TUE 9/01 agenda

- Take attendance, etc.
- Discuss Twitter issues, sign up for live-tweeting, & order journal issues
- Define race and racism
- Discuss Harte’s poem
- Start discussing Eaton’s “Leaves”

Defining Race

- An inadequate, problematic term
- Categories used to distinguish different populations of humans from others
- Typically based on physical traits, genes, cultural traits, and self-identification
- Race is not an essence
- Race as a sociohistorical construct

Racial Formation

- “We define racial formation as the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed.”
  — Examples: Takao Ozawa vs. US (1922), and US vs. Bhagat Singh Thind (1923)

Working Definition of Racism

- “Racism is the state-sanctioned and/or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerabilities to premature death.”
  — Ruth Gilmore
- What comes first—race or racism?
Bret Harte and the “Heathen Chinee”

- What’s the relationship between Harte (the poet) and “truthful James” (the speaker)?
- The use (and failure) of irony/satire
- Used to support Chinese Exclusion Act (1882)

Edith Maude Eaton/Sui Sin Far
(1865–1914)

“Leaves from the Mental Portfolio of an Eurasian” (1909)

- Argument 1 – Eaton presents biraciality as a way to counter notions of race as “natural” and fixed.
  - Cases of misrecognition (221, 222)
  - Possibility of Chinese superiority (225)
  - Solidarity with other non-white peoples (228)
  - Notion of racial fluidity (233)

FOR THURSDAY

- Read Eaton’s “Mrs. Spring Fragrance”
  - Do you notice anything strange?
  - Why might Eaton (or anyone) write in code?
- Read Lowe’s chapter 1 of Immigrant Acts
- Tweet something about the reading