I. The Social Construction of the “Other”

A. Modernity’s two conceptions of humanity

1. Western “individual”: rational, enlightened, scientific and progressive.

2. The “Other”: irrational, superstitious, stagnant and uncivilized.

B. Social Construction of the Other and Colonialism

1. Colonialism

a. definition

1. periods

c. “other”

2. Early colonialism and the “Other”

a. Spanish treatment of indigenous peoples required justification.

i. Columbus

ii. de las Casas

b. Asked the pope to decide if they were human?

i. if beasts Spanish could enslave them, kill them.

ii. if human had to try to save their souls.

c . Requirement of 1512: they were human, but heathens,

i. they had souls and could be saved.

ii. they were uncivilized, needed to be civilized

d. Requirement: must read the following called the Requirement

i. accept the Catholic Church and the Pope

ii. accept the rule of Spain

iii. submit to the preaching of the faith

iv. if refused

We shall take you and your wives and your children, and shall make slaves of them, and as such shall sell and dispose of them as their Highnesses may command; and we shall take away your goods, and shall do all the harm and damage that we can, as to vassals who do not obey, and refuse to receive their lord, and resist and contradict him; and we protest that the deaths and the losses which shall accrue from this are your fault, and not that of their Highnesses, or ours, nor these cavaliers who come with us . . .

3. English Puritans

a. Puritans saw them as heathens

b. diaries: "servants of Satan" "demons from hell"

"hellish fiends and brutish men"

b. human but in the way

c. Puritans and the Garden of Eden

4. Colonial Americans saw them as beasts

Washington: 'The gradual extension of our settlements will as certainly cause the savage, as the wolf, to retire, both being beasts of prey, tho' different in shape."

D. Later Colonialism: The Discovery of Race (and the scientific construction of the “Other”)

1. Age of Empire

a. "race science" (craniometry and phrenology) emerged.

b. scientific method

i. observation

ii. measurement: craniometry in the late 1800s

measured and weighted skull sizes to measure intelligence

(remember social construction of intelligence)

larger skulls meant greater intelligence

width of noses, height, bone structure,

hair

iii. “discovered” race

iv. “scientific theory” of racial hierarchy: biological determinism

2. theory of biological determinism

a. human beings can be classified into homogenous groups

b. shared physical characteristics

c. transferred from generation to generation

d. these racial groups share other traits

i. intelligence

ii. morals

iii. hard work

iv. insensitivity to pain

e. superior and inferior races

i. Anglo-Saxon race was rational, enlightened, civilized, and progressive

ii. Superior ideas, beliefs, values, institutions, language

iii. proof: colonialism

iv. U.S. is: proof of the mighty history of racial growth

(T. Roosevelt)

v. Africa and Asia, homes to inferior races, need to be subjugated

and shown a civilized way to organize their societies.

3. cultural imperialism

a. academics, literature, philosophers in the West characterize the “other”

b. Orientalism and Cultural Imperialism by Edward Said

i. absolute difference systemic difference

West-rational, developed, humane and superior

East-irrational, undeveloped, and inferior

ii. “Orient” is eternal, uniform, incapable of developing or changing by itself

“arrested development of semites”

“a mute unity”

iii. dangerous and threatening

4. social construction of the “other” has justified

a. slavery

b. colonialism

i. Late Victorian Holocaust

ii. White Man’s Burden

c. Manifest Destiny

d. segregation

i. Dredd Scott: “beings of an inferior order”

ii. Plessy v Ferguson

e. eugenics

i. perfect race: White

ii. 30 states/forced sterilization

iii. influence Germany

f. internment of Japanese Americans

g. genocide

h. Neoliberalism

E. social construction of race

a. traits: who decides?

b. biological criteria: depending on criteria

chosen, 3 to 200+ races

c. recent genetic studies:

* + 1. no marker for race
    2. 95-99% of all genetic material
    3. no pure race
    4. monogenesis

F. Eugenics

1. Comes from Greek meaning “Good origin”

2. Def: “Science” of heredity and good breeding

3. Assumption: a characteristic of evolution was the passing of traits from generation to generation.

a. some traits are good, others are bad.

b. fit and unfit people

c. fit = upper class and Anglo-Saxons, unfit=lower class and minorities

4. Goal of Eugenics:

a. breed “better” traits in: Anglo-Saxonism

b. breed “bad” traits out

i. poverty

ii. immorality

iii. feeble minded

iv. inferior races (Southern Europeans, Asians, blacks)

v. “un”intelligence

c. preserving the “American type”: Anglo-Saxon

d. preserving good racial stock

5. Organizations and support

a. American Genetic Association (previously American Breeders Association)

b. National Conference on Race Betterment

c. scientists, doctors, philanthropists

6. Means

a. Separation

i. institutionalization

ii. miscegenation laws

b. exclusion

i. Immigration Act of 1924

ii. Coolidge: Nordics deteriorate when mixed

iii. immigrants based on observation of intelligence

c. forced sterilization

1930 30 states

ii. 60,000 people

d. movies “The Black Stork”, county fairs, universities

e. Supreme Court Buck v Bell 1927

7. American eugenics and Hitler