

Who is Ethnic

Werner Sollors (June 6 1943) American



- An **ethnic group** or **ethnicity** is a grouping of [people](#) who [identify](#) with each other on the basis of shared attributes that distinguish them from other groups. Those attributes can include common sets of traditions, ancestry, language, history, society, culture, nation, religion, or social treatment within their residing area.
- Race: a group of people of common [ancestry](#), distinguished from others by physical characteristics, such as hair type, colour of eyes and skin, [stature](#), etc

'caste' is a system of social stratification, where groups are assigned a way of life defined primarily by occupation.

Dictionary meaning: connected with or belonging to a nation or tribe that shares a cultural tradition.

There is not universally accepted answer to the question - who is ethnic?

Two conflicting uses of ethnic and ethnicity:

According to Everett and Helen we are all ethnic. According to E. K. Francis, French Canadians, the Pennsylvania Dutch, French of France, Irish of Ireland all are ethnic. This is universalist or inclusive use.

Another use excludes dominant groups and establishes an ethnicity minus one. White protestant Americans are excluded from the category of ethnicity. Ethnicity is defined as otherness. The concept of ethnicity changes from speaker to speaker. For example, for some Americans eating turkey and reading Hawthorne appear to be more ethnic than eating lasagna and reading Puzo.

# Mario Francis **Puzo** (1920 – July 2, 1999)

## American



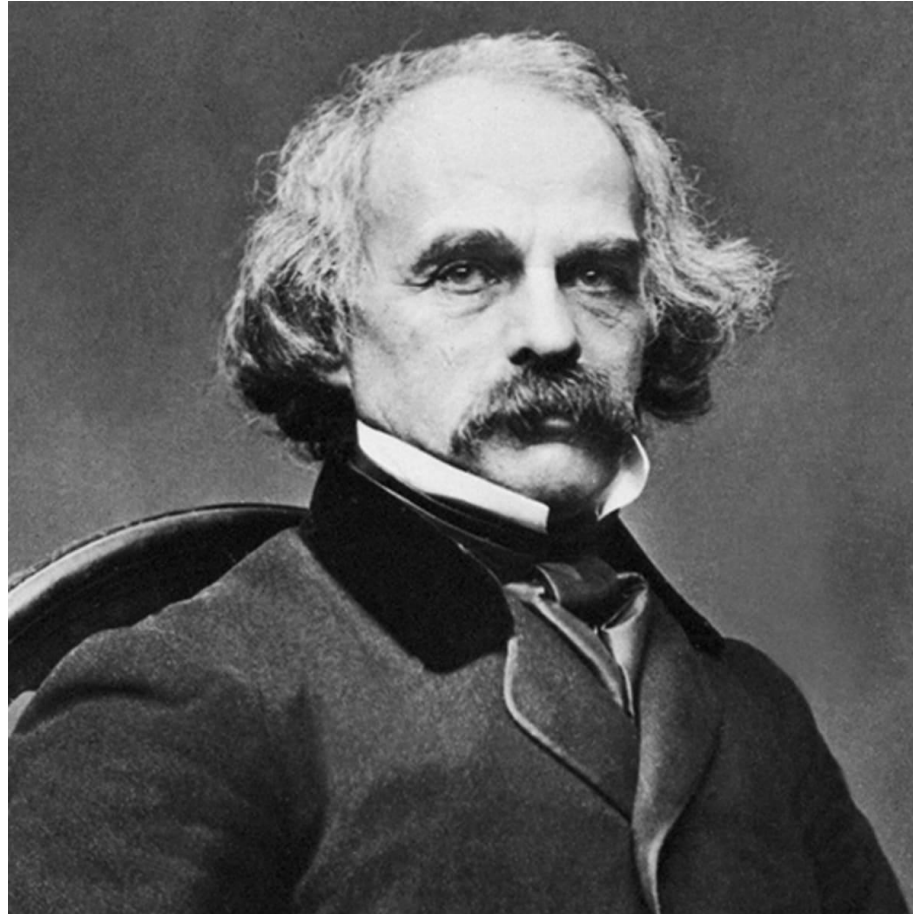
# Lasagne લજાન્યા





# Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804 –1864)

American novelist



# Turkey



- The word ethnic is defined in different ways in different countries. The association of the ethnic with the other is not made in some languages: 'In Greece the national bank is the ethnic bank. In this country (America) ethnic banks cannot be the national bank...' Etymologically an ethnic is a *goy*, (a [Jewish](#) word for a [gentile](#)). The Greek word *ethnikos*, from which the English 'ethnic' and 'ethnicity' are derived, meant 'gentile' 'heathen'.
- A **Gentile** is a person who is not Jewish. **Heathen** [means](#) having no [religion](#), or [belonging](#) to a religion that is not Christianity, Judaism, or Islam.

- . In the Christianized context the word 'ethnic' (sometimes spelled 'hethnic') recurred, from the fourteenth to the nineteenth century, in the sense of 'heathen'. Only in the mid-nineteenth century the more familiar meaning of 'ethnic' as 'peculiar to a race or nation' reemerged. However, the English language has retained the sense of ethnic as other, as nonstandard, or, in America, as not fully American.

- ‘If a group maintains its identity when members interact with others, this entails criteria for determining membership and ways of signalling membership and exclusion’. Previous anthropologists, historians, sociologists, and literary critics tended to think about ethnicity ‘in terms of different peoples, with different histories and cultures, coming together and accommodating themselves to each other.

# RACE AND ETHNICITY

There is another important line of disagreement concerning race and ethnicity. On the one hand, Harold Abramson argued that although 'race is the most salient ethnic factor, it is still only one of the dimensions of the larger cultural and historical phenomenon of ethnicity'. On the other hand, M.G.Smith would consider race a special 'objective' category that cannot be meaningfully discussed under the heading 'ethnicity' .

- The author is on the side of Abramson's universalist interpretation according to which ethnicity includes dominant groups and in which race is merely one aspect of ethnicity. He gives three reasons for doing so. First, the interpretation of the rites and rituals of culturally dominant groups sometimes provides the matrix for the emergence of divergent group identities.
- A **matrix** is the environment or context in which something such as a society develops and grows.

- Second, the discussions of ethnicity and the production of ethnic literature have been strongly affected by Afro-Americans, and so actively influenced by them since World War II, that an omission of the Afro-American tradition in a discussion of ethnic culture in America would create a very serious gap in.



- Finally, the author is interested in the processes of group formation and in the naturalization of group relationships...and he has found examples from Puritan New England and Afro-America crucial to an understanding of these processes among other groups in America. The term 'ethnicity' here is thus a broadly conceived term.