argues that wilderness preservation may encourage the migration of dirty industries to poor communities whose members lack access to networks of power; Robert D. Bullard (2002) adds that the term "environmental racism" more accurately describes the environmental policies and industry practices that provide benefits to whites while shifting costs to people of color. Environmental justice movements, including the "environmentalism of the poor" in developing countries, place the survival of poor and marginalized people at the center of environmental activism. These movements seek freedom from state-centered and international development projects that excrete the toxins of affluent nations and local communities into poor communities.

Environmental justice activists charge deep ecologists with ignoring the problems of social and economic inequality on a global scale. Deep ecologists counter with the charge that the environmental justice position is reformist and anthropocentric, too firmly rooted in human communities. In contrast, deep ecology establishes itself as biocentric or ecocentric. The advantage of the latter position lies in its emphasis on the notion that "everything is connected"; its disadvantage is that it can be accused of ventriloquizing a natural world that cannot speak for itself. Herein lies the central paradox: Speaking for a natural world is a representational practice requiring the intervention of an authorized human agent. Biocentrism's radical displacement of human agency means that a powerful speaking human subject vanishes into nature, setting up an ideological fantasy of a world of total equality among humans, and between humans and nonhuman "nature" (van Wyck 1997). As Jim Tarter (2002, 213) puts this critique of biocentrism, "some live more downstream than others," and those people tend to be poorer and darker, and to have little or no access to environmental policymakers. In short, biocentrism risks masking the relationship between environmental exploitation and human exploitation. By contrast, the broader sense of the term "environment" can enable a questioning of relations of power, agency, and responsibility to human and nonhuman environments.

27
Ethnicity

Henry Yu

The term "ethnicity" gained widespread currency in the mid- to late twentieth century, naming a process by which individuals or groups came to be understood, or to understand themselves, as separate or different from others. This meaning of ethnicity commonly referred to the consciousness of exclusion or subordination, though it also indexed social practices—language, religion, rituals, and other patterns of behavior—that define the content of a group's culture. The spread of this theory of ethnic culture created two mutually exclusive, analytically separate categories: "ethnicity," defined as cultural traits, was utterly divorced from the workings of the physical body, defined as "race." When anthropologists such as Franz

Boas (1940) of Columbia University and sociologists and anthropologists from the University of Chicago began to teach students in the early twentieth century that cultural characteristics were the most interesting social phenomena for study, they spread at the same time the idea that any attention to physical characteristics was intellectually inappropriate. Attacking justifications for racial hierarchy grounded in biology, social scientists used the concept of ethnicity as a weapon against racial thinking.

"Ethnicity" thus became the term that named an alternative to the earlier biological emphases of racial hierarchy. In *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race* (1942), one of the most significant anti-racist books published in the twentieth century, anthropologist Ashley Montagu argued that race as a category of analysis should be dropped as a dangerous invention, and that "ethnic group" was a more neutral term. Ethnicity became synonymous with cultural difference, and any theory dependent upon physical characteristics was dismissed as racist. Similarly, the attempt by anthropologists such as Ruth Benedict (1934) to array societies in a spectrum of cultures aided this flattening of all human distinction into a matter of cultural or ethnic difference. Possibilities for the elimination of racial prejudice (defined specifically as the expression of conscious attitudes about a group of people considered racially different) depended upon a very specific definition of race as a form of consciousness. Race was a myth because it had no basis in biology, yet race as a consciousness about the importance of a set of physical attributes could still exist. Because consciousness of race was claimed to be merely one form of ethnic consciousness, race and ethnicity were concepts simultaneously distinct and indistinct from each other.

The subsuming of race under the broader category of ethnicity was both a significant attempt at offering a solution to racial conflict and a sign of the persistent difficulties with distinguishing between the two. As a matter of consciousness, the racial culture of "Negro Americans" was no different in kind than the ethnic culture of "Polish Americans," and purely cultural processes of assimilation could eliminate all differences between them. However, there were chronic difficulties with the distinction between race and ethnicity. W. Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole's widely read *Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups* (1945) exemplified the paradox inherent in this distinction. According to them, the host society accepted some groups more easily than others. Class differences tended to fragment ethnic groups, and the class mobility of some members of ethnic groups was the major determinant of acceptance within the host society. Most difficult to accept, however, were those groups seen to be racially different. Although Warner and Srole argued that group conflict was a matter of ethnic identification (in the sense that the host society viewed a group as different, and the group viewed themselves as different), they also assumed that there was some characteristic that set apart ethnic groups that were racially defined. The "future of American ethnic groups seems to be limited," Warner and Srole concluded; "it is likely that they will be quickly absorbed. When this happens one of the great epochs of

American history will have ended and another, that of race, will begin" (295).

This sense that a great epoch of ethnicity was about to end at mid-century was a product of a crucial social transformation in the decades following the explicitly racialized immigration exclusion policies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By the 1920s, U.S. social scientists (some of whom were themselves either migrants or children of migrants) had created a body of theories of race and culture that had grown out of studying mass migration (Yu 2001). The most significant of these studies were associated with sociologists such as William I. Thomas (1918–20) and Robert E. Park (1950) at the University of Chicago. Park and Thomas were at the forefront of an attempt to advance a new theory about social interaction based upon the concept of culture. In opposition to earlier theories about the importance of inherited characteristics and physical bodies in determining human behavior, cultural theories emphasized the centrality of consciousness, of the mental attitudes and forms of self-understanding that people communicated through writing, speech, and other media. One of the most important of these theories concerned what Park and Thomas labeled "cultural assimilation," the process by which two groups communicated with each other and came to share common experiences, memories, and histories. Applied specifically to U.S. immigrants, the theory of assimilation promised that any migrant, no matter how different in language, religion, or other social practices at the moment of arrival, could learn to assimilate national cultural norms. This historically progressive vision of the United States became the foundation for later arguments about ethnic consciousness, self-identity, and group identity.

At the same time, the twentieth-century "alchemy of race" (Jacobson 1998) had its origins in the mechanisms by which European immigrants who were defined at the beginning of the century as racially different came to be seen as "white" ethnics by the end of the century (Brodkin 1998). Along with the intellectual transformation wrought by cultural theory, popular writers such as Louis Adamic, who was himself of recent immigrant ancestry, pushed for an overcoming of the nativist divide between old and new U.S. Americans. In books such as *From Many Lands* (1940) and *Nation of Nations* (1944), Adamic reconceived the United States as a land of immigrants, subsuming what had earlier been major dividing lines such as religion and language into mere differences of ethnic culture. At the same time (and with Adamic's assistance), organizations such as the National Council of Christians and Jews, founded in 1928, were striving to unify Protestants, Catholics, Orthodox Christians, and Jews into a so-called Judeo-Christian tradition. This period also saw widespread mass-cultural arguments for the end of religious discrimination, perhaps most visibly in 1950s Hollywood motion pictures such as *The Ten Commandments* (1956) and *Ben-Hur* (1959). The focus upon the assimilation of religious differences, powerfully propelled by wartime propaganda against the genocidal science of Nazism, helped label anti-Semitism and anti-Catholicism as un-American.

By the end of the 1950s, class mobility fueled by the postwar Montgomery G.I. Bill and federal subsidies of suburban housing had made Adamic's dream of an amalgamation of new and old seem viable.

The truth is that such programs of social engineering were predominantly focused on men able to pass as white. Immigrants who had been treated in the period between 1890 and 1920 as racially different (Slavs, Jews, Southern Europeans such as Italians, Greeks, and Armenians) were now transformed into white ethnics, mere varieties of white people. Just as dividing lines over religion, which had seemed intractable a generation before, were now reduced to mere denominational differences, all such culturally defined elements of difference had disappeared into a generic whiteness marked only superficially by vestiges of ethnic culture. Ironically, the civil rights movement of the 1950s helped reinforce this process of ethnic transformation. Jewish American intellectuals of the 1930s and 1940s had been at the forefront of political coalitions with African Americans seeking civil rights. Similarities in discrimination and exclusion at work, and in the legal segregation of housing and public facilities, had drawn Jewish and African Americans together to fight for civil rights. However, paralleling the larger transformation of white ethnics, Jewish Americans by the end of the civil rights era had become solidly white, even if anti-Semitism remained in vestigial and virulent forms. The civil rights movement for blacks ended up helping immigrant groups that previously had been the targets of racial nativism to amalgamate into a new ethnic "whiteness."

Despite these formidable intellectual and political problems, "ethnicity" has continued to be used widely as a description of and prescription for social life. Indeed, the acceptance and eventual celebration of ethnic difference was one of the most significant transitions of the twentieth century. Coincident with the increasing awareness of migration at the beginning of the century, a cosmopolitan appreciation of exotic difference arose. Writing in the days before World War I, a number of New York intellectuals embraced the rich diversity of the city, forecasting that the eclectic mix of global migrants was the future of U.S. society. Randolph Bourne's vision of a "transnational America" (1916) and Horace Kallen's description of "cultural pluralism" (1915) argued against the xenophobia that fueled the immigration exclusion acts of the same period, replacing it with an embrace of the different. The consumption by elite whites of the music and art of the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s, along with periodic fads for Oriental art and so-called primitive tribal objects, reflected an embrace of the exotic as valuable. The celebration of exoticism in theories about the cosmopolitan self laid the groundwork for two major developments concerning ethnicity. The first was the theoretical foundation for the commercialization of ethnic difference; the second was the creation of a new definition of elite, enlightened whiteness.

Beginning with the fascination with exotic art forms in modernism, but also embodied in the hunger for ethnic food and objects, a tasteful appreciation of the exotic became part of an educational program to combat racism and ignorance in the 1960s. At the

same time that education was touted as the answer to race relations, ethnic music and other forms of exotic art and entertainment were offered at first as alternatives to the mass productions of popular culture, and by the 1990s as important commodities distributed and consumed in the marketplace. Interestingly, the rise and spread of a cosmopolitan embrace of exotic difference helped expand the boundaries of whiteness. One of the ways in which those individuals formerly excluded as racially or ethnically suspect could "whiten" themselves was by embracing cosmopolitan ideas. Those who continued to express racist opinions were subsumed under the newly enlarged rubric of white racists (a category that "whitened" former ethnics at the same time that it tarred them as ignorant bigots of the lower classes). The embrace of cosmopolitan ideals offered a way of becoming an elite, enlightened white. Whether it was black music or Chinese food, an appreciation of exotic difference signaled one's aspiration to a higher class status. These ideas were spread through advertising and by an education system that began in the 1940s to promote this outlook on ethnicity and class.

By the end of the twentieth century, objects associated with ethnicity enjoyed a popular boom as commercial goods. Ethnic objects that had assumed the status of collectible art (such as African tribal masks and Native American totem poles); items of everyday use (such as Chinese woks and chopsticks or Scottish tartan kilts); performances of identity that could be consumed (ethnic music and dance): all were packaged as desirable objects of consumption. Ethnicity was something to be collected by a tasteful consumer able to appreciate an array of objects. This commercialization of ethnicity also allowed those identified as different to turn that identification into an object with value. Musical styles such as rhythm and blues, rock and roll, soul, rap, and hip-hop were marketed through an association with their black origins. By the 1970s, the commercialization of ethnicity extended to those ethnics who had been targets of xenophobia but were now comfortably white. White ethnics could continue to express cosmopolitan appreciation for the exoticism of nonwhites, but they could also embrace signs of their own ethnicity without fear of exclusion from the privileges of whiteness. White ethnicity was thus securely different from nonwhite racial ethnicity, and white ethnics drew upon a history as victims of discrimination in ways that attenuated their own enjoyment of the privileges of being white, even as it evoked parallels to the historical suffering of nonwhites.

There are many long-term legacies of this history of ethnicity, including the rise of "whiteness studies" and the current use of the term "ethnicity" in the U.S. media to describe a wide array of subnational and transnational conflicts. The ethnic cultural theory that underwrites these legacies derived its popular appeal from the combination of two elements. One was the description of how European immigrants were transformed into white ethnics during the mid-twentieth century; the other was the hope that this social process would also work for U.S. Americans subordinated as nonwhite. However, the extension of what Nathan Glazer (1983) called the "ethnic analogy" to