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Introduction:
The Semiotics of Exclusion

This book is about language prejudice. The people who took part in it are New York Puerto Ricans who have lived working-class lives, but everyone who has endured language, race, or class exclusion has had similar experience. Prejudice is expressed as social signs, that is, as meaningful behaviors and actions that take place in ordinary social interaction. Social signs include but go well beyond language. Communication is thus a complex system of meaningful social action—that is, a semiotic system. Much of communication is politicized because the interpretations that count depend on who has power.1

Most of what we see, hear, and sense would be shapeless were it not codified, that is, systematically laid out as discrete concepts and relations. Much of the codification lies in the structure of language itself, in the semantics and grammar of words and sentences. At the same time, language comes to life because it is something people do with each other. As language becomes action, concepts become real. Constructions are never “mere” nor are they opposed to reality. They are reality. They frame what we know of physical reality, and they set out the terms of social reality. What we know is mediated through social relations—who we live with, deal with, learn from, talk to.2

For the people in this book, their reality is shaped by the conditions that limit where and how they live, work, earn money, send their children to school, and generally chart their paths through life. Like everyone living in a post-industrial society, their lives are shaped in large part by who controls capital, production, and labor, that is, by relations of class in Marx’s sense. Like all humans everywhere, they objectify (turn into “things”) the linguistic and social conditions in which they live. How people do this tells a great deal about how their world is put together.
The Signs of Language Prejudice

When people express linguistic prejudices, they generally start by objectifying the languages in question, talking and thinking about them as if they were concrete and sharply defined, even though languages are not always clearly bounded from each other. It is a basic cognitive activity for humans to turn the indeterminate and complex into clearly defined objects. Doing so becomes a problem when social groups are subject to being judged. Such is the case for the people in this book. Though their own experience shows how fluid Spanish and English can be, they live in a society that sharply objectifies Spanish and English, where English signifies the more valued language and Spanish the less valued. Least valued are signs of Span

in one's English. These signs are objectified as “accents” or “mistakes” or “bad grammar” and are interpreted in race and class terms. “Puerto Rican” (or “Hispanic”) is conflated (fused together) with “poor” or “lower class” and both conflated with “Spanish” or “Spanish interference in English” or simply “bad English.” Thus, what seems at first glance a simple classification of language turns out to be fundamentally a classification of people.

Most Puerto Ricans living in U.S. cities speak English. What they speak is unequivocally English in phonology (sound structure) and grammar (word and sentence structure). Yet they often find their speech typified by Americans as “broken” or “mixed” and their accents as “heavy,” all of which is contrasted with “good” English as if good English were a clearly defined object. Such typifications arise not from astute linguistic observation but from assumptions about race and class. The
function of human relations and the conditions shaping human relations. So any
tory of communicative competence must be situated within, as Zentella (1997)
terms it, an anthropological linguistics.

This study is equally informed by the related, but more explicitly historical,
ecology of language approach proposed by Haugen (1972), in which language
contact and the resultant forms and use-patterns can only be understood as part of
a long-term process of social change. Working along the same lines, Hill and Hill
(1986) and Mannheim (1991) show how people’s perceptions of languages are
mapped onto complex connections of actors and environment in centuries-long
matrices of social, political, and cultural relations. The studies by Hill and Hill and
by Mannheim contrast the ways Spanish has figured into the lives of (respectively)
Mexican (Nahuatl) and Peruvian Quechua speakers as the language of unequal
relations with the nation-state and market commodities whereas Mexican and
Quechua have figured into local social life as the language of reciprocity. The very
words and sounds that have come to make up those languages have become part
of the systems of social action and exchange that make up those spheres of
people’s lives.

Along similar lines, Fabian (1986) treats Swahili not as a pre-existing language
but as a set of linguistic practices emerging in specific fields of politically cons tit-
uted interactions where it boomes objectified and codified. An interactive
approach is also taken by LePage and Tabouret-Keller (1985), who, working in that
most variable of linguistic environments, the Caribbean, also problematize the idea
that language is monolithic. The only things to which linguists have direct access,
they argue, are specific moments of use, the linguistic “acts of identity” in which
people locate and identify themselves in a world of relations. Language provides an
easily objectified and coded set of elements on which to hang other aspects of
identity and difference. The sense of a coherent whole, of language as entity, and of
a defined community to which it belongs are always emergent, in flux.

The conditions that have brought about bi- and multilingual situations in
post-colonial industrial-capitalist societies have been aggressively politicized.
Relatively few people have had the luxury of choosing to become bilingual. When
people migrate, become political minorities, or become colonized, they find their
lives structured in ways that force them to work across languages and place on
them the burden of understanding and responding correctly. In these politicized
situations, the idea that any language is a coherent whole emerges selectively. As
market relations and labor migrations form, people speak complex language pat-
terns that shift with time. These are excellent environments in which to explore
and develop the ideas proposed by Gal (1987) and Irvine (1989): that there is a
political economy of language objects such that the ways in which people formu-
late, value, and use words, sounds, phrases, and codes are constituted through power
relations: bureaucratic, economic, racial, and any combination thereof.

Most of these principles are set out by Bourdieu (1977b, 1991). Languages are
objectified in the processes through which nation-states form. Specific languages
emerge as the authorized languages of nation-states when people use them in

politically constituted fields of relations. Bourdieu provides a complex and useful
theoretical agenda for the study of language and power, but investigators must be
aware of the dangers of simply “plugging in” to these principles. Bourdieu under-
emphasizes the fact that power relations evolve differently in different societies and
may be contested and resisted. As Woolard’s studies of Carahan and Castilhan (1985,
1989) show, political ascendance need not equal economic power. How languages
figure into processes of symbolic domination must be accounted for ethnographi-
cally (see also Irvine 1989).

Many of Bourdieu’s principles were previously articulated by Hymes, who
emphasizes that meaning does not inhere to words or grammar alone and that lan-
guage function—the social meaning of what people say—goes well beyond the
semantic-referential or dictionary sense of meaning. When people speak, they
may persuade, charm, create a bond, or play with language. People form their per-
ceptions of particular languages or aspects of language, such as accents, through
functionally complex usage over time. Thus, because accents play an important role
in the interactive performance of identity, they cannot be reduced to quantifiable
variable phonemes and variable rules.

In his program for investigating the factors involved in language contact situa-
tions, Weinreich (1953) stressed the importance of considering social and context-
ual factors in assessing bi- and multilingualism. At the same time, Weinreich’s
emphasis on the individual as the locus of language contact reinforced the idea of
languages as discrete and monolithic codes: the generic bilingual became the
speaker with two grammars in one brain. Affiliated concepts like “interference”
and “ideal bilingual” tended to reinforce the sense of boundedness, leaving the
speaker a marginal. This perspective also tends to equate all bi- and multilinguals.
Puerto Rican factory workers or French businessmen in New York manifest “the
same” phenomenon, leaving politics to be explained away after the fact by posit-
ing one language as lower in prestige than the other. But saying that Spanish has less
prestige than English is not the same as saying that the controlling agents and insti-
tutions of the U.S. electorate and business interests equate being Puerto Rican
with being poor and non-white, and with speaking Spanish. These conflations are
specific to U.S. economic and race politics. It is impossible not to talk about
Puerto Ricans speaking Spanish and English. But it is imperative first to address
the conditions under which Puerto Ricans come to experience English and
Spanish, and then to address the forms of the languages themselves.

The study by Fishman, Cooper, and Me (1971) of Puerto Ricans in Jersey City
made the important point that code-switching (the alternation of Spanish and
English clauses or phrases) is a complex mode of language use that integrates rela-
tions among those who do it and consolidates their identity; Haugen (1969) made
the same point about bilingual Norwegian-Americans in the Midwest. At the same
time, Fishman’s study takes for granted the equation of a language and a culture.
Spanish is equated with Puerto Rican values and English with American values in
ways that objectively both language and culture. Similarly, the study assumes the
existence of discrete domains in which the use of English or Spanish correlates with
institutionalized roles and activities. This assumes a functional compartmentalization of code, without which, Fishman argued, a bilingual situation cannot remain stable. Work by the Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños (Center for Puerto Rican Studies) Language Policy Task Force on a Puerto Rican block of East Harlem (1970s–1980s) found abundant evidence that English and Spanish are not compartmentalized by domain (Attinasi 1979; Language Policy Task Force 1980; Pedraza, Attinasi, and Hoffman 1980; Language Policy Task Force 1982; Pedraza 1987). Making no prior assumptions about the social location of English or Spanish, the Centro study began by examining local networks; building its survey instruments, ethnographic techniques, and assumptions about language around class/race issues; presenting its findings to local residents; and taking their perceptions into account. The result comes much closer to people’s lived experience of English and Spanish.

As Zentella’s (1981a, 1981b, 1982, 1997) East Harlem work shows, the Puerto Rican lived experience of English and Spanish represents a range of language varieties and social relations. The cultural meanings of English or Spanish depend on the ways in which English and Spanish varieties are institutionalized and sanctioned. How children grow into a bilingual communicative competence is embedded in their perceptions of themselves and the people they talk to. As children grow into code-switching, they first learn to judge who they are talking to and what language is appropriate (see also Genish 1981; Huerta-Macias 1981; and Romaine 1989:205ff for literature review). In short, English and Spanish cultural meanings are mediated by how people classify relationships, which is in part an issue of social development.

From a political perspective, the most accurate way to put it might be this: For Puerto Ricans in the continental United States, the range of situations in which people use English ordinarily extends from the most intimate, familiar, and equal to the most external, unfamiliar, and authority-weighted. The range of situations in which people use Spanish is ordinarily limited to the intimate, familiar, and equal, although there are exceptions: bilingual classrooms, Spanish-speaking churches, some public media, some workplaces. This formulation makes a distinction between the languages themselves and the ways that meaning is socially produced, that is, pragmatics. This is an important distinction because pragmatics takes into account the politics of context. When bilingual siblings gossip or tease in English and Spanish, the pragmatics of English is much more like the pragmatics of Spanish than it is like the pragmatics of English spoken with an Anglo doctor. It is thus a mistake to approach bilingual behavior from the perspective that a language equals a culture.

By the same token, assumptions about assimilation cannot be made on the basis of how much English or Spanish is used. Centro studies by Flores, Attinasi, and Pedraza (1981) and Attinasi (1983) point out the fallacy of assimilationist survey techniques that measure Puerto Rican “success” against that of European immigrants based on simple equations of language, culture, and nation. Aside from the fact that European “assimilation” was largely a function of class mobility and Puerto Ricans, like African Americans, have had far less opportunity than Europeans to be class mobile (see next chapter), Puerto Rican uses of English cannot be classified as signs of assimilation. They use English in ways that signify the complex realities and identities of local social life. The Centro studies show that local residents find ways to be Puerto Rican in English or in code-switched English and Spanish. Schoolteachers, steeped in more traditional perspectives on language (as emblem of the nation-state and as a discrete compendium of rules and forms), tend not to see or acknowledge this the way local residents do.

Walsh (1991) examines English and Spanish in the classroom. She argues that the “common sense” ways in which students and teachers talk about English and Spanish demonstrate hegemony in Gramsci’s (1971:420) sense. As Puerto Rican students move through school, their view of social reality becomes saturated with the judgments and expectations of the dominant society. For example, English-dominant bilinguals judge terms like hispano/hispanic, bilingue/bilingual, puertorriqueño/Puerto Rican much more pejoratively than do Spanish-dominant students. English-dominant students come to see Spanish-language elements (like accents) as signs of contamination, internalizing Anglo teachers’ perceptions of their non-standard English as deviant and their switching as a sign they have no real language.

Walsh seeks the roots of prejudice in the ways that power relations are institutionalized and language objectified. Only by looking at the recreation and institutionalization of bilingual situations can we fully expose the enactment of prejudice through language. Prejudice may be seen as a result of “bad” grammar, “broken” rules or a “Spanish” accent, but there is a far more complex relation to language and social action.

The Indexical Underpinnings of Language Prejudice

In this book I emphasize those aspects of language that structure relationships rather than code (English or Spanish): in other words, I fit the referential (word and grammar meaning independent of context) into the indexical (the social aspect of meaning) and not vice versa (after Silverstein 1977). Indexes (after Peirce 1956) are signs that indicate connection, co-existence, or causality. For our purposes, indexes are words, sounds, or grammatical elements that carry information about the speaker’s identity or location. Interpreting indexes depends on the interpreter’s perspective. For example, the indexical adverbs here and there can only be fully understood when the speaker’s and addressee’s positions are known: here is where I am or we are; she or they are over there.

Indexes may be, in Silverstein’s (1976) terms, presupposing or creative (performatice). An index is presupposing when the information it signals is already taken for granted in the speech situation. An index is creative (performative) when it sets up new relations, or makes relations explicit and overt, or sets up terms of interaction. Consider the following hypothetical scene (a composite of scenes I have witnessed or heard described): Two Puerto Rican women, neighbors, meet in front of
Introduction: The Semiotics of Exclusion

Opposing spheres of relations: the inner sphere of class-equal familiar and familial relations, and the outer sphere of authority and class/race imbalance. Outer-sphere relations are hierarchic by definition; these are people one has to deal with whether one wants to or not (teacher, boss, doctor, landlord). They are in a position to judge and impose consequences as inner-sphere people cannot. Spanish or Spanish indexes (such as an accent) metacomunicate different messages in inner- and outer-sphere relations. In outer-sphere relations, for example, a “Spanish accent” may set up an interpretive frame where one is subject to judgments and reactions that one cannot fight because they are made by people in positions of authority. In inner-sphere relations, people share the same indexes and it is unlikely that anyone has the kind of unanswerable authority that outer-sphere figures do. So the same linguistic elements function differently in different spheres.

Much of what I talk about here is not overtly about specific languages. Language as code—English or Spanish or any named language or dialect—is the tip of the iceberg and always rests on power relations. Class, race, and authority imbalance make people aware of language correctness as the one thing that they should be able to control. When people are faced with the problem of giving information to or getting it from someone in authority, there is an overwhelming tendency to see linguistic action as a code issue, that is, as an English-language problem. Moreover, “correct” English is rarely an inner-sphere issue. It is of paramount importance in outer-sphere relations because it just might level the playing field: one “defends oneself” by “knowing the rules” for “good grammar.” In outer-sphere relations, one’s intentions can be overridden, misunderstood, or ignored, so one falls back on the ideology of semantic purity: if one speaks exactly right, “they” must listen.

The object of inquiry in this study is the indexical dynamic that sustains language prejudice, its structural source, and its enactment in daily routines. Chapter 1 lays out the main argument: that race and ethnicity are competing categories of origin difference; that race is based on the idea of difference as inherent, disorderly, and dangerous whereas ethnicity is based on the idea of difference as cultural, neat, and safe; and that difference in language of origin is only occasionally safe in the United States. Spanish and indexes of Spanish become conflated with race (non-white) and class (poor). Chapter 2 explores the ways in which Puerto Ricans and their language came to be racialized in the United States, and the effect of racialization on where and how they live. Chapter 3, based on observed events, explores functions of English and Spanish in inner and outer spheres. Chapter 4, based on interviews and people’s reactions to speech samples, explores their perceptions of English correctness as it affects their lives. Chapter 5, based on interviews, explores connections that people find among language, race, and class in their experience.

How I Came to These Issues

My first encounter with the U.S.-Puerto Rican politics of English and Spanish was in 1970, as a VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) volunteer in Puerto Rico, forty miles out of college with almost no prior knowledge of Spanish or
young adults who had lived many years in U.S. cities, or as they put it, afuera ("outside" Puerto Rico). Several said they felt peculiar and uncomfortable about the way family and neighbors reacted to their English, teasing or scolding them for acting as if they were showing off and "acting American."

After I left Puerto Rico in 1971, I worked for a year and a half as a junior counselor at the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC). MRC had been receiving Spanish-speaking referrals and wanted a caseworker in the office who could speak English. After several weeks, the case manager told me that I had been hired and that I would be transferred to another office. The bottom line, as I should have realized, was the number of successfully closed cases that came out of each office. My supervisor did not welcome the active recruitment of complex Spanish-speaking cases. I decided it was time to apply to graduate school.

When I began my dissertation fieldwork in the fall of 1977, I spent the first four months in Cidra where I had lived as a VISTA volunteer, partly to relearn Spanish and partly to refamiliarize myself with the background of the people with whom I would work in New York. Again I found people who shied away from English; again I met a few people who had lived in U.S. cities and wanted someone familiar to talk to. The people I knew in Puerto Rico who were comfortable with English had lived in the continental United States or had gone to private or Catholic school in Puerto Rico; some had done both. Those who had gone to private or Catholic school were usually middle class.

I also met several people who had learned English as migrants or children of migrants in New York or Chicago and who sought the chance to use it with me. The irony is, in the continental United States they had experienced English in precisely the kinds of working-class contexts that conflate language with class and race and where they would have felt least comfortable around a middle-class white.

I give this brief sketch to make the point that it is not the code per se which carries the meaning, but how the code is perceived and taken up. If a Puerto Rican who must have known linguistic and race prejudice from Americans in Brooklyn or Jersey City is eager to seek out and speak English to an American in a small town in Puerto Rico, the important issue is that person's sense of control over English and the politics that structure that sense of control. In the U.S. urban neighborhoods in which this study is set, many factors converge to rob Puerto Ricans of control over almost any aspect of their lives. Language is a lightning-rod for this convergence because, ideologically, it is something which...
Americans are supposed to be able to control. In Puerto Rico, knowing English is a sign of success and control over a definingly American practice. When Puerto Ricans in Puerto Rico display that knowledge, they can evoke resentment. For Puerto Ricans who have lived for years in continental U.S. cities, the English they learned there, familiarly switched with Spanish and probably shared with black friends, has become a part of them, and it is hard to give up (see Zentella 1990 for further discussion).

The People in This Book and How We Came to Know Each Other

When I started this research in 1978, I planned to study the social structure of bilingualism by charting ways that English, Spanish, and code-switching fit into local domains of family, neighbor, school, and work relations. I expected to find clearly marked domains of English or Spanish usage, as suggested by the Fishman et al. (1971) model, with clear patterns of switching that matched the speech events making up the Puerto Rican bilingual speech community’s day-to-day life. I planned to study these through interviews and tape recordings of routine code-switched conversations. I thought English would be associated with an American identity or American cultural values, and Spanish with intimate family values. I soon felt the frustration of focusing on English and Spanish when I wanted to talk about politics. It took me years to rethink my approach along the lines developed in this book, yet the evidence seemed all around me.5

I chose New York because I wanted a site where Puerto Rican neighborhoods had long been established. In January 1978 I took a job as linguistic consultant (studying language use among Puerto Rican and African American teenage boys) with a research and resource group on the Lower East Side. I worked there until September 1979. Many of my initial contacts were made through the four other members of the research group, including the director, Jamm Shaff, and the secretary, Nilsa Buon, who also took part in the research for this book. The five of us tutored after school, ran interference with city agencies for local residents, and ran a summer program for local children, with day trips, lunches supplied by the city, and an arts and crafts program that I organized and taught. In this way I first came to know local children and eventually their mothers and the rest of their families, a process which took some months. I worked with eight families, seven Puerto Rican and one African American. My 1984 doctoral thesis, an ethnography of routine bilingual behavior and networks on New York’s Lower East Side, was based on this research. Once I finished it, I felt it concentrated too much on “the stuff inside” the boundary, that is, the behavior that marked one as bilingual, and that I had concentrated too little on the emergence of boundaries. I decided not to publish it, but it did contain the seeds of the approach taken in this book.

I remained in touch with several of the families from the 1978–1979 study, or I should say, they remained in touch with me. In 1988 I returned to New York for five months to do the interviews on which the second half of this book is based. At this point I worked intensively with nine people: Milagros (Millie) Wright and her daughter, Cathy, Marilyn Mojica and her brother José, Eugenia (Jenny) Pacheco, Jenny's son Luis Molina; Luis' wife Rosalina (Rosie), Rosie's mother Generosa (Tay) Roman, and Nilsa Buon. Millie, Cathy, Marilyn, José, Jenny, and Luis all took part in the 1978–79 work; Cathy, Marilyn, José, and Luis had been my after-school tutees. Everyone in the 1988 study appears under his or her own name. We decided to use real names because of the ways in which people participated. The 1988 interviews and the follow-up interviews done in 1991 involved discussion, questioning, and argument that structured the interviews and, in many ways, the writing itself. People reflected on and analyzed their experience and helped develop the object of study, the informing theory and the methods of investigation. This text was complexly created. Using real names gives credit where credit is due.

When I began the 1988 research, I spent three months keeping track of points that surfaced in ordinary conversations, such as how it felt to be the butt of racial teasing or to be treated as if one knew nothing. I brought my laptop computer to people’s homes, raised the points I had tracked, and asked people to expand and analyze them. These discussions shaped questions that formed the basis of subsequent tape-recorded interviews. People told stories and anecdotes illustrating the general principles we discussed: the politics of class relations; the conflation of race and class; the experience of being marked; the thin line between “advancing yourself” and “acting white.” This material was supplemented by 1991 interviews exploring people’s perceptions and analyses of “poor” and “middle class.”

As Fox puts it, ethnography is not a place but a stance, the construction of a frame of inquiry. The frame that governs this study has been interactively, often accidentally constructed, pulling in the relations from afar that structure inequality in local, everyday life” (Fox 1991:95) in what Appadurai (1991) calls the shifting, non-localized, globally connected ethnoscapes. The problem this book addresses evolved over fourteen years in which periods of ongoing conversation alternate with periods of limited contact. Much turned up in what seemed to me ordinary talk; much was said in 1979 interviews that took me years to understand, especially when people talked about respect, defense, acting white, having the wrong accent, or trying to get the right words. Nevertheless, I found it easy to explain my theoretical base to the people I worked with because it was familiar territory to them. They frequently thank and theorize about the experience of prejudice. When, in this book, I show how they do this, I am not explaining “native” theory in “real” (i.e., academic) terms. I am showing how all of us arrived mutually, over some time, at an understanding of the informing dynamics.

This book does not present a generic New York Puerto Rican, because no such entity exists. I worked with a small group of people, mostly women—more women than men felt comfortable talking about language and prejudice with me. I show in detail how people conceptualize and confront problem situations and map them onto English and Spanish, focusing on the complexity, depth, and consistency of their constructions and reflections. Above all, I emphasize the social and
cultural dynamics that make peoples' lives hard because of what they are perceived to be. In ethnographic and linguistic studies of “minority” people, it is easy to take the boundary for granted, focusing on the “stuff inside” without questioning how the inside-outside distinction came to be in the first place. The people about whom this book is written and who helped construct this book live difficult lives because the fabric of their lives is marked in ways that materially affect where and how they and their children live and work and what they can hope for. So I have chosen to focus on how they live with such prejudice and on how the language boundaries that affect their lives and identities have become painful social facts.

Notes
1. Semiotics is the study of signs and interpretive systems. Semiotic analyses have long informed work in linguistic and cultural/symbolic anthropology. This work integrates the Percian semiotic developed and adapted by Silverstein (1976) with a theory of the political economy of language, race, and class developed in the next chapter. I hope people reading this will realize how deeply semiotized all human experience is and not regard “semiotics” as solely the domain of literary analysis.
2. For extended analysis, see Berger and Luckmann (1967).
3. This approach has been elegantly developed in ethnographic studies of language contact and change by Gél (1979), Doris (1981), Heller (1982, 1988), and others.
4. The more static aspects of Hymes research program, particularly his concern with rules, may be rethought in ways that enhance his original aims. Fabian (1979) criticizes Hymes notion of a sociolinguistic rule in a way parallel to Bourdieus (1972a) criticism of the rule in formal linguistics: rules reduce practice to schemas that deny the part played by time.
5. As I read the studies of Puerto Rican and Mexican-American bilinguals that began emerging in the late 1970s, I often sensed similar frustration. These investigators knew how utterly politicized were the issues they had chosen to confront and explore in their research, yet they had inherited analytic models in which the political was more or less embryonic.

Racialization and Ethnicizing

Racialization and Ethnicizing

Language differences are routinely attributed to origin differences and in the United States origin differences are framed as race and ethnicity. Race and ethnicity are both about belonging to the nation, but belonging in different ways. When people are talked about as an ethnic group, as Italian-American, Polish-American, African American, Hispanic-American, Asian-American, the ideological emphasis is on national and/or cultural origins. This emphasis gives them a rightful place in the United States and their claim to language is seen as a point of pride. When people are talked about as a race (and every group now seen as ethnic was once or is still seen as a race as well as an ethnic group), the emphasis is on natural attributes that hierarchize them and, if they are not white, make their place in the nation provisional at best. When groups are seen in racial terms, language differences are ideologically problematic.

Although Americans talk about race and ethnicity as if they were self-evident facts, I argue that they are constructions of difference that are opposed to each other in complex ways. The current meanings of race and ethnicity emerge from decades of national discourse about difference, value, and belonging. Race discourses, or racializing, frame group origin in natural terms: ethnic discourses, or ethnicizing, frame group origin in cultural terms. Racializing is defined by a polarity between dominant and subordinate groups, the latter having minimal control over their position in the nation-state. Brackette Williams (1989, 1991) argues that race and ethnicity intertwine with class to grow from the processes which form the nation-state. Racial and ethnic discourses make up the myths of purity in the nation-state. Racialized people are typified as human matter out of place: dirty, dangerous, unwilling, or unable to do their bit for the nation-state. In