Chapter 1

Immigration, Race, Ethnicity, Colonialism

Buffalo, New York, December 2004. Thirty-four American citizens are detained for up to six hours at the U.S. border on their return from a religious conference in Toronto, entitled "Reviving the Islamic Spirit." They are forced by U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents to surrender their fingerprints. Newspapers the same day report that the United States has failed in its efforts to compile a national fingerprint data bank. They also report that the border has been reopened, after a mad cow disease scare, for cattle from the United States and Canada to move freely back and forth without restrictions or security checks. None, it may be assumed, are crossing the border to attend conferences on "Reviving the Bovine Spirit."[1]

Queens, New York, June 6, 1993. The *Golden Venture*, a rusting freighter of Indonesian registry, runs aground a few hundred feet off Rockaway Beach. After four months in the dank hold, 286 Chinese aspiring immigrants run onto the deck and plunge into the ocean, flailing toward shore. Ten drown and the others are arrested. Only about 10 are granted asylum; 100 are deported to Central America; and another one-third are sent back to China. Later, after nearly four years in jail, the final 53 are paroled by the Clinton administration and become immigrants of a sort. On that same day, a shining 747 disgorges several hundred Irish tourists at JFK airport. Dozens, perhaps scores of them overstay their visas and melt into the White American population. They become students, bartenders, actors, and accountants. No one hunts them down as illegal aliens. A decade later, some return to Ireland as its economic upturn begins to reverse the Irish exodus. Meanwhile, the Chinese would-be migrants await deportation.[2]

Los Angeles, April 29, 1992. A multiethnic riot erupts after a racially charged trial that results in the acquittal of four police officers who beat motorist Rodney King. The news media portray the riot as largely a Black-against-Korean confrontation. They show African American rioters targeting Korean American businesses and attacking random White passersby, while Korean shopkeepers defend their

property with guns. The Koreans are portrayed as the good minorities—owners of property, hard-working small business people, and law abiding—while the Blacks are lawless, violent, and bad minorities. Subsequent information and arrest records show that more Latinos than African Americans were arrested for looting, that Whites also took part in the looting, and that Black-owned businesses were also burned. Enduring issues such as police violence against Latinos and African Americans, the lack of jobs in the central city, and business flight from minority neighborhoods take a backseat to racial sensationalism.[3]

Pasadena, 1945. H. S. Tsien, Goddard Professor of Aeronautics at Cal Tech, is awarded a top security clearance, goes to Europe, interrogates Nazi scientists, brings their rocketry research back to the United States, and jump-starts the U.S. missile program. Five years later, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) accuses him of spying for China, the land of his birth, and revokes his security clearance. After another five years filled with McCarthy-era harassment, humiliation, and virtual house arrest, Tsien gives in to Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) attempts to deport him and moves to China. There he is chosen to head up the Chinese missile program and designs the Silkworm missile that is later sold to Iran and Iraq.[4]

The Southwest, 1930s. Under pressure from the federal government and local leaders, as many as one million Mexican Americans leave the United States. Some go voluntarily, some are coerced. In rural Texas, Los Angeles, the mines of Arizona, the fields of the San Joaquin Valley, and Henry Ford's Detroit, the INS sweeps up hundreds of U.S. citizens along with noncitizens, deposits them in northern Mexico, and denies them re-entry to the land of their birth. Two thousand Filipinos are similarly repatriated.[5]

Washington, D.C., 1924. Congress passes the Johnson–Reed Act. It bans immigration from Asia, including the foreign-born wives and children of U.S. citizens of Asian ancestry, and severely limits migration from Southern and Eastern Europe. Meanwhile, it leaves wide the gates for Northwest Europeans. President Calvin Coolidge and the bill's author Albert Johnson tie it explicitly to a theory of Nordic supremacy and their desire to keep America's people from being "diluted by a stream of alien blood." Many Asian and South and East European immigrants return home, discouraged. Others stay and try to find ways to bring their families together in America.[6]

Arizona Territory, September 1886. Goyathlay (Geronimo) and the Chiricahua Apaches surrender to the U.S. Army. Geronimo and his followers are taken from their homeland to a prison compound in Florida, then to Alabama. They are never allowed to return home. One-quarter century later Geronimo dies in captivity at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. The Chiricahua Apache surrender follows on the heels of warfare and death or incarceration for other Native peoples of the American West: Captain Jack and the Modocs in 1872; Crazy Horse and the Oglala Sioux in 1877; Chief Joseph and the Nez Percé in the latter year; and many other Native groups. Thus ends the era of Indian armed resistance to European immigration.[7]

Russia, 1881. The murder of Tsar Alexander II leads to a wave of *pogroms*, officially encouraged riots targeted at Jewish communities. Thousands are rendered homeless. Coming after decades of punitive laws and followed by decades more of violence, the *pogroms* send into exile two million Jews—one-third of the East European Jewish population. Many make their way to America, through Castle Garden to the Lower East Side of Manhattan or to other destinations, there to build new Jewish communities and a new Judaism.[8]

Promontory Point, Utah Territory, May 10, 1869. Leland Stanford, president of the Central Pacific Railroad, drives the Golden Spike, completing the Transcontinental Railroad. Engineers shake hands. Euro-American train operators, dignitaries, and laborers (many of them immigrants) look on. Missing from the picture are the thousands of Chinese immigrant workers who also built the railroad, constructing the more difficult and dangerous western half of the route. Missing, too, are the tens of thousands of Native Americans who will be forced to leave their homes to make way for land-hungry Euro-American immigrants brought by the train.[9]

Northern Mexico, May 30, 1848. The United States concludes its war of aggression against Mexico by seizing the Mexican northlands. That territory later forms the greater part of seven southwestern U.S. states. By the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, some of the 100,000 Mexican citizens who live in the transferred territory become American citizens. They are granted elements of formal, legal Whiteness, though ever after they are relegated to second-class social Brownness. Others become foreigners in their native land. Land titles are voided, occupations are blocked, lynching is common. The United States seeks to Americanize its new empire from Texas to California, imposing the English language, American laws and courts, American food and dress, and American racial hierarchy on the inhabitants.[10]

Ireland, 1846. A particularly vicious fungus attacks potatoes across Ireland for the second year in a row, turning 80 percent of the main food crop into rotting, gooey, black blobs in the ground. Faced with starvation and a hostile English master class, hundreds of thousands of Irish peasants leave their lands. Many go to work in factories in Liverpool and the British Midlands, others to Australia and New Zealand. The largest number join the stream to America that will total four million Irish migrants by the founding of the Irish Republic in 1921–1922. Most are near penniless when they arrive. They land in eastern cities where they form the shock troops of the U.S. Industrial Revolution. Ireland never regains its lost population—eventually nine times as many Irish descendants live in the United States as in the Old Sod.[11]

Cherokee Nation, 1838. Under orders from Congress and President Andrew Jackson, General Winfield Scott and U.S. troops round up substantially the entire population of the independent, sovereign Cherokee Nation and place them in stockades. Over the ensuing months, several detachments—some guarded by U.S. soldiers, some under tribal leaders like John and Lewis Ross—make the 800-mile trek to a new "Indian Territory" west of the Mississippi River. At least one-quarter of the Cherokee population, and perhaps as many as 8000, die in the stockades or along the way. This Trail of Tears is the final removal of Native peoples from the Southeastern

United States, preceded by the removal of the Chickasaw, Creek, Choctaw, and Seminole peoples, to make way for Euro-American migration into their homelands.[12]

East Coast, December 1773 to March 1776. Eight thousand migrants from England come to the thirteen colonies in eastern North America. Hailing from London and the Thames Valley, from Yorkshire, and from points all over the island, the largest numbers land in ports such as New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. Leaving unemployment and landlord tyranny, or seeking to become landowners themselves, they quickly spread across the landscape from New England to the Carolinas. Others like them go to Nova Scotia and the West Indies.[13]

Taos, New Mexico, August 10, 1680. The Pueblo Indians revolt against their Spanish overlords. After eighty years of mostly peaceful Spanish occupation and agricultural cooperation, Native peoples from most Pueblos in New Mexico rise in revolt. They kill or drive out the Spanish friars, farmers, and ranchers from the countryside and lay siege to Santa Fe. On September 21 they allow a remnant of Spanish soldiers and citizens to evacuate the smoldering town. The Spanish do not reclaim the territory until a dozen years later.[14]

Chesapeake Colonies, 1640–1700. Slavery and race become entwined. African immigrants and their descendants are gradually pushed from a semi-free condition as indentured servants into slavery. The labor force on tobacco plantations is transformed from mostly White to mostly Black, from mostly indentured to mostly enslaved. In 1640 John Punch, a Black indentured servant, runs away with two White comrades. When they are caught, the Whites are sentenced to extra years as servants, and Punch to slavery for life. In 1676 Nathaniel Bacon leads a revolt of White servants and African slaves against the colony's leaders in a dispute over Indian policy. The revolt fizzles, but the White elite is convinced that they need a stronger hold on the working population and makes a rapid transition to African American slavery as the labor system of choice.[15]

Plymouth, December 21, 1620. A boatload of illegal immigrants from England sneaks ashore. Chartered to make their homes in Virginia, the Pilgrims, led by Governor John Carver and soldier of fortune Miles Standish, wander off course—either accidentally or intentionally, we cannot be sure. They suffer terribly that first winter: half of them die from cold, scurvy, and malnutrition. They survive only because Squanto and the Wampanoag Indians give them food and show them how to prosper in this new place, in return for their pledge to help the Wampanoags fight against the neighboring Narragansetts. Squanto does not ask for their green cards.[16]

All of these are parts of the story of immigration in U.S. history.

Beyond Ellis Island—How Not to Think about Immigration History[17]

"America is a nation of immigrants." Who has not heard this phrase? It is a sentiment close to the core of America's vision of itself. The statement is formally true—more than 99 percent of the current U.S. population can at least theoretically trace its ancestry back to people who came here from somewhere else. In this sense,

American history is inevitably the history of immigration. Yet this perspective also obscures a great deal about the nature of the peoples who have made up America and the relationships among them.

The rhetorical vision of the United States as a nation of immigrants has a marvelous quality of national self-celebration about it. It proclaims proudly that we are a people made up of all the world's peoples. Here, all the varieties of humankind are fused into one American identity. J. Hector St. John Crèvecoeur, himself an immigrant from France to late-colonial America, put the matter perhaps first and most memorably in his *Letters from an American Farmer* in 1782:

> What then is the American, this new man? He is either an European, or the descendant of an European, hence that strange mixture of blood, which you will find in no other country. I could point out to you a family whose grandfather was an Englishman, whose wife was Dutch, whose son married a French woman, and whose present four sons have now four wives of different nations. *He* is an American, who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds. He becomes an American by being received in the broad lap of our great *Alma Mater*. Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men, whose labours and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world. Americans are the western pilgrims, who are carrying along with them the great mass of arts, sciences, vigour, and industry which began long since in the east; they will finish the great circle. The Americans were once scattered all over Europe; here they are incorporated into one of the finest systems of population which has ever appeared, and which will hereafter become distinct by the power of the different climates they inhabit. The American ought therefore to love this country much better than that wherein either he or his forefathers were born.[18]

Soaringly poetic though it be, this vision masks the profound power dynamics that have existed among America's peoples. Carl Wittke wrote the first large, comprehensive, and widely read history of American immigration, which he titled *We Who Built America: The Saga of the Immigrant*. Wittke rhapsodized about the glorious mix of peoples who made up the United States. But for Wittke as for Crèvecoeur, that meant Northwest European peoples. Four-fifths of Wittke's 500-plus pages described immigrants from Holland, France, Wales, Ireland, Germany, Scandinavia, and so on. Less than one-fifth of the pages were devoted to South and East European migrants; they were numerous, but presumably they were not as central to the American project as the others. Wittke had only fourteen pages for Asians, three for Mexicans, and none at all for Africans or Native Americans—apparently they did not contribute to the building of America.[19]

This understanding of immigration is built on an interlocking set of unexamined assumptions about how various racial and ethnic groups have in fact functioned in relationship to each other in American history. For example, while the nation-of-immigrants ideology perfunctorily recognizes that the people who came to North America from England were immigrants, it does not treat them that way. On the contrary, it posits the English as by definition native to the American landscape, and measures others with respect to English Americans. Milton Gordon identified this assumption a couple of generations ago as "Anglo-conformity": all other people in

the United States would be expected to change their behavior to approximate that of Americans of English descent.[20] There is something more insidious, however, than mere Anglo-conformity going on here. "Conformity" implies a certain volition on the part of the conforming person, a willingness to give up her or his preferred behavior patterns in return for a measure of acceptance. But in the case of Anglo-Americans, the assumption is unspoken but insistent that English people are natural Americans and every other sort of people are less so. One might call this "Anglo-normativity."

We can see Anglo-normativity at work in the writing of Peter Brimelow. Here a recent immigrant from England talks savagely and disparagingly about how inappropriate are immigrants from other places, as if his very Englishness made him a natural American: "The problem is not necessarily immigration in principle—it's immigration in practice. Specifically, it's the workings of the 1965 Immigration Act and its subsequent amendments. … [Before the 1965 act], immigrants came overwhelmingly from Europe … ; now, immigrants are overwhelmingly visible minorities from the Third World. … The mass immigration so thoughtlessly triggered in 1965 risks making America an *alien nation* … America will become a freak among the world's nations because of the unprecedented demographic mutation it is inflicting on itself" by taking in non-White, non-English immigrants. "[C]urrent immigration policy is Adolf Hitler's posthumous revenge on America."[21]

Oscar Handlin was for many years regarded as the premier historian of U.S. immigration. His book *The Uprooted*, a monument to historical empathy, begins with the words: "Once I thought to write a history of the immigrants in America. Then I discovered that the immigrants *were* American history." Yet all of Handlin's immigrants are Europeans, and none of them are English. The same is true for Handlin's book *Immigration as a Factor in American History.* He goes on at length about "old world background, the economic adjustment, immigrant organization," and other issues. But he only talks about Asians in a few pages on "color prejudice" near the end of the book, and does not talk about English Americans, nor about other peoples of color at all; apparently they are not part of the immigrant experience. In a more recent generation, John Bodnar contested many of Handlin's conclusions in *The Transplanted*. But still, for Bodnar as for Handlin, immigration meant primarily non-English Europeans. Like so many others who think about U.S. immigration, for these authors English people were not immigrants but natural Americans, and non-White peoples were not in the picture at all.[22]

The story of American immigration has thus almost always been portrayed as a series of one-way migrations by successive waves of European but non-English peoples, from an Old Country (which was for one reason or another a bad place to live) to the New Country (which was by self-definition good). They left the Old Country—uprooted in Handlin's telling, transplanted in Bodnar's—and came to America on a one-way ship. Crèvecoeur assumed that anyone who left Europe for America had been poor and miserable in Europe, and that one came to America to become prosperous and happy. That is the understanding that Emma Lazarus celebrated when she wrote the words that appear at the base of the Statue of Liberty: "Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the nameless, tempest-tost to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"[23]

We may call this the Ellis Island paradigm[24] or the immigrant assimilation model. According to the model, the task of these peoples was to become Americanized, that is, to become facsimiles of English-descended Americans. Secretary of

State John Quincy Adams put the issue clearly, in an 1819 letter to German Baron von Furstenwäther responding to a question about the prospects for German migrants in the United States: "To one thing they must make up their minds, or, they will be disappointed in every expectation of happiness as Americans. They must cast off the European skin, never to resume it. They must look forward to their posterity rather than backward to their ancestors"—they must, in short, assimilate to Anglo-American norms.[25]

Thus the story of immigration has been presented as the same story over and over again. Wittke enunciated the paradigm, but its outlines had been agreed upon for many decades before he wrote, and they remain barely challenged today. First there was "The Old Immigration" of the middle of the nineteenth century: people from Ireland, Germany, and Scandinavia came to America and became like Anglo-Americans. Then there was "The New Immigration" of the period 1880 to 1924: people came from Italy, Poland, Greece, and other parts of Southern and Eastern Europe and did their best to become like Anglo-Americans.[26] Each of these "waves" of immigration is treated analytically as more or less the same.[27] In the twentieth century, writers have referred to "The Third Wave" and even "The Fourth Wave," all following more or less the same pattern, though with populations that diverged more and more from the assumed Anglo-American central group, and so were less able to make the prescribed cultural transformation.[28]

According to the immigrant assimilation model, culture change is the story. In the migrant generation the people in question were foreign to the mainstream American identity. They spoke a "foreign" language (so regarded because the natural language of the United States is presumed to be English); they wore foreign clothes, ate foreign foods, thought in ways that were foreign to Anglo-America. By choice or by compulsion, they associated mainly with people from their ancestral homeland. In succeeding generations they peeled off the cultural markers of their difference—they learned unaccented American English, changed their clothes and manners, adopted new associates—and gradually they became Americans. Richard Alba and Victor Nee put the matter succinctly:

> The mainstream of American life has demonstrated since the colonial period a remarkable capacity to draw into its swift currents the descendants of successive waves of immigrants. Individuals and families descended from the mass immigrations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have joined the mainstream. … The descendants may choose to celebrate their ethnic identity and cultural roots, but their ethnicity has greatly diminished as an ascriptive trait that decisively shapes life chances. The processes that brought about this outcome are the motor of American assimilation.[29]

Thus relationships between groups had nothing to do with power, economic station, race, slavery, oppression, discrimination, or displacement of Native peoples. They had only to do with how well immigrants adapted culturally to the Anglo-American norm. There is no power, there is only culture.[30]

It is as if America were a giant metaphoric escalator. Every new group starts at the bottom and makes its way inexorably up to the top over the course of three or four generations. It is mechanical, inevitable; it just happens that way. Along the way, in order to stay, each group must jettison the things that distinguish it from other

Americans: language, religion, ways of thinking. At the top, people are all the same and cease to have ethnicity. They are simply Americans, and American democracy is triumphant.[31]

Part of the embrace of a self-celebratory paradigm may have to do with people's filiopietistic motivations for studying immigration history. I have written elsewhere that those who write the history of Christianity almost always place their own denominational roots at the center of the story. Their religious grandparents, if you will, are for them the pivot point around which the whole of Christian history revolves, the seed crystal that gives form to the entire edifice. A Roman Catholic, a Baptist, and a Russian Orthodox history of Christianity resemble each other only in the vaguest of outlines.[32] So it is with the history of immigration. As Diane Johnson reminds us, "Just as civilizations have foundation myths, Americans have arrival myths, the whole collective notion of the huddled masses yearning to breathe free mixed with the particular memories of a grandparent arrived at Ellis Island. … Underlying the arrival story in each region of America [and for each ethnic group]—and all are different—was the same explicit promise of freedom and opportunity, usually meaning freedom from persecution and freedom to become rich."[33]

So for most historians of immigration, their own forebears or some other group with whom they identify become the template for all immigration experiences. And just as almost all historians of immigration are European Americans, nearly all the templates are European American templates. The stories of their European immigrant ancestors, coming through Castle Garden or Ellis Island in New York and settling in the northeastern part of the United States, become *the* story of immigration. Everything that does not fit that story is epiphenomenal. European American experiences are the really real. If some peoples of color have different experiences, those are just exceptions.

The story of European immigration through places like Ellis Island is *part* of the story of immigration in American history, but it is only a part, and it has never been more than that. *Almost All Aliens* tells that story, but it tells the other stories too, and it relates them one to another.

The Ellis Island version of immigration history leaves out a mountain of essential material and vital perspectives. As noted above, it treats English Americans as the quintessential natives, not as immigrants. It ignores the fact that tens of thousands of English people kept coming to the United States each year throughout the supposed periods of the Old and New Immigration and after. It may surprise some readers to learn that more than twice as many migrants came to the United States from Britain in the single decade of the 1880s than came from all of Europe during the entire colonial era. It may surprise them further to learn that as many British immigrants came to the United States during the 1990s as during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries combined.[34]

Whether those English people migrated in the 1690s or the 1960s, they entered a multicultural America. The European-centered assimilation model also ignores the fact that America has always been a profoundly multicultural place, a nation of peoples far more diverse than that model has room for. Yet the most knowledgeable people in such matters refuse to let us see the South in the colonial era as simply Black and White, and insist that it was always a zone of complex interactions between various peoples whom it is probably unfair to simplify into merely Red, White, and Black. Likewise, California, Texas, Kansas, the Pacific Northwest, and other parts of the country were zones characterized for a very long time by complex,

evolving sets of relationships between multiple peoples: Native Americans of various groups, different sorts of Europeans, Mexicans, African-descended peoples, several kinds of Asians.[35]

The Ellis Island interpretation further refuses to treat Africans as part of the history of migration to North America at all. Because they do not fit the escalator model, they are epiphenomenal. Will Herberg, much-revered pioneer scholar of immigrant religion, had only a footnote for Blacks and Latinos:

> Two major groups stand measurably outside this division of American society into three "melting pots" [Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish]—the Negroes and the recent Latin-American immigrants (Mexicans in the southwest, Puerto Ricans in New York and other eastern centers). Ethnic amalgamation within the religious community does not yet include them to any appreciable extent; their primary context of self-identification and social location remains their ethnic or "racial" group. … The future of the Negroes in the United States constitutes a much more difficult problem, about which very little may be said with any assurance today.[36]

African-descended people had been on the continent for 350 years, but still very little could be said about them, because they did not fit the model; they were exceptions to be ignored.

Some immigration writers have actually tried to fit African Americans into an escalator model, arguing that they did not get on the escalator until the early decades of the twentieth century, when large numbers migrated from the rural South to the urban North. Hence, if they are a people apart still in America, it is only because of their very late entry. It has nothing to do with racial division and oppression. No one is to blame.[37]

Africans were in fact migrants, though compelled, and I argue in the chapters to come that they have undergone processes that are in some ways very similar to those of other immigrant groups—and in some ways they are profoundly different. It is essential to see both the similarities (many of which have to do with cultural processes) and also the differences (which have to do with race and power).[38] The relevant comparison for African American migrants is to compare the descendants of slaves and servants who came starting in the 1620s with the descendants of English people who came starting in the 1620s, not to compare Black Americans who migrated from the South to the North and West beginning at the dawn of the twentieth century with European immigrants to eastern seaports about the same time. Most U.S. historians would be surprised to learn that, in the generation before the American Revolution, between 1720 and 1760, more African migrants came to the thirteen colonies than European migrants: 159,000 Africans compared to 105,000 Europeans. African American migration dominated the demography of that era to an even greater extent than did European migration dominate the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century.[39]

Likewise, the immigrant assimilation model has no way to deal with Native Americans. In fact, like much of American mythic history, it tends to treat Native peoples like parts of the natural landscape—like antelopes and cougars, if you will, sometimes threatening and sometimes benign, but subject to removal and extermination without thinking.[40] It is this very naturalizing that leads a lot of White Americans to claim some Native American ancestry (always several generations back and

usually an Indian woman, preferably Cherokee).[41] As historian Philip Deloria put it, "Americans wanted to feel a natural affinity with the continent, and it was Indians who could teach them such aboriginal closeness. Yet, in order to control the landscape they had to destroy the original inhabitants." White Americans have played at being Indians, from the Boston Tea Party to the Boy Scouts to the New Age, in order to establish a national identity on the North American continent and to identify with that continent—in Deloria's words, "to encounter the authentic amidst the anxiety of urban industrial and postindustrial life. … Over the past thirty years, the counterculture, the New Age, the men's movement, and a host of other Indian performance options have given meaning to Americans lost in a (post)modern freefall. … Playing Indian is a persistent tradition."[42] Kevin Costner can dance with wolves and claim some Native American ancestry, in part because it costs him nothing and it makes him more American to do so. To be Native American, unlike to be Black, is to be naturally, primordially part of America. What this construction ignores is the manifestly larger and more important historical issue: White people killing Indians, spreading across the landscape, and taking it. All that is about race, power, and colonialism. These are central issues in the story of American immigration.

Nor does the Ellis Island model deal well with Mexican Americans. It insists on treating Mexicans as recent immigrants (*pace* Herberg above), when many are not immigrants at all, but rather the descendants of people who lived in lands that the United States conquered and took. In effect, the border crossed them. Others came later but still have lived in the United States for several generations—many for a century or more—yet the Ellis Island model treats them as recently arrived aliens.[43] The immigrant assimilation model posits a long distance between the country of origin and the United States, and with that distance little ongoing contact. The Old Country is left and the New Country is embraced. Many Mexican and other Western Hemisphere immigrants, by contrast, have maintained ongoing connections with their ancestral homelands, even as they have been full Americans.[44]

The immigrant assimilation model likewise cannot deal with such non-European immigrants as Chinese and Japanese. If Asians are included in the traditional interpretation at all, they are regarded as part of the New Immigration: more foreign culturally, more difficult to assimilate than Old Immigrants (so, by implication, if they have a hard time in America, it is their own fault for being culturally incompatible). How is it, then, that 230,000 Chinese came to the United States during the period of the Old Immigration, and only half that number during the period of the New? The Ellis Island paradigm has no answer. But Roger Daniels does: "The old typology between old and new simply assumed that immigrants were Europeans. Chinese, who came in the era of the old, and Japanese, who came in the period of the new, were treated as exotic exceptions when they were not written off as sojourners and thus not immigrants at all."[45]

The immigrant assimilation model also has no explanation for the stubborn fact that today American-born U.S. citizens of Asian and Mexican descent are regarded as foreigners in their native land by Whites, even those whose ancestry in the United States may be of substantially shorter duration. As Lisa Lowe puts it, "[T]he Asian is always seen as an immigrant, as the 'foreigner-within,' even when born in the United States and the descendant of generations born here before."[46] During the 1996 campaign of Washington State Governor Gary Locke, an American-born lawyer of Chinese descent, a third-generation American, he received the endorsement of the *Seattle Times*, the state's most prominent newspaper. Nonetheless, the *Times* felt

constrained to have an investigative reporter go through the list of contributors to Locke's campaign, highlight all the Chinese surnames, and check to see if they were U.S. citizens, hence eligible to contribute. They did not go through his opponents' lists of contributors looking for English or Scandinavian names and check to see if those people were citizens. Asians are treated as perpetual foreigners indeed.[47]

Moreover, the immigrant assimilation model is relentlessly unanalytical about key issues. For example, it never asks: What is a White person? What is a Black person, or an Italian for that matter? It merely assumes categories.[48]

Not Assimilation But Race Making

Race is a central, not a marginal, issue in U.S. immigration history. *Almost All Aliens* offers a new paradigm for interpreting the whole history of American immigration and identity, placing race at the center of the analysis, rather than on the margins as with the previous paradigm. This new view of U.S. immigration history will hold in tension three ways of thinking about their subject: the immigrant assimilation paradigm, the transnational diasporic model, and the theory of panethnic formation.

The Immigrant Assimilation Model

The Ellis Island paradigm, which I have been discussing for much of this chapter, tells part of the story. It is good at detailing the changes that take place in the behavior and cultural skills of migrants as they leave one place and enter another. Its emphasis on culture change over generations is particularly helpful when considering the dynamics within specific immigrant communities over extended periods of time.

The main rhetorical mode of the immigrant assimilation paradigm is the Melting Pot. Everyone since Crèvecoeur has heard that America is a great melting pot. The melting pot myth is an extremely powerful rhetorical tool. The idea is that people will come to the United States from all over the world. Each group will contribute a portion of its culture—food, language, religion, physical appearance. Out of the melting pot will come a proportional blend of all the peoples who make up America. It is a hopeful vision indeed. It promises respect for every individual and group. It promises that everyone who comes to America will change, and all will change together.

Ralph Waldo Emerson struck the note boldly: "[A]s in the old burning of the Temple at Corinth, by the melting and intermixture of silver and gold and other metals a new compound more precious than any, called Corinthian brass, was formed; so in this continent,—asylum of all nations,—the energy of Irish, Germans, Swedes, Poles, and Cossacks, and all the European tribes,—of the Africans, and of the Polynesians,—will construct a new race, a new religion, a new state, a new literature."[49] Israel Zangwill's 1908 play, *The Melting Pot*, echoed Emerson's theme. There, a Russian Jewish immigrant named David Quixano, in love with a native Gentile woman, nearly sings his joy in America: "America is God's crucible, the great Melting Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and re-forming! Here you stand, good folk, think I, when I see them at Ellis Island, here you stand in your fifty groups, with your fifty languages and histories, and your fifty blood hatreds and rivalries. But you won't be long like that, brothers, for these are the fires of God you've come to—these

are the fires of God. A fig for your feuds and vendettas! Germans and Frenchmen, Irishmen and Englishmen, Jews and Russians—into the Crucible with you all! God is making an American."[50]

The melting pot rhapsody underlay a 1993 special issue of *Time* magazine, on "How immigrants are shaping the world's first multicultural society." Never mind that there have been lots of multicultural societies before, from Byzantium to the Swahili Coast to Tang China to the Philippines. A little self-celebration sells magazines. On the cover was a picture of an impossibly beautiful woman, "The New Face of America." She was not an actual human being, but a computer creation, morphed from photos of dozens of actual people—purporting to represent the mathematical average of all the physical types present in the American population, in precise proportion to the size of the various groups half a century hence: 15 percent Anglo-Saxon, 17.5 percent Middle Eastern, 17.5 percent African, 7.5 percent Asian, 35 percent Southern European, and 7.5 percent Latino (Figure 1.1).[51]

All this is pleasant, positive, hopeful. The promise of the melting pot is that America will become a happy place where everyone blends together and turns out somewhere in the physical and cultural middle. But there is another—a hegemonic—side to the melting pot idea.

As Milton Gordon noted so trenchantly four decades ago, when someone invokes the melting pot, that person really means Anglo-conformity. That person is acting rhetorically, attempting to establish Anglo-American hegemony over other peoples in the United States.[52] As Will Herberg admitted, "Our cultural assimilation has taken place not in a 'melting pot,' but rather in a 'transmuting pot' in which all ingredients have been transformed and assimilated to an idealized 'Anglo-Saxon' model."[53] Whenever people invoke the melting pot, they are really pushing Anglo-conformity.[54] Gordon offers us another useful insight: a distinction between assimilation and acculturation. That is, "assimilation" he describes as the incorporation of an immigrant or racial minority group into the dominant Anglo-American group structurally, in terms of participation in dominant-group institutions, intermarriage, and common identification as one people. "Acculturation"—adoption of the cultural skills of the dominant Anglo-American group—Gordon argues, can take place without significant structural assimilation. Immigrants can learn English and eat American dishes without abandoning their connections with others from their immigrant group. Yet here, too, Gordon assumes that the change will be a one-way thing: the immigrant will acculturate to Anglo-American norms (speak English, become a Christian, and so forth). "Acculturation" is as laden with Anglo-conformity as is "assimilation."[55]

Eileen Tamura shows us a more fruitful way to think about acculturation. She makes a distinction between acculturation and Americanization. She analyzes the behavior of Nisei (that is, second-generation Japanese Americans) in Hawai'i in the decades surrounding World War II. Haoles (that is, Whites) controlled the social and political processes of the islands and used the public schools to Americanize the Nisei. They forced Nisei to learn national standard English, Anglo-American table manners, handwriting by the Palmer method, and the like. The Whites' goal was to create an educated Nisei servant class. The generation of Daniel Inouye and Patsy Mink, however, took those cultural tools and turned them against their would-be betters. They used their education and Anglo-American cultural skills, not to become servants to White people, but to seize control of the islands politically (and, to a lesser extent, socially).[56]

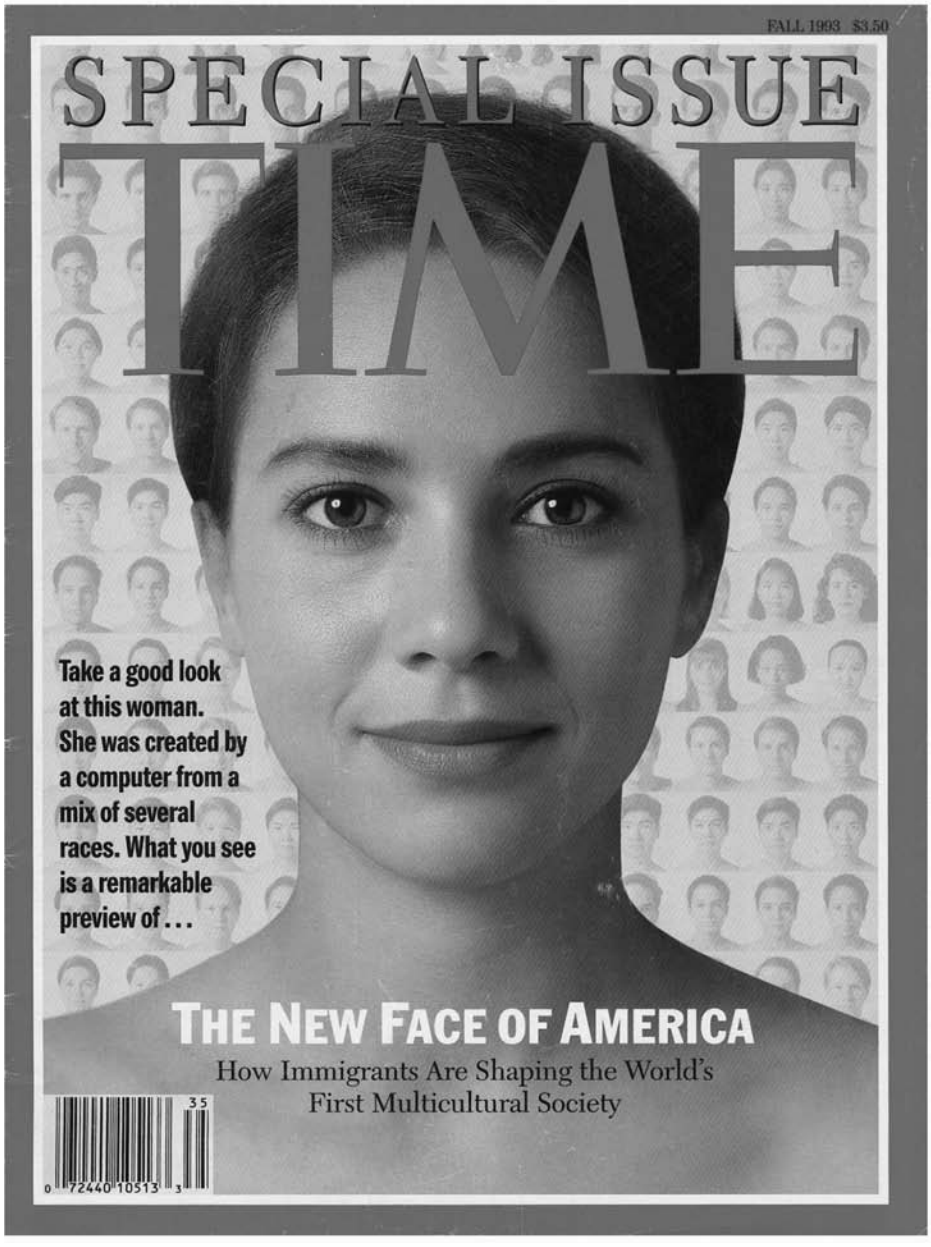

Figure 1.1 "The New Face of America," according to *Time*.

The question remains unresolved, however: must acculturation always be a one-way thing, non-Anglo Americans changing to conform to Anglo-American norms? Or can acculturation ever be a genuinely multiple-sided process, with all the peoples who make up America changing to meet with all the others? Can the promise of the melting pot become reality? It seems unlikely.

Even if there can be no melting pot, and there must be only Anglo-conformity, there are nonetheless issues and patterns that are common to the experience of many immigrant groups: the rigors of the journey, the shock of the new, alienation of the second generation from their parents, and a host of other processes. Yet I want to be wary of the unspoken assumption of the Ellis Island model: that every group in U.S. history is going through more or less the same process of assimilation and incorporation into a nonethnic American mass. The assumption of assimilation scholarship is that all American ethnic and racial groups are marching along the same pathway; perhaps they are at different points on that pathway, but they are all marching relentlessly, in Richard Alba's memorable phrase, "into the twilight of ethnicity" when they will be just undifferentiated Americans.[57] A couple of early twenty-first-century books even predict that, by 2050, Latinos and Asians will be White.[58] Can one imagine a person who used to be Chinese and now is White? It is a nonsensical assertion.

The contention of the assimilationists that all ethnic groups are traveling the same pathway is not accurate for the United States today, nor has it ever been accurate. Whatever similarities we may find between various groups, there is a fundamental difference between the experiences of peoples of color and those of White immigrants. Matthew Jacobson makes the case that there have been from time to time different shades or degrees of Whiteness.[59] Yet there is also a fundamental divide, historically and currently, between the experiences of the pigment poor and those of the pigment rich.[60] The assimilation model does not work for people of color. No amount of wishing will make it so.

The Ellis Island Museum in New York Harbor presents Ellis Island as "America's Gate." Well, it is one of America's gates. The story of Ellis Island and the Lower East Side is one of the stories of American immigration. European immigrant uplift over generations into fairly undifferentiated Whiteness is part of American immigration history, but there are other parts. The story of American immigration is also the story of Angel Island and East Los Angeles, and of the Rio Grande Valley, and of Miami, and the Canadian border. Many points of entry, many vectors of immigrant experience. Not just in the present but for all of America's past, the story of American immigration and identity has been a more complex one than the immigrant assimilation model can fully comprehend.

The Transnational Diasporic Model

Two interpretive paradigms, the transnational diasporic model and the panethnic or racial formation model, are useful as partners with the immigrant assimilation model.[61]

Much has been made in recent years about the diasporic nature of human migrations. People who have come to America typically have not, contrary to the assimilation model, cut off their ties to the places from which they came. That was as true for George Washington and Benjamin Franklin as for 1990s dot-com wizards from Madras. Washington, for example, was indeed America's first great general, national hero, and president. But he also was heir to a country house in the north of England where he might instead have chosen to live out his days as a gentleman. Franklin spent a third of his adult life in England and France, and he very nearly might have chosen to remain in Britain at the start of the American Revolution. Instead of a roll-the-dice, once-and-for-all abandoning of the ancestral homeland and

siding with the United States, for almost every American immigrant group, there has been a going and a coming, a continuing connectedness with the homeland, and also with other places to which migrants from one's homeland have gone. Many Greek and Italian villages by the 1930s and 1940s had aging residents who had spent their young adult years in the United States. And the Italians did not just come to the United States: many went to North Africa, Argentina, Brazil, and other places, just as the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English went not only to the United States and Canada, but also to Australia, India, East and South Africa, Aotearoa, Fiji, South America, and other places as well.[62]

Roger Rouse writes on the linked Mexican communities of Aguililla (Michoacán) and Redwood City (California):

> It has become inadequate to see Aguilillan migration as a movement between distinct communities, understood as the loci of distinct sets of social relationships. Today, Aguilillans find that their most important kin and friends are as likely to be living hundreds or thousands of miles away as immediately around them. More significantly, they are often able to maintain these spatially extended relationships as actively and effectively as the ties that link them to their neighbors. In this growing access to the telephone has been particularly significant, allowing people not just to keep in touch periodically, but to contribute to decision-making and participate in familial events from a considerable distance.[63]

The Internet and the World Wide Web have tied them closer together still. That is a new view of Mexicans that the immigrant assimilation model could not accommodate.

The diasporic process is not new. People in migration have always been linked and have moved back and forth. What is new is that we have a conceptual orientation, the transnational model, that allows us to see that pattern. People were moving around what is now the U.S. Southwest and the Mexican North long before there was a United States or a Mexico. In the trans-Pacific Chinese family, adolescent boys for several generations left South China and went out to work in the United States, Hawai'i, Southeast Asia, and elsewhere. Women and children stayed home. The men would make a trip or two back to China, marry, sire children, and return overseas. The family went on for decades, even generations, existing simultaneously on both sides of the Pacific or in two regions of Asia. After World War II, the War Brides Acts were designed to allow American soldiers to bring home, outside racially motivated immigration quotas, women they had married abroad during wartime; several thousand Chinese American soldiers used them to bring over their wives of many years.[64]

If the diasporic or transnational model has perspectival and explanatory strength, it is not without its detractors among ethnic studies scholars.[65] They argue against the diasporic concept on essentially political grounds, citing the centrality of service to communities of color in the mission of ethnic studies. If ethnic studies scholarship is to be useful for much, it ought to empower the powerless, and they feel that the diasporic perspective detracts from that purpose. On the one hand, it concentrates on the migrating generation—on first-generation Chinese or Samoans, for example, around the globe. In doing so it turns its attention away from the issues of succeeding generations in any given location. Asian Americans and Asians are not the same people, despite the tendency of non-Asians to confuse them. Similarly, one

may say that Italians and Italian Americans, Poles and Polish Americans, are not quite the same people, either, though surely they are linked.

Second, the critics are troubled by what they see as an upper-class bias in diasporic studies. Sau-ling Wong wonders "to what extent a class bias is coded into the privileging of travel and transnational mobility in … articulations of denationalization" and diasporas. People can go and come because they have the money to do so and jobs and comfortable homes to return to. The diasporic model, says Wong, "is, at least in part, extrapolated from the wide range of options available to a particular socioeconomic class, yet the class element is typically rendered invisible."[66]

It might also be argued that the emphasis of the transnational model on the immigrant generation and connections with ancestral homelands may jeopardize the well-being of immigrants in racialized states. In the United States, it is true that there are woeful limitations on the life chances of immigrants, especially people of color. But there is at least the countervailing influence of the immigrant assimilation model, which asserts that anyone born in America is an American and belongs to America. Contrast that to the situation in places like Germany, Austria, France, and Denmark, where entrenched nativist parties insist that even second- and third-generation Turks, Algerians, and Hungarians do not belong.[67]

One particularly interesting take on transnational relationships that may drive migration comes from work on international labor migration by Edna Bonacich and Lucie Cheng. They argue that, at least under the conditions of a mature international capitalist economy such as has existed in much of the world since the mid-nineteenth century, economic forces link the sending places and the receiving places. Some other, simpler models talk about "push factors" such as war, disease, and rural impoverishment driving people out of their ancestral homelands. They talk about separate "pull factors" such as cheap land, good public education, and abundant job opportunities that pull people to a place like the United States.[68] Cheng and Bonacich say that such factors may be linked, and the mechanism that links them is the global market economy. Figure 1.2 shows their conceptual diagram explaining their theory.[69]

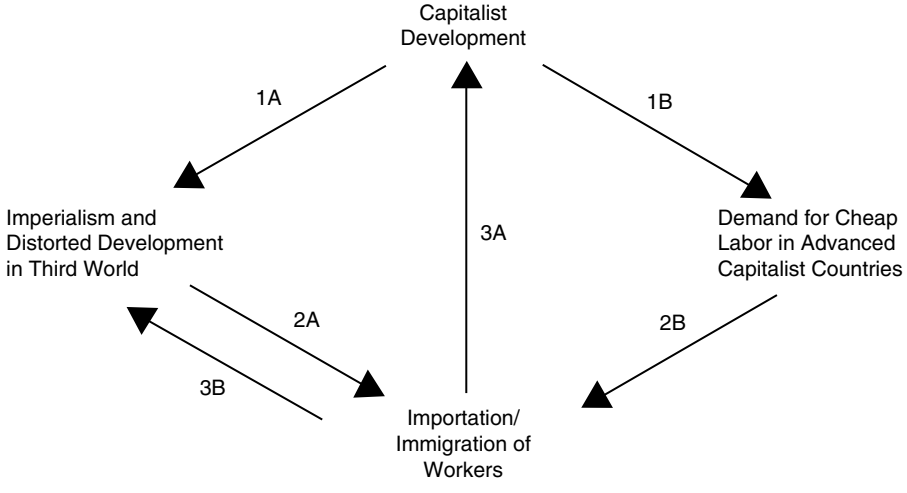

Figure 1.2 Bonacich and Cheng's conceptual diagram of international labor migration.

One can see how such dynamics might have linked China with Britain and the United States in the mid-nineteenth century. Capitalist development in Britain in the age of the Industrial Revolution sent British merchant fleets abroad seeking markets (vector 1A). The British East India Company provoked two Opium Wars in China, which resulted in imperial encroachment on Chinese sovereignty, not only by England, but also by the United States and several other industrializing powers. As the Chinese central government lost control of its southeastern provinces, rebellion and warlordism drove peasants off the land. Some of them took ship for Southeast Asia and America (2A). In the United States, Chinese laborers on railroads and in mines built essential parts of the infrastructure of industrial capitalism (3A). But their leaving left parts of rural China underpopulated and unstable (3B). In a simpler and more obvious set of connections, industrial capitalist development in Europe and the United States, as well as imperialist development by the United States and Europe abroad (1B) led to a demand for cheap labor, both in those countries and in overseas colonies such as Singapore and Indochina. Hence (2B) workers were imported, and this contributed further (3A) to the development of capitalist power in Europe and the United States.

Not only, then, was there a back-and-forth quality to the migrations of peoples, some of whom ended up in the United States. Those peoples in motion were part of vast international webs by which people moved from Europe, Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific to North America. They also moved within each of those regions; and from Europe to Africa and Africa to Europe; from Asia to Africa, Latin America, and the Pacific and back; and so on and on. The pathways of migration were also the pathways of trade and of colonial economic and political connection. It was a complicated set of interlocking patterns, far more complex than can be comprehended by the assimilation model alone.

The Panethnic Formation Model

The other necessary supplement to the Ellis Island paradigm is the panethnic or racial formation model. Richard Alba and Victor Nee write that, by about the third generation in any immigrant group, "their ethnicity has greatly diminished as an ascriptive trait that decisively shapes life chances."[70] Nonsense! It may well be that, for instance, the lives of the great-grandchildren of Irish American immigrants are not shaped in any meaningful way by their Irishness. I am one of those. I am Irish on March 17 and whenever anyone offers Guinness, but Irish identity does not in any meaningful way shape my life chances. What does shape my life chances is the fact that I am White. *That* is my ethnicity, and it is powerful. My ethnicity has not diminished. It is not less than the ethnicity of my purely Irish great-grandmother. It has changed. She was Irish; I am White.

What Alba and Nee fail to see is *the major fact* of ethnic identity in American history: panethnic formation. Yen Le Espiritu coined the term "panethnicity" to describe a process that has been going on in the world for a very long time: the lumping together of formerly separate ethnic groups, frequently in a new geographical or political setting. People came to this country as members of ethnic groups that were frequently defined by place of origin. In the United States, they became members of larger panethnic groups, which we sometimes call races. Igbo, Hausa, Fon, Fulani, Asante, Yoruba, and dozens of other groups became Negroes by late in the

eighteenth century or early in the nineteenth, and then, in the fullness of time, they came to be called Blacks, and then African Americans. Sicilianos and Milanos became Italians; Litvaks and Galitsianers became East European Jews; and then those Italians and Jews, and English descendants and Swedes and Poles and Irish, became White people. Osage, Choctaw, and Potawatomi became Indians. Beginning in the 1950s and 1960s, Chinese, Japanese, Koreans and others began to become Asian Americans. In the last third of the twentieth century and the first part of the twenty-first, Dominicans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, and others may be becoming Latinos. Everyone has ethnicity. No one's ethnicity has been diminished. Rather, it has been transformed. People whose ancestors were members of smaller, nationally defined ethnic groups have become in America members of races. They are not less ethnic; they are differently ethnic.[71]

What is happening, then, is not simple assimilation, but panethnic or racial formation. The panethnicity model, like the immigrant assimilation model, emphasizes the experiences of people in the place to which they migrate—in the present case, the United States. It is similar to the immigrant model in that it tends to focus on the experiences of succeeding generations in the new place, and de-emphasizes connections to places of origin. It is different from the immigrant model in that it does not presume the ultimate absorption of the immigrant people into some amorphous American mass. Rather, it highlights the formation of larger, enduring ethnic collectivities through which people may act together. Together these three ways of conceiving ethnic processes—the immigrant assimilation theory, the transnational diasporic paradigm, and the panethnic formation model—help us see clearly what has gone on in the history of American immigration.

Race vs. Ethnicity: The Difference, and the Difference It Makes

Ethnicity and race, then, are among the central concerns of this book. But what exactly are they, and how do they relate to each other?[72] At the broadest level, I see at least two ways that people tend to think about these matters. One way comes to us from the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century pseudoscience of Blumenbach, Gobineau, Cuvier, and their intellectual descendants (right down to Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein, J. Philippe Rushton, and Jon Entine as the twentieth century turns to the twenty-first).[73] Their vision is the one that most lay people assume to be the way things are.

According to the pseudoscientists, there are four or five big races and smaller subsidiary ethnic groups. In this view, race is about biology, genes, phenotype, the body. It is physical, inherited, and immutable. The races are discrete from each other, each marked not only by specific distinguishing bodily features—skin color, hair texture, nose shape, and so forth—but also by specific character qualities that cannot be erased. These character qualities are heritable, immutable, hard-wired into people's genes. They may be suppressed, but eventually they will out.

In this same mode of thinking, ethnicity is based on smaller human subdivisions of race. The various ethnic groups within a race look very much, if not completely, alike. Their differences are based on cultural or national divisions, such as language, citizenship, religion, child-rearing practices, food habits, clothing, and so forth. Ethnic differences, in this way of thinking, are mutable. Ethnicity derives from an ancestral group, but it can be changed by changing behavior.

An alternative view emphasizes the plasticity and constructedness of groups, whether we call them "races" or "ethnic groups."[74] It notes that groups that are often called races have cultures, and that there are average physical differences that can be observed among the peoples who are called ethnic groups, so the race/ethnic group dichotomy tends to break down pretty quickly. It emphasizes that race is not a thing or a condition but a *process*. This alternative view notes further that the understanding of the pseudoscientists was created in a particular time and place (Europe and the United States in the late eighteenth to early twentieth centuries). It was created among a set of people who were trying to explain the varieties of peoples that Europeans and Euro-Americans were encountering as they made colonies around the globe. Some would say that they were trying to naturalize colonialism, to lay it onto the genes of people.[75]

History and logic argue for the use of "ethnicity" rather than "race" as a generic term for kinds of groups that operate on more or less the same bases.[76] Both are social and political constructs based on real or fictive common ancestry, which were generated in particular contexts and which have gone through particular histories. If one is focusing on internal group processes, they are much the same kinds of groups, whether one calls them "races," "ethnic groups," "ethno-racial groups," or some other common term (more about those processes in the next section of this essay). To distinguish between "race" and "ethnicity" is to give in to the pseudoscientific racists by adopting their terminology. It is to conjure up visions of large, physical, immutable races and smaller, cultural subgroups that are ethnic groups.

In the United States, it is true, the markers of the largest social groups do in fact more or less correspond to Blumenbach's pseudoscientific racial categories: Native, Asian, African, Latin, and White Americans. Those are the meaningful racial formations in American society.[77] But elsewhere, it is other markers that make the big divisions. In Britain, at least for a time in the 1970s and 1980s, people whom Americans would call Asians and Africans, many Britons joined together under the single term "Black."[78] Taoufik Djebali argues that, in North Africa throughout much of its history, it was religion that constituted the big divider. There, religion is, in power terms, a "racial" divider, in that people on either side of the religious divide see each other as fundamentally, immutably different from themselves. So, too, Han Chinese and Tibetans, Japanese and Koreans have something like "racial" differences between them.[79]

The Racial Moment. Despite such evident similarities between "racial" and "ethnic" groups, there *is* nonetheless a critical juncture in relationships between peoples when they come to see each other, and are seen by outsiders, as fundamentally, essentially, immutably different from one another. At such a juncture, the differences they perceive are often laid on the body and the essential character. That is what I would call *the racial moment*. At such times, that racializing move is accompanied by at least an attempt by one group to exert power over the other, or to highlight its own disempowerment. It is worth noting that "race" is a term that seems static and essential, while "racialize" emphasizes agency and process: ongoing action taken to make hierarchy, to position oneself and to create an Other.

At its point of origin and in its ongoing formations, race is a story about power, and it is written on the body. That is, dividing into peoples has usually been done for reasons of asserting power vis-à-vis one another. Those with more power have frequently dictated the shape of the division: who would be in each group, what would be the criteria for group membership, what would be the relationships between the

groups, and what members of each group would have to do henceforth. Subordinate groups may do some reflexive policing of their own, but the impetus comes from the powerful. This racialization process tends to create the impression of permanence. A sociopolitical process of dividing and dominating comes to be viewed as an essential, biological difference between peoples. The purpose of writing racial division onto the body is to naturalize it, to make it inevitable, and thus no one's fault.[80]

In the United States, for instance, much of race relations has depended on the one-drop rule: race relations have been defined as being between Black and White, and any person with any known African ancestry has been regarded as Black.[81] That was in order to keep the part-White sons and daughters of slave owners and slave women as slaves and to keep them from asserting any measure of Whiteness. Then subordinate status was written onto the Black body itself. Whites (and others) assumed that the people whom they defined as Black possessed particular character qualities and life chances, and that the people they defined as White naturally, by virtue of their supposed biological inheritance, were blessed with more positive character qualities and better life chances.

Yet for other groups in the United States, the one-drop rule does not apply, at least not in the same way and with the same pervasiveness. People who are part-Indian and part-White are sometimes reckoned Native American and sometimes White, depending on the degree of their connectedness to Native peoples, cultures, and institutions. People who are part-Indian and part-Black are generally reckoned Black. People who are part-Asian and part-something else have much more complex sets of ethnic possibilities and constraints. We shall see how these differences have come to be.[82]

Ethnic Formation Processes

It is worth thinking about what kinds of things hold ethnic groups together and what allows them to come apart.[83] Ethnic groups are not primordial units of human relationship. They are social groupings that form, and change their shape and the glue that holds them together, and sometimes they are subsumed into larger ethnicities.

In the twentieth century, most systematic thinking about ethnicity has been done by social scientists. Beyond the common-sense understanding of ethnicity as shared ancestry—as kinship writ large—a survey of social-scientific writing identifies three forces that shape the creation, sustenance, dissolution, and re-formation of ethnic groups.[84] These are shared interests, shared institutions, and shared culture. All three are important. No one of them is more fundamental than the others to the nature of an ethnic group. Each has a role to play in shaping group consciousness and action at various times in the history of the ethnic group. Many theorists have been inclined to see one of the three as fundamental and the others as superstructural. It is not true.

Shared Interests, political or economic, are usually the things that pull an ethnic group together in the first place. That is, if a set of people perceive themselves to share a common heritage and also have concrete economic or political reasons for affiliating with each other, they may begin to form an ethnic group.[85]

One example of this type of group formation is occurring among Latinos in the United States today. Latinos, or "Hispanics," as some call them, are not a single

group. The three largest groups—Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans—have very little in common. Mexican Americans live throughout the country but are concentrated in the Southwest, exhibit an ancestral mixture of mainly Spanish and Indian, are concentrated in the lower and middle classes, and vote heavily for the Democratic Party. Some have been in what is now the United States since before the American Revolution, while others arrived yesterday. Puerto Rican Americans are concentrated mainly in the industrial cities of the Northeast, mix Black ancestry along with Spanish and Indian, are heavily working class, and generally vote Democratic. Cuban Americans are concentrated in Florida, are visibly lighter of skin on the average than the other two groups, have many more members of the upper middle class, are often attuned to anti-Communist politics in their ancestral homeland, and usually vote for the Republican Party. Each of these groups came to the United States at a different time—Mexicans throughout U.S. history—and for very different reasons. They spoke different varieties of Spanish and pursued subtly different varieties of Catholic Christianity.[86]

All share certain cultural similarities, but there is no strong cultural uniformity. What all three groups have most in common is an *interest*. Independently, none of the groups is large enough to attract much attention from the U.S. government or the public at large outside the locale of its highest concentration. But together they can muster millions of voters. Thus, Mexican, Cuban, and Puerto Rican Americans have a political *interest* in banding together as Latinos. In time, we may see Latinos forming shared institutions and creating shared culture that will sustain them as a group.

While interests may bring a group together initially, interests change easily—they are external to the group and largely determined by others. Latinos are becoming a single ethnic group in America, not because of any substantial natural commonality among them, but because there is a major tangible advantage to be gained by acting as a single group, and because Anglos have a hard time telling them apart. Yet interests are only a short-term basis for group cohesion. If an ethnic group endures, it is usually because it forms shared institutions and builds up shared culture.

Shared Institutions are the ways people within the ethnic group organize themselves to achieve their interests, practice their culture, and maintain their group identity.[87] There are any number of examples of ethnic institutions. The United Farm Workers is a mainly Mexican American ethnic institution that expresses and protects the interests of laboring Chicanos. Cumberland Presbyterian Church in San Francisco is an ethnic institution where Chinese Americans come together to worship and to socialize. Hadassah is an ethnic institution where Jewish women gather to connect with each other, reinforce their Jewishness, and serve their ethnic community. The Daughters of the American Revolution is an Anglo-American ethnic institution that seeks to celebrate and maintain the elite position of the dominant group in American society. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is an ethnic institution that acts to create and defend the rights of African Americans.

Ethnic institutions are the places where members of a group come together to pursue group interests—the United Negro College Fund is an example, as is the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith. But ethnic institutions are also places where **Shared Culture** is created and maintained. It is in Chinese churches, Chinese families, and Chinese neighborhoods that Chinese language—an item of culture—is spoken and the ability to speak is passed on. The culture is not just what people

do in institutions, however. It is, on its own, an important binding agent that keeps group identity alive. Ethnicity-as-culture is an old view of these things, associated with people like Robert Ezra Park and E. Franklin Frazier.[88] But it has a lot to recommend it. What do an Israeli farmer, a New York journalist, and a London businessman have in common? Nothing at all, in terms of interests or institutions. Yet once a year they all say the same words at a Passover *seder*, and that ritual act—that piece of culture—binds them tightly together. Because they share culture, they all see themselves as Jews and as fundamentally related, indeed as essential to each other. They have a strong bond of identity and emotion.[89]

Shared culture may be outward and apparent to the noninvolved observer. Italian food, Polish language, and Vietnamese Buddhism are examples. Or shared culture may be inward and more or less invisible. It can have to do with shared values, orientations, ways of framing issues, or seeing the world. A trivial example will illustrate. Most Americans flip a switch and say they "turned on the light." But most Chinese Americans, down to the third generation, including those who speak no Chinese at all, on performing the same act, say they "opened the light." Most American-born Chinese do not even realize that their expression derives from the Chinese-language term, which connotes opening a gate to allow a current to flow. This is inward shared culture, albeit of a relatively inconsequential sort. Aspects of inward shared culture include patterns of childrearing, facial affect, talking with one's hands, and a host of other items.

To summarize, the forces of shared interests, institutions, and culture interact in a dynamic way to provide the glue that holds together ethnic consciousness. Most ethnic groups form, in the beginning, on the basis of some tangible shared interest, as Latinos seem to be doing in the late twentieth century and the early twenty-first. They create ethnic institutions by which they organize themselves to pursue their common interests. As people come together in those institutions, they interact and create shared culture—rituals, habitual turns of phrase, behaviors, and understandings that bind them together. Institutions and especially culture are much longer lived than are interests. They enable ethnic groups to survive changing circumstances. After an initially shared interest changes or disappears, culture and institutions may even hold the group together long enough for a new set of interests to emerge.

One can imagine a number of situations in which ethnic groups might find themselves with regard to these three factors: interests, institutions, and culture. It is possible to represent these factors in ethnic group development schematically as three continua (Table 1.1).[90]

At any given point in the history of an ethnic group, one ought to be able to locate that group with respect to each factor in ethnic group saliency. Some ethnic groups—African Americans today, for example—are high on all three indices. Although there is tremendous regional and class variety, there is also a good quantum of shared culture among Black Americans, from dialect to food to affective

Table 1.1 Factors in Ethnic Group Development

Interests	low	medium	high
Culture	low	medium	high
Institutions	low	medium	high

behavior. There are shared interests, insofar as Blacks as a group still suffer systematic social and economic disabilities, and insofar as they may also all potentially benefit from, for example, affirmative action. And there is a web of shared institutions, from the NAACP to First A.M.E. Zion Church. African American ethnicity seems to be quite high.

There are also groups that are high on only one or two of the three indices. Latinos today, for example, are a group that may be high in certain sorts of interests and elements of shared culture, but quite low in institutions. Yet they are even now creating and expanding shared institutions such as the various Hispanic or Latino caucuses in government and professional circles. In time, they may build up a good deal more shared culture—language and religion are similar enough to provide a basis for some of that. Much will depend on whether or not they function historically as a group in the future.

There are other groups that are high on culture yet low on institutions and interests. There is a tremendous amount of shared religious, intellectual, and emotional culture among American Jews—at the same time that Jews are arrayed across the class spectrum and perhaps a third of the Jewish population has not been inside a synagogue or community meeting in over a year. Interests are fairly low, institutional connectedness is not much higher, but certain aspects of culture (not necessarily including formal religious observance) are fairly high. Ethnicity remains.

One must be wary about this schema, as with all social scientific models, not to allow the model to reify one's perceptions of ethnic processes that are fluid and dynamic. Such models may be aids to insight, but they are not realities in their own right. Family and community relationships, identity claiming, ethnic relationships, perceived common social interests, and so on are the things that bind people together in a group.

Colonialism and Race Making

The reinterpretation of American immigration offered in this book highlights the role of colonialism. It will not surprise knowledgeable readers that many important American ideas about racial and ethnic hierarchy were shaped by colonial encounters between light-skinned Americans and darker-skinned peoples in places like the Philippines and Hawai'i. European American expansion across the North American continent also had a colonial quality to it—it was the homeland of other peoples, and the United States took it by force and made subjects of the former owners—and racial hierarchy was made in that enterprise. The argument here highlights the ways that, when Europeans made racial hierarchy in their interactions with Africans and Native Americans, they did so in a colonial context. It explores the ways immigration (by Europeans, Asians, and Latin Americans) to the newly colonized territories was partly a colonial story as well as a migrant story. Immigration and ethnic identity in U.S. history have been intimately tied to race and slavery, on the one hand, and to colonial expansion across the continent, on the other.

Race making is done in the context of colony making. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, pseudoscientific ideas about race were created by English, German, and French colonizers who went to Africa and Asia, and by those who stayed behind and enjoyed the fruits of empire. Those racial ideas were means to

explain the peoples that Europeans found in such places, and to rationalize Europeans' violent domination of those peoples. English people went to South and East Africa, to India, to Fiji, and a host of other places. In each of those locations they developed an ideology of the natural superiority of Europeans in general and English people in particular, of the fitness of such people to lead the darker masses, and of the appropriateness of colonial rule. Rudyard Kipling expressed English racial, colonial condescension in "The White Man's Burden," as he encouraged his American cousins to seize the Philippines:

> Take up the White Man's burden—
> Send forth the best ye breed—
> Go bind your sons to exile
> To serve your captives' need;
> To wait in heavy harness,
> On fluttered folk and wild—
> Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
> Half-devil and half-child.[91]

Lest one think that such imperial, racial condescension is a uniquely British trait, Elisabeth Schäfer-Wünsche instructs us that German pseudoscientific racial ideas were born in the conquest and near-annihilation of the Hereros in Southwest Africa, long before they were applied to Jews in Europe. Taoufik Djebali and Richard Fogarty find the French making similar racial-colonial distinctions in their dealings with North Africans. The making of racial distinctions and laying them on the body occurred in other colonial encounters that did not involve Europeans at all. Miyuki Yonezawa finds them in Japanese imperial expansion against the Ainu and Ryukyuans. And Han Chinese have long laid a discourse of innate primitivity and racial inferiority on Tibetans, Uygurs, and other colonized peoples.[92]

United States racial ideas owe profoundly to three encounters between Euro-Americans and other peoples: Africans whom Euro-Americans encountered in the act of enslaving them; Native peoples whom Euro-Americans encountered in the acts of displacing and destroying them; and later, in such overseas places as the Philippines, dark-skinned peoples whom Euro-Americans encountered in the process of making formal empire.[93] I would contend that these are all colonial encounters. In its classic form, colonialism involves several acts of domination: military intervention; political transfer of sovereignty; economic domination; and ultimately cultural domination. Those were all true in the cases of slavery, of Native American removal and genocide, and of the overseas adventures of the late nineteenth century. In some instances, the cultural domination was so complete as to amount to what Antonio Gramsci termed "hegemony": that domination so complete that the one dominated knows not he is being dominated, but thinks it the natural order of things.[94]

The consistent pattern of relationships between the races since the seventeenth century has been this: Non-White persons have possessed lesser rights than have White persons. People of color have not possessed full, individual identities in the eyes of Whites or before the law. They could be (and frequently were) treated as an undifferentiated mass. They could be (and frequently were) moved out to make room for others (of European descent) who were seen as individuals with rights.

Albert Memmi, in *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, points out with excruciating precision how it is just such relationships that constitute the core of colonized—and, we may add, of racialized—relationships.[95]

It has become fashionable in recent years to talk about European immigrants to the United States as if they once suffered the same disabilities as have peoples of color.[96] It isn't true. There is no question that many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European immigrants to the United States had a tougher time than native Whites of their era, or than those immigrants' own descendants, and that they were subjected to humiliations and poverty. But the Native peoples were killed or pushed out of New England. Five large tribes were ousted from the Southeast in forced marches in the 1830s. In 1885 and 1886, the entire Chinese populations of Seattle and Tacoma, Washington and Rock Springs, Wyoming, were shipped out of those towns, and many were murdered. In the 1930s, a million Mexican Americans—many of them U.S. citizens—were forced to leave the country. During World War II, 120,000 Japanese Americans—two-thirds of them U.S. citizens—were jailed on account of their race. And let us not forget the master case of all this: Black racial slavery. No group of White Americans was ever subjected to anything like these sorts of racial domination and abuse.

These are all racial dominations that occur in the ongoing context of Euro-American colonial relationships with peoples of color in the United States. One cannot say that "since the colonial period" such-and-such has happened in U.S. history. The colonial period of American history continues. The first fact of the history of American immigration is genocide: the displacement and destruction of the Native peoples of North America. That is part of the story of *immigration*; it is not some other, parallel history. The two—immigration and genocide—are two interlocking parts of the same story. This is an inescapable fact that we must keep always before us.

It is not that the Ellis Island model is incorrect, but rather that it is only partial. The Ellis Island pattern of immigrant assimilation and uplift over generations is accurate, more or less, for explaining the experiences of White immigrants to the United States. But it has never accurately represented the experiences of peoples of color. What *Almost All Aliens* attempts to do is to retell the story of American immigration, taking race off the margins and putting it in the middle of the analysis. We shall find as we go along that processes of assimilation and acculturation have indeed happened in U.S. history for every migrant people. But they have been by no means uniform in the ease and speed with which they have occurred. Moreover, peoples have assimilated not to some abstract and ethnicity-free "American" identity, but rather into one of five large panethnic groups—White Americans, African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, or Latinos—through complex processes of racial formation and identity negotiation.

Words Matter

Words are not neutral objects. They do not simply denote meanings taken directly from dictionary definitions. Frequently, they are laden with extra meanings that are consequential. Here are some words about which I want to be careful in writing this book and about which I hope the reader will be careful when she or he reads this book and others.

Some Terms the Reader May Want to Think about Differently

American. Sometimes the term is used simply to refer to people who live in the United States or who are U.S. citizens. With apologies to my friends from Canada and Latin America, who might prefer a term like "USian," I have no quarrel, at least for the purposes of the present volume, with using "American" to refer to the people of the United States of America. There is, of course, also the related problem of what to call this place that became the United States of America before that nation had declared its existence. One can hardly call it the United States before 1776. Perhaps it is unavoidable that there should be some unsatisfying slippage among such terms, ideas, and usages.

My main concern in this book about the term "American" is that I want to be careful not to use it as a synonym for "Euro-American." That is very often the way the word is used, by Euro-Americans and also by others, when describing relationships between Euro-Americans and other peoples such as Asian Americans and Latinos. I know more than one Asian American who refers to "the Sansei [third-generation Japanese American] girl who is dating an American boy," when that person really means "the Sansei girl who is dating the White boy."

Settler. Throughout the literature of American history, one finds the term "settler" used to refer to Europeans who came to North America to displace the local Native Americans. In other historical contexts, one finds it used for British people who went to Aotearoa (New Zealand) to displace the local Maori; for Dutch people who went to South Africa to displace the local Xhosa; for Russians who went to Central Asia to displace the local Turkmen; and for Jewish Israelis who went to the West Bank to displace the local Palestinians. The term implies that there was no one there before the "settlers" came, or that the people who were there were heathen barbarians—that it was a wild land in need of settling by civilized people like the Europeans, British, Dutch, Russians, and Israelis. Hence the Puritan "errand into the wilderness" populated only by animals and "savages" was a mission to settle and "civilize" a wasteland.[97] I will try not to use the word "settler."[98]

Tribe is a word that also takes on connotations of barbarism. At its base meaning, tribe is a lineage-based system of social organization. But it takes on other connotations as well. Indians come in tribes—primitive, animal-like—and so we are not bound to respect them. They are not like Europeans who come in families and communities, modes of social organization that we are committed to support. Sometimes it is almost impossible to avoid using the word "tribe" in referring to groups of Native Americans, but I shall try.

Alien. This is a formal, legal term for one who is living outside the place of his or her citizenship. I have no quarrel with that formal definition. Yet the reader must be aware of the other connotation that comes with "alien." An alien is a foreigner, an outsider, one who does not belong. Aliens come not just from other countries but from other planets. Aliens are invaders from outer space. They are irreducibly Other. If I refer to a migrant as an "alien," then I am creating in the reader's mind a prejudice; I am dehumanizing that person and defining his or her presence in the United States as illegitimate.

There is self-conscious irony in my choice of a title for this book. "Almost All Aliens" is intended to draw the reader's attention to this problem with the use of the word "alien," and to highlight the fact that nearly all Americans are guests on the North American continent. It is the thing we have most in common.

Caucasian. From time to time, I have a student who complains about being called "White." On such occasions, the person in question says that being labeled White sounds like an accusation. Usually, she or he expresses a preference for being called "Caucasian." We shall see in Chapter 6 that the term "Caucasian" echoes the pseudoscientific racism of the latter nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which worked to rationalize hierarchy and domination. I will use "White" rather than "Caucasian." It is not an accusation; it is a description.

Immigration. There is a human experience and there are policy issues. In the latter case, the talk is of "immigration" and it is usually described as a "problem" to be solved or managed.[99] This book will lean heavily toward the former. This is a book more about immigrants than about immigration. The reader should note that *Almost All Aliens* is not a book about U.S. immigration policy, either in the present or in the past. Of course, policy, like demography, shapes immigrant experiences. But this book is primarily about those human experiences. It emphatically does not advocate any particular policy for immigration in America's future. Some readers may change their views on policy issues based partly on what they read here, but that is not my goal. I simply want to write an account that is true to the human experiences of the past.

I hope to use "migrant" and "migration" as frequently as "immigrant" and "immigration." The latter pair focuses on the place to which migrants come—in our case, the United States—and suggests that the important thing about their experience is their coming to the United States. "Migration" and "migrant" are, it seems to me, more neutral terms, that express an openness to the possibility that the persons in question are moving from one place to another, but do not demand special privilege for the place to which they move.

An Idea That May Be New

This book employs some concepts that may not be familiar to all readers. One of these is **Normative Whiteness.** This is a way to describe the very common assumption that, unless we are informed to the contrary, the people under discussion are White. Normal people are, by definition and without remark, White people. If one is White, then one is a person, but if one is not White, then one's not-Whiteness needs to be explained. When we read the pages of most daily newspapers, we find race marked only for people of color. There are people, and then there are Black people. There are people and there are Native Americans. People (that is, White people) have names and personalities; non-White people have races. We only mark those who diverge from the norm we presume, which is normative Whiteness. (It is worth noting that most publications also assume a normative maleness and a normative heterosexuality).[100]

We mark our privilege by what we do not want to talk about. A colleague who teaches racial issues at an Ivy League university reports that, on the first day of class, she always asks each student to identify him- or herself. There are no further instructions, although the students are aware that it is a course on racial this and that. Student A says she is a Black single mother, and the class knows pretty much who she is. Student B says she is a woman, and one doesn't need to look—one can be sure that she is White. Student C presents him- or herself as a citizen, an American, or a human being, and one can be sure without looking that this is a White male. And

none of the students in question is highlighting the fact that they are all students at an Ivy League college that tends to attract the hyper-privileged and to confer substantial privilege upon even those students who did not previously possess it. We mark our privilege by what we do not want to talk about.

Normative Whiteness reared its head very publicly in 1995, in the hubbub surrounding the murder trial of athlete and celebrity O. J. Simpson. Since the trial was televised, Judge Lance Ito became a familiar figure to audiences across the country. Ito is a third-generation Japanese American, the grandson of immigrants. U.S. Senator Alfonse D'Amato of New York made an appearance on Don Imus's radio talk show. D'Amato is a third-generation Italian American, the grandson of immigrants. On the radio, D'Amato criticized the slow pace of the trial, and then launched into what he imagined to be a thick Japanese accent. Anyone who had seen the trial on TV (that is, any American) knew that Ito speaks with sharp consonants, round vowels, and not a trace of an accent, whereas D'Amato has a pronounced New York accent. Nonetheless, it seems that D'Amato saw himself as an American on the basis of his Whiteness, whereas Ito, he apparently assumed, must be reckoned a foreigner on account of his Asian ancestry. Both were middle-class, politically successful grandchildren of immigrants. Yet D'Amato saw his Whiteness as natural, but felt called to remark disparagingly upon Ito's Asianness.[101]

One key example of normative Whiteness is the attempt to present the story of European immigration as if it were the story of immigration. White immigrants are simply immigrants; their Whiteness is not named. So if another group has a different experience than that of Ellis Island White immigrants, their differences are just the exceptions to the rule. The privilege granted to White experiences is not named.

Immigrant assimilation, transnationalism, panethnic formation, colonialism. Shared interests, institutions, and culture. New terms like normative Whiteness and old ones about which we may wish to be careful. Let us keep all these thoughts in mind as we go forward to explore the story of immigration in American history. But let us remember that it is a story. It tells of the lives of people, not just of the relationships between peoples—far less of abstract theories. Let us always keep before us that this is a human story. And so we begin.