nature, the Malay is an idler, the Chinaman is a thief, and the Kling is a drunkard, yet each in his own class of work is both cheap and efficient, when properly supervised.



A few of Malaysia's many faces

Race/Ethnicity in Malaysia



FIGURE 1. Map of Contemporary Malaysia and Peninsular Malaysia

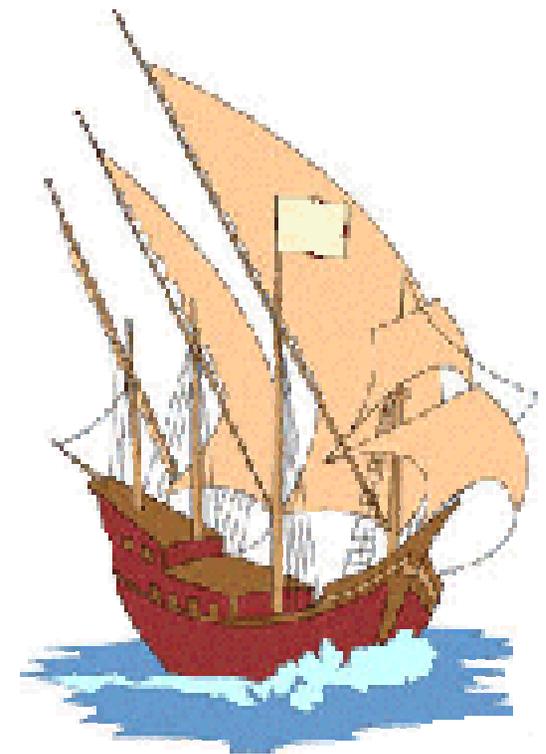
- Malay, Chinese, Indian
- Pre-colonial Era
- European Imperialism
 - 1511 to 1957
- Peasants and coolies
- Modernization
 - New opportunities
- Democracy
 - Subjects to citizens

1.) Race is Usually Assigned

- Outsiders (and not the group themselves) usually assigns the racial classification.
- In contrast, ethnicity often is **asserted** by the group themselves.
- The ethnically diverse Malay did not see themselves as a single people, and surely not a “race”. The Europeans created this identity.

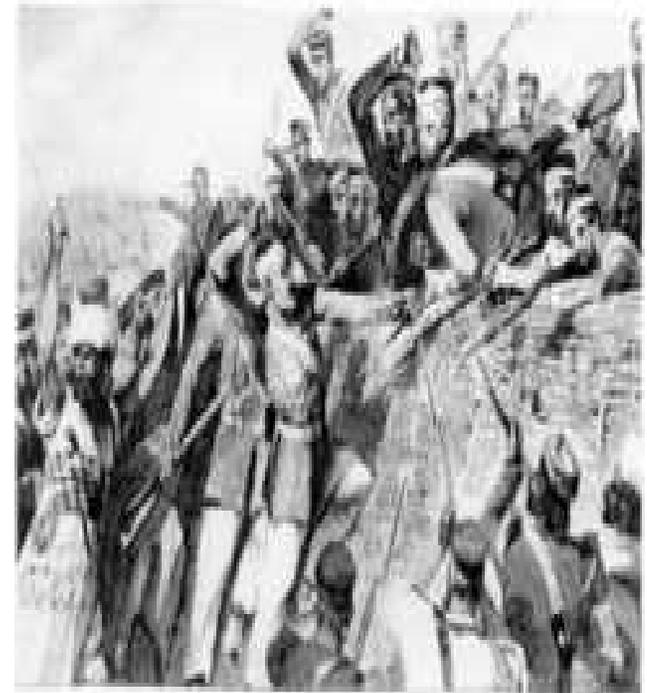
2.) Race is the Product of Modern Social Interaction

- Race became a dominant concept over the last few thousand years when human groups have become increasingly in contact with diverse peoples.
- 15th century European exploration.



3.) Race often is concerned with Power Relations

- Racial assignment often involves power, or the attempt of one group to have control over the behavior of another group.
- Explorers often had the motive to acquire and hold onto wealth.



Sepoy Rebellion in India

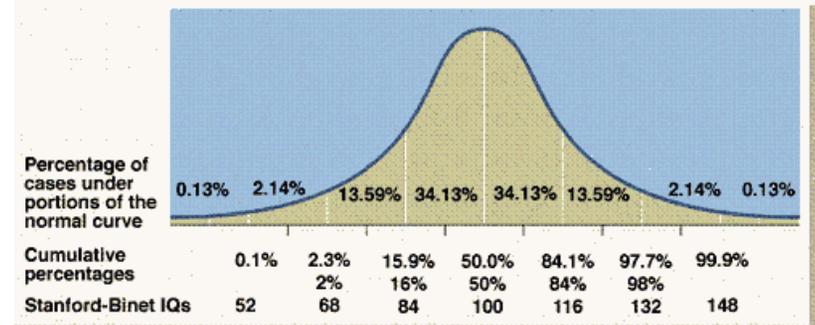
4.) Race Typically implies Inferiority

- Racial groups depicted as physically or mentally inferior to other groups.
- “By nature the Malay is an idler, the Chinaman is a thief, and the Kling is a drunkard”
- “... By nature” usually the worthiness of different groups is inherent and thought to be permanent and stable.

Race and Intelligence

- Intelligence is the capacity to process and evaluate information for problem-solving, whereas knowledge is storage and recall of learned information.
- IQ tests
 - Stanford-Binet (1905)
 - The Bell Curve (1994)
 - Rely largely on culture, environmental factors
- Other kinds of intelligence
 - [Howard Gardner](#) (1983) = linguistic, logical-mathematical, bodily-kinesthetic, spatial, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal

Normal Curve and the Stanford-Binet IQ Scores



“The Bell Curve”

- The 1994 book, *The Bell Curve*, by Herrnstein and Murray, stirred up a whirlpool of controversy
 - *The Bell Curve* argues:
 - IQ is largely genetically-determined
 - Minority groups (especially African Americans) are trapped in an IQ-lowering environment from which they are unlikely to emerge

The race and IQ myth

- Every generation for the last hundred years has seen attempts to promote racist ideologies about intelligence through science
- These attempts have always been refuted successfully by science
- **Why is this myth so persistent?**

Italians as an Example of Assigned Ethnicity

- Usually ethnicity is less likely to be assigned.
- However, the Italian immigrant experience is a counter example.

Italians

- Although Italy as a unified nation did not exist until 1861, the Italian peninsula has sent millions of its people to the shores of North America.
- These new arrivals thought of themselves as Neopolitans, Sicilians, Calabrians, or Syracuseans.
- They might not have understood each other's dialects, but on arrival in the United States they became Italian Americans.



Ethnocentrism vs. Race

- Ethnocentrism: belief in the normality and superiority of one's own people and their ways of doing things.
- Ethnocentrism is generally less strong in assumptions about the inherent, biologically inferiority and superiority typically attached to race.
- This is why most social scientists have shifted from the use of the term *race* to the term *ethnic group*.

Part II: Commonalities of Race and Ethnicity

- Clearly ethnicity and race are different concepts, so why are these considered together in this text?

1.) Terms are Used Interchangeably

- Although race and ethnicity are distinct, both social scientists and the society as a whole link these terms together.
- The terms are linked, but these are not the same.

2.) Both are products of interaction between diverse populations

- Social interactions lead groups to form a number of questions:

conceptual: What are important differences between us and them?

material: Can these differences be used for material advantage?

political: How can we control the situation in which we find ourselves.

3.) Both are held to be “natural” categories

- Categories usually based on common descent or origin.
- As we will discuss in the next few chapters, both ethnicity and race are elastic, and these identities depend far more on the claims people make about them than any physical or cultural trait.

4.) Race and ethnicity often overlap

- Sometime people share similar physical traits used to determine race as well as perceived common ancestry and sets of symbols and cultural traits.
- A race can become an ethnic group and a ethnic group can become a race.

Irish Americans

- Irish immigrants came in large numbers and first conceptualized as a racial group
- Later the Irish were categorized as “whites” from Europe.



Great famine in
Ireland

Ethnic Groups and Races

Identity	Ethnic group	Both	Race
Based on...	Common descent, shared history, symbols		Perceived physical differences
Origins....	Assigned or asserted		Assigned
and power...	May or may not reflect power		Reflects power relations
worth...	May or may not reflect worth		Inherent differences in worth
Constructed by ..	Selves and others	Selves and others	Others